

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Gulf of Maine Coastal Program



*“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity,  
stability and beauty of the biotic community.  
It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”*

*Aldo Leopold*





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*Developing and implementing landscape scale conservation projects benefit both the wildlife and people who frequent the Gulf of Maine region.*

## A Landscape Approach...

The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program works with a variety of partners to share information, knowledge and capabilities for habitat conservation at the landscape scale to support healthy populations of fish and wildlife. Together, we protect and restore habitats that sustain diverse and abundant populations of fish, wildlife and plants throughout the Gulf of Maine watershed. With the threat of climate change, successful landscape level habitat conservation will provide opportunities for fish and wildlife to adapt. This holistic approach ensures that individual projects produce meaningful and sustainable results for fish and wildlife and makes the best use of limited resources.

## ...for fish, wildlife and people.

Our efforts to protect and restore habitat not only improve the lives of endangered species, migratory birds and sea-run fish, but the people who live in or visit the state of Maine. The tangible benefits include maintaining clean water and open space, providing recreational opportunities (such as hiking, bird watching, hunting and fishing) and preserving the quality of life that makes the Gulf of Maine attractive to residents, visitors and businesses. Restoration projects also contribute to the health of the Gulf of Maine as a whole, to the region's multi-million dollar fishing industry and to the creation of "green jobs" for engineers, contractors and others.



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*“Like the resource it seeks to protect, wildlife conservation must be dynamic, changing as conditions change, seeking always to become more effective.”*

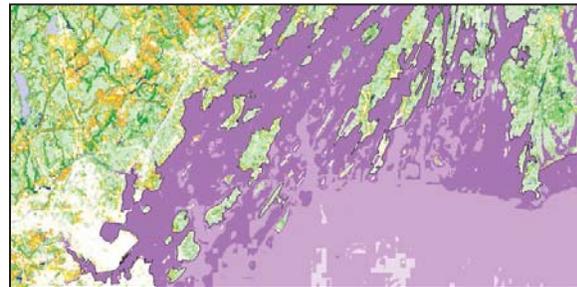
*Rachel Carson*

## A Catalyst for Conservation

*The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program makes conservation happen on the ground. At times we initiate and lead habitat protection and restoration projects. More often, we support other entities including state agencies and nonprofit organizations that are committed to protecting and restoring populations and habitats. In all cases, we strive to ensure that resources and funding are available to ensure the best possible result.*

### Biological Information as a Foundation

To achieve our goals and to develop conservation priorities, we use biological datasets, models and mapping to explain and predict the relationships between species and their habitats. These tools help the program address today’s complex and challenging conservation problems.



*Since 1991, we have developed habitat maps for 91 species found in the Gulf of Maine. This information is invaluable when assessing whether a habitat protection or restoration opportunity matches up with our stated goals.*

### Sharing Technical Expertise

Coastal Program staff share expertise in biology, computer mapping, and river, wetland and island restoration techniques to identify, design and implement landscape conservation projects. The program has completed a habitat analysis that identifies, ranks and maps high value forested, freshwater wetland and estuarine habitats and has coordinated a stream barrier inventory and prioritization project to most efficiently restore habitat access for diadromous fish.



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*The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program combines sophisticated mapping and data gathering techniques with reports from the field to help identify high value conservation projects.*

### Building Partnerships

Protecting and restoring habitat is a challenging task due to the impacts of habitat fragmentation, pollution and the continuing threats to our ecosystems. It takes the effort of many individuals and organizations to make a difference. Through collaboration with state agencies, nongovernment agencies, municipalities and land owners, we have shared skills, leveraged funds and achieved significant restoration and protection objectives.



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*The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program works with partners to accomplish more together for fish and wildlife than could be accomplished separately.*

# Delivering Conservation

## Protection

### Flag Island Purchase



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When Flag Island was about to be listed for sale on the open market, Maine Coast Heritage Trust negotiated with the landowners to pre-acquire the island on behalf of Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Biologists at Gulf of Maine Coastal Program determined that Flag Island is particularly important for its huge concentration of nesting eiders — far greater than any other eider nesting island in Casco Bay. Our Gulf of Maine Watershed GIS Habitats Analysis also predicts that Flag Island and its surrounding intertidal wetlands provide important habitat for the 15 endangered, threatened, rare or declining water dependent birds in the Gulf of Maine watershed. These findings played an integral role in securing the protection of this vital resource in perpetuity.

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*“The purchase of Flag Island, one of the most important bird nesting islands in Casco Bay, conserves in perpetuity important nesting habitat for seabirds, waterfowl and ospreys and gives them the chance to thrive among our rich tapestry of coastal islands.”*

Brad Allen, Bird Group Leader  
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

## Restoration

### Somesville — Mt Desert Island

The alewife run played an integral role in the cultural traditions of the local community, but four degraded fishways located at low head mill dams resulted in drastic declines in annual fish runs. The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program provided considerable fisheries restoration and planning expertise, repairing three dams in the Somes-Long Pond watershed, monitoring fish runs and developing management strategies to allow native sea-run fish populations such as alewife, American eel and sea lamprey to return to their historic spawning and nursery habitat in the Somes Pond and Long Pond watersheds.



Duane Raver/USFWS

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*“Renovating these three fishways has improved upstream and downstream passage for diadromous (sea-run) fish — especially alewives. This project will help restore the alewife population, enhance biological vitality, improve recreational opportunities and expand economic prospects. It is one more important piece in larger and ongoing efforts to restore both the Somes-Long Pond watershed and the Gulf of Maine as a natural resource of community pride.”*

David Lamon, Executive Director  
Somes-Meynell Wildlife Sanctuary

## Wetlands

### Scarborough Marsh



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Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area is Maine’s largest saltmarsh (3,100 acres) and is renowned for its biological diversity and productivity. Threats to the health of the marsh have degraded habitat and allowed the establishment and spread of *Phragmites australis*, an aggressively invasive plant. Gulf of Maine Coastal Program took the lead in initiating many saltmarsh restoration projects and restored tidal hydrology and the associated ecological saltmarsh functions for saltmarsh dependent fish and wildlife species. Tidal restrictions were removed and a *Phragmites* inventory was initiated which led to eradication and controlling their spread, allowing native species to re-establish themselves in these critically sensitive areas of Scarborough Marsh.

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*“These important restoration projects provide marvelous benefits for the Scarborough Marsh tidal wetlands and will provide for greater fish and wildlife value, as well as invasive species control for Maine’s largest and most biologically diverse salt marsh.”*

CD Armstrong, President  
Friends of Scarborough Marsh

## Species

### Roseate Tern

For decades, the numbers of endangered Roseate Terns and other endangered or threatened species of seabirds have been on the decline. Many of these native seabirds have been threatened by multiple factors, including unnaturally high populations of aggressive gulls, increasing recreational use, second home developments, timber harvesting, inappropriately located aquaculture facilities and low quality habitat due to invasive vegetation.

For the past several years, the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program has played an active role in assessing seabird populations and implementing habitat restoration and enhancement in 11 outer islands of Casco Bay. These efforts have helped the Roseate Tern and other species gain a foothold in their historic breeding grounds and populations are returning to Casco Bay in significant numbers once again.



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*“Helping Roseate Terns return to their historic breeding grounds is one of the most rewarding outcomes I have witnessed in my 30 plus years in the field. The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program has been a key partner in that success.”*

Stephen Kress, Director  
Audubon Seabird Restoration Program (Project Puffin)



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## A Model that Works

Since inception, Gulf of Maine Coastal Program partnerships have:

- *Permanently protected 1.69 million acres of high value fish and wildlife habitat through fee and easement acquisition*
- *Restored over 23,800 acres for fish and wildlife*
- *Established or restored 82 migratory fish projects*
- *Protected 60 coastal nesting islands*
- *Protected more than 200 coastal wetland sites*
- *Brought over \$48.1 million in federal funding to Maine while generating an additional \$144.6 million in conservation partner funds*

Yet, there is much more work to be done. Valuable habitat and conservation opportunities are abundant. We can act now to protect the Gulf of Maine or face the enormous costs of trying to restore these habitats and the species that inhabit them later, if they can be restored at all. Our goal is clear — to identify valuable natural resources and work with partners to create landscapes that sustain fish and wildlife populations and habitats for our children and future generations. Please join us.



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*Sustaining fish and wildlife populations on a large scale effectively conserves biodiversity for the benefit of all.*



*“We’ve made an impact by focusing collective efforts on highest priority habitats and species across the landscape, while leveraging capabilities and funds of many diverse organizations.”*

*Stewart Fefer, Project Leader  
Gulf of Maine Coastal Program*

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