



## FRIENDS OF MAINE'S SEABIRD ISLANDS

*Our mission is to support the Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge in its efforts to conserve, protect and enhance the rich diversity of coastal habitats, seabirds and other wildlife.*



**Volunteers**



**Birds**



**Art**

## Celebrating Our Accomplishments

The Friends of Maine's Seabird Islands is managed by a Board of nine members. Others who care about our coastal islands and wildlife volunteer their time to greet visitors at the Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge's Visitor Center, to maintain trails on the Refuge's mainland properties, write grants, and plan programs. And then there's you, our many friends from across the country, supporting our efforts with your dollars. A wise investment! Here are the things you have helped us accomplish this year:

- ★ Secured funding through grants for these following projects:
  - Acquired TV, blu-ray player and projector for the Visitor Center (**Arthur Norcross Foundation**).
  - Constructed new seabird blinds for monitoring seabird colonies (**Arthur Norcross Foundation Board Member**).
  - Launched a new bird banding and bird research exhibit (**John Sage Foundation**).

- Built a kiosk for the Orientation Room in the Visitor Center (**Bangor Savings Bank**).
- Established new conservation through the arts programming (**Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation**).
- Developed an new lighthouse and history of seabirds exhibit (**Maine Community Foundation**).
- Produced an introductory video about the Refuge for visitors (**National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and the Nellie Taft Foundation**).

★ Exhibited the works of 12 artists in the Visitor Center Art Gallery and provided refreshments and volunteers for the First Friday Art Walks in Rockland (**King and Quimby Foundations**).

★ Opened the Nature Shop at the Visitor Center.

★ Participated in various local events: Downeast Birding Festival; Maine Boats, Homes & Harbor Show; and Windjammer Days.

★ Completed renovations to the former Roland Richard's property in Rockport, providing housing for Refuge interns.

★ Created new brochures for the Friend's Group and rack cards for the Visitor Center.

★ Hosted the Annual Seabird Cruise with staff from the Refuge providing narration.

★ Began work on ceramic wall art for the Visitor Center in memory of Board Member, Patti Reilly.

*Thank you to all our generous donors & sponsors for your support!*



*Socializing at an Art Walk Gallery Opening*

## Biologists Meet to Review the Summer's Seabird Nesting Success

Warmer than usual water and heavy rainfall was the backdrop for low nesting success for Atlantic puffins and many colonies of rare terns this past summer. The full picture emerged as the members of the Gulf of Maine Seabird Working Group held their annual review in Bremen, Maine, in August.

Nesting success in a given year varies depending on the body condition of arriving adults, weather, food availability and predation. Although terns typically lay two to three eggs, biologists consider it a successful season if an average of at least one chick per nest survives to fledge. This year, the terns only achieved this on the more southern and western islands of Stratton, Outer Green, Jenny and Pond Island. Although food resources seemed adequate elsewhere, heavy rains caused great tern chick mortality on several of the more easterly islands, especially on Seal Island NWR and Petit Manan Island. High tide overwash led to nest losses on Ship Island. Elsewhere, biologists reported losses to bald eagles, great horned owls, black-crowned night-herons, peregrine falcons and mink.

For the first time, biologists noted dozens of Atlantic moonfish in tern feedings. These fish are rarely found north of Cape Cod, and like butterfish they are usually inedible because their round shape makes them too large for chicks to swallow. Such occurrences are of concern to seabird biologists as they indicate warming waters and demonstrate how seabirds are vulnerable to changes in their usual foods.

Atlantic puffins, which suffered unusual winter mortality during the past winter, began nesting a few weeks later than usual on Machias Seal Island, Matinicus Rock, Seal Island and Eastern Egg Rock, presumably because they needed to gain weight before being able to produce eggs. There were also fewer puffins nesting on Petit Manan Island, Seal Island and Matinicus Rock. Puffins, which only lay one egg per nest, usually fledge chicks from 70% of their eggs, but this year they experienced the lowest nesting success in decades, hatching only 9% to 56%. The exception was at Eastern Egg Rock, where 91% of puffin chicks reached fledging age. Puffins spent less time than usual loafing at their nesting colonies this summer, leading biologists to speculate that they were having to spend more time searching for food and this contributed to the low nesting success at most islands.

## Wilderness Act

The Board continues to help protect our Maine Coastal Islands by supporting the designation of 13 of the Refuge's wildest islands as Wilderness Areas as recommended by the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Congressman Mike Michaud reintroduced HR 1808, The Maine Coastal Islands Wilderness Act of 2013. If this bill is passed into law, it will preserve the natural state of these islands for people to experience forever. We have been actively involved with efforts to support its passage. We helped send a local business owner to testify in Washington D.C. in favor of the legislation, and we submitted written testimony to the House Committee. We participated in a boat trip out to some islands with staff from each of our congressional delegations where we were able to discuss the importance of the legislation. We also have been organizing supporters of the legislation and recently sent out an action alert requesting that supporters call Senator King and urge him to introduce a companion bill in the U.S. Senate. Anyone who is interested in learning more about this bill, and helping support it, should contact Barbara Arter at [bsarter@panax.com](mailto:bsarter@panax.com) or contact our office.



## Volunteer Highlight - Carol & Kevin Adams

Meet Carol & Kevin Adams of Round Pond, Maine. They were instrumental in helping the Friends' group open, stock and run the Nature Shop at the Visitor Center. All proceeds from this shop go to support the work of the Friends' Group. Carol researched unique items to sell, learned how to use the computerized cash register, did inventory, rearranged items for better viewing, and staffed the shop. She continues to add items, keeping the shop well stocked. Kevin not only supports the Nature Shop, he coordinates our volunteers. Throughout the year, Kevin keeps volunteers updated on Refuge work and needs. He coordinates volunteers to help at work days and specific events. If you don't see Carol and Kevin at the Nature Shop, you will find them mowing and raking, or cleaning the Visitor Center. And those are just the tasks we know about! By the way, Carol makes awesome treats for our First Friday Art Walks, resulting in our reputation for the best appetizers during art gallery openings!



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