



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# The Coastal Program

*Success on the New England Coast*



## Caring for Our Coastal Habitats

### Rhode Island South Shore Phase II

The South Shore of Rhode Island, part of the Atlantic flyway, is a critical area for migratory birds and coastal fishes due to the mix of freshwater wetlands, uplands, salt ponds, and tidal habitats. It is also an area that is undergoing tremendous development pressure and change. To provide permanent protection for the area, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program in Southern New England--New York Bight worked with partners to develop a successful application for a North American



Snowy egret.



Moonstone Beach, protected as part of the South Shore Phase II project.

Photo: Andrew Milliken, USFWS

Wetlands Conservation Act grant. This grant gives the go-ahead for acquiring land in, or adjacent to, Rhode Island's focus sites in the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

The South Shore Phase II project, along with the grants for 3 other related habitat protection projects, will make available \$7,052,000 to protect, in perpetuity, over 1,450 acres of crucial coastal habitat in Rhode Island. These wetlands and associated upland habitats will provide habitat for 66 priority waterfowl and other bird species.

The Service's partners in developing the grant application included the Narrow River Land Trust, the Rhode Island Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and the town of North Kingstown. The Coastal Program provided biological support and technical assistance.

### ***"It was like fireworks going off."***

The South Shore project began when a handful of families who owned land along streams emptying into the Narrow River became interested in preserving their property from encroaching development. They approached the local chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for help. TNC advised them to talk with their neighbors and show them, by example, how they could make a significant contribution to the Narrow River and its inhabitants by conserving their property.

As neighbors spoke to one another, they formed groups interested in protecting open space—not otherwise planned for, or protected, by the existing county plan. These groups worked together to write what turned out to be a very successful grant proposal. "It was like fireworks going off," related Marci Caplis, of the Service's Southern New England Coastal Program office, "...initiated by the people themselves."

**These coastal places are home to:** pied-billed grebe, American bittern, least bittern, black-crowned night-heron, little blue heron, snowy egret, great egret, great blue heron, glossy ibis, king rail, sora, American oystercatcher, \*piping plover, upland sandpiper, \*roseate tern, least tern, \*bald eagle, northern harrier, \*peregrine falcon, marsh wren, New England bluet, bog copper, Hessel's hairstreak, Eastern pond mussel, lampmussel, coastal swamp amphipod, New England thoroughwort, bushy rockrose, creeping St. John's-wort, northern blazing-star, Long's bitter-creed, salt-marsh pink, swamp pink, slender arrowhead, umbrella grass, long-beaked bald sedge, swamp bulrush, tiny-flowered sedge, tall beaked sedge, reticulated nut-rush, Smith's bulrush, pink tickseed, water lobelia, horsetail spikerush, small-beaked spikerush, dwarf huckleberry, Plymouth marsh pink, Carolina redroot, weak rush, northern gamma-grass, wild rice, swamp cottonwood, mudwort.

*\*Federally listed species protected under the Endangered Species Act*



**Viall Farm, protected through the efforts of local landowners in partnership with the Service's Coastal Program.**

**Photo: Andrew MacLachlan, USFWS**

***Once in a Lifetime Opportunity***

The South Shore habitats of Rhode Island are very important to migratory and rare birds, plants, and other species. The Service's Coastal Program's habitat data, analytical and GIS capabilities and partner contacts were used by the area's residents to support their habitat conservation efforts.

The Service is proud to have been—and continues to be—a part of the local citizenry's commitment to protecting these resources for future generations of people and wildlife.



**Trustom Pond, a coastal pond, supports numerous coastal migratory bird species. Photo: Andrew Milliken, USFWS**

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