



# *Friends of Maine Coastal Islands*

## *National Wildlife Refuge*

### *2016 Highlights*

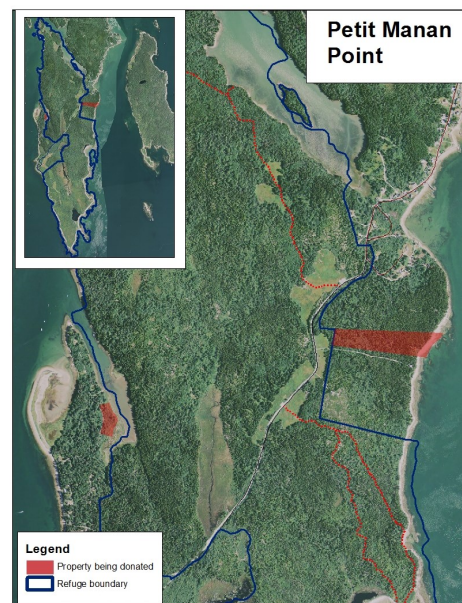
#### **Your Gift to FOMCI Helps Grow the Refuge**

As an independent nonprofit organization, the Friends of Maine Coastal Islands NWR (FOMCI) is a key partner in helping the Maine Coastal Islands NWR fulfill its mission of protecting critical wildlife habitat. This year, thanks to your support, FOMCI was able to grow the Refuge by accepting two donations of inholdings (privately owned land within refuge boundaries) on Petit Manan Point. One has two camps that are being used to house summer work crews and the other contains shoreline along Over Cove, which has critical bird habitat.

These once-in-a-lifetime land acquisitions were possible because of two generous landowners. FOMCI played a pivotal role by accepting the donated land on behalf of the Refuge at a time when the government could not move quickly enough to secure the donations.

Refuge land transactions involve title research, contaminant surveys, boundary surveys and value appraisals that need to be done to government standards prior to a purchase or donation. These can take a year or two to complete. Sometimes a landowner cannot wait that long. FOMCI is able to step in before the window of opportunity closes by taking over some of this due diligence and even, at times, accepting a donation of property and holding it until the property is turned over to the Refuge.

**Your** support of FOMCI makes this possible. It is a gift that will keep on giving to the American people for generations to come. We're a 501(c)(3) organization, so your donations are tax deductible. Please give generously!



#### **Thanks, Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company!**

FOMCI's biggest annual fundraiser is our seabird-viewing trip to Petit Manan Island. It wouldn't be possible without **Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company**, which donated use of their boat for our July trip. We saw puffins, terns and lighthouses while enjoying good company, a fun live auction, Divining Rod wines graciously provided by Janice and Marc Mondavi, and hors d'oeuvres provided by FOMCI's board members.



*Linda Welch , Refuge Biologist, shows off the birds*

In addition to sponsoring this trip every year, Bar Harbor Whale Watch also sells FOMCI buttons on its seabird-watching trips to Petit Manan Island, which attract thousands of visitors. We're grateful for their continued generous support!

# A Year of Programs—Thanks to You!

## At the Visitor Center . . .

### Maine Coastal Islands Art Gallery

With Rockland now recognized as a must-visit destination for art lovers, the Visitor Center art gallery managed by FOMCI is rapidly becoming part of the city's bustling art scene. In this beautiful space conservation-minded artists, both established and newly emerging, are able to share their love for nature through painting, photography, sculpture and other visual media. FOMCI contracts with Carney Doucette to manage the gallery and we participate in monthly "First Friday" Art Walks with other Rockland art museums and galleries. This year we featured the work of 11 Maine artists. When you buy art at the gallery, both FOMCI and the artists benefit. Visit soon! Our newest show opened on November 4, and will run through April.

### Artists Share their Skills

This year, several artists generously offered free hands-on workshops for FOMCI supporters. Many thanks to Susan Beebe and Michael Boardman for encouraging aspiring artists with workshops on drawing and painting birds, and to Leon Vanella for his session on seeing nature through a photographer's eye. Watch for more workshops in the coming year. Let us know what you'd like to learn!



*Leon Vanella explains photographic techniques*



*Michael Boardman gives some drawing tips*

### Seabird Island Exhibit Goes Live

Thanks to your donations, the seabird island exhibit at the Refuge's Visitor Center now includes all the trappings of a real managed island. There you'll find a binocular-equipped observation blind, a sound system that broadcasts the cries of a real tern colony, and replicas of island vegetation, seabird nests and eggs, and the decoys used by refuge scientists to attract seabirds. We hope you'll bring your children and grandchildren to experience this family-oriented outdoor adventure. The youngest kids can hunt for seabird eggs and older children can become junior biologists and complete a seabird census.



*A parent guides her children in conducting a census.*



*Two children view the seabird island from the blind with PVC pipe binoculars*

## More Programs—Serving More People!

Thanks to your support, FOMCI was able to continue to employ our program manager, Carney Doucette, and offer 36 free public programs during the past year. The increased number of free programs attracted more participants than ever (1,205 compared to last year's 740). If you enjoy our programs, we hope you will continue to support them with a generous year-end contribution.

## Exploring the Refuge System

This year, FOMCI made it possible to explore more than 35 different National Wildlife Refuges through a series of guest speakers' talks and films at the Visitor Center. Participants got a virtual tour of the amazing diversity of wildlife and habitat found in Maine's Refuges and in our National Wildlife Refuge System.

## Go for a Hike

Cary Kish, author of *Best Day Hikes Along the Maine Coast*, shared his favorite hikes with a crowd of 60 people and signed copies of his books in the Refuge's FOMCI-run nature store. They're still in stock, along with many other nature-themed items available for your holiday gift giving.

## On Birds and Babies

We were honored to have Dr. Adrian Cerezo present two workshops and provide expertise in completing our Family Seabird Island Adventure and wall map. Dr. Cerezo has extensive expertise in child development and museum design nationally and internationally. He volunteered his time and expertise to help our exhibits come alive.



Patricia King reads about bird's eggs during a summertime story hour

## Benefit Concert

In honor of International Migratory Bird Day in May, Rockland singers Kathy Westra and George Stephens donated a concert of nature-themed songs from their *Birds of Passage* CD. We appreciated it!



Kathy Westra and George Stephens sing

## Coming Soon!

**New Exhibits**—One of the amazing, unforgettable things about a nesting colony of terns is the cacophony of cries and calls as the birds swoop and dive all around. Thanks to a generous anonymous donation of \$10,000, combined with your generous contributions to FOMCI, we will be bringing you that experience with a new surround-sound experience to the Center and also adding some audiovisual enhancements to the south exhibit room. Soon you will be able to stand in the small central exhibit room, close your eyes, and be transported to the middle of a noisy tern colony (but without the smell)! A large TV and speakers in the large exhibit room means we will be able to seat our larger audiences in there! Your additional donations will help us install speakers in the theater.

## Join Us January 29 for Pies on Parade!

Stop in between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. Sunday, January 29 to sample our "Egg Rock Nest" pie. Yum!

*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.”*

We do this by: raising funds to directly support the refuge’s programs; by volunteering; by providing educational exhibits, materials, and programming; and through partnerships and advocacy.

We hope you will continue to support us!

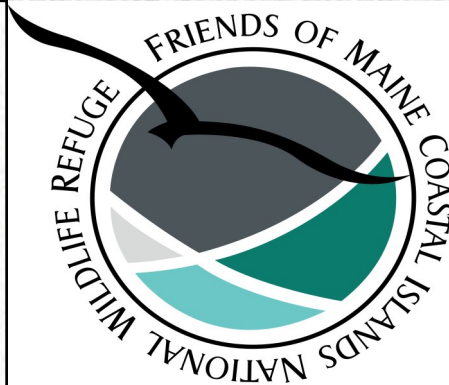
*Want all the news? You can sign up to receive email announcements of upcoming programs and manager’s weekly notes during the field season. Just contact us!*

**Contact us at:**

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[www.maine.coastislands.org](http://www.maine.coastislands.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofMaineCoastIslandsNWR/>

Twitter: (@MaineIslandsNWR)

**Thanks to everyone for all of your help!**

We couldn't do what we do without our board members, volunteers and contributors.

**Board members:**

Charles Walsh, Chair  
Meriwether Gill, Vice-Chair  
Dick Tomeo, Secretary  
Tom Goettel, Treasurer  
Kevin Adams  
Pam Bryer  
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Ann Harrison  
Mark Green  
Sandy Hobbs  
Kathy Westra  
Julie Stiler

Sandy Lathem  
Don Johnson,  
Degan Wildes  
Jeanne Picicello  
Patricia King  
George Stephens  
Adrian Cerezo

**Contributors:**

**You!**

**Thanks to you, we're on the map!**

Thanks to your participation and support, FOMCI is making strides in increasing public awareness of the refuge and its programs. The Visitor Center is now on the Camden-Rockland Discovery Map produced by the Penobscot Bay Chamber of Commerce, helping many tourists find us. We also are attracting new visitors through street signs and rack cards distributed at tourist information centers or local hotels and inns. Next summer, thanks to a generous FOMCI contributor, we'll have thousands of palm cards available to distribute to the cruise ship passengers who visit Rockland. We could use your help to distribute those if you're willing to lend a hand!

**We're on the Web!**

As you may have noticed, we're getting more social! Thanks to a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, we'll be increasing our visibility on the web and on social media. You can help by visiting our website ([www.maine.coastislands.org](http://www.maine.coastislands.org)), liking our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofMaineCoastIslandsNWR/>) and inviting your friends to do the same, and following us on Twitter (@MaineIslandsNWR).