

# Monomoy and Nomans Land Island National Wildlife Refuges Comprehensive Conservation Plan

*Planning Update*

*Winter 2004/2005*

## Restarting the CCP!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is pleased to be restarting the process of comprehensive conservation planning for the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge in Chatham, Massachusetts, and Nomans Land Island NWR, an island south of Martha's Vineyard that is a part of the town of Chilmark. Comprehensive conservation plans provide 15-year frameworks for all aspects of refuge management.

On December 13, 2004, we announced in the [Federal Register](#) that we were restarting the CCP process for those two refuges, an effort originally initiated in 1998. That announcement states we must receive comments on the scope of the CCP from the public by January 27, 2005. However, to allow time to hold our public meetings, we will now accept comments until April 22, 2005.

Our original planning process first started in 1998. It included all eight refuges in the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex. In February 1999, we held open houses in each neighboring town, to provide the public opportunities to comment on different issues, including

current and future management strategies, land protection, and public uses. We were pleased with the participation at those meetings, whose attendance ranged between 30 and more than 100 people.

Because we recognized that attending our open houses would be inconvenient for

some, we designed an

issues workbook, which encourages additional comment. More than 8,000 people, representing a variety of interests, received that workbook by mail, at open houses, and at refuge complex headquarters. We received more than 660 workbooks in response.

In February 2001, we realized that producing a CCP for the entire refuge complex was far too cumbersome. Instead, we delayed our planning for Monomoy and Nomans Land Island, and first focused on three other refuges in the complex.

We have been reviewing the information we received in 1999 and 2001 from public meetings and planning workbooks. We also have been contacting some groups that our future refuge management is likely to affect.

Visit the refuge website at <http://monomoy.fws.gov/plan> to review CCP information and join the CCP mailing list.



Common terns USFWS Staff photo

## CCP Process – Where are we now....

We have restarted the CCP process by taking a fresh look at all of the issues that face

long term management at Monomoy and Nomans Land Island NWRs. The list of issues came out of the 1999 scoping meetings and was updated in 2004 by talking to a range of stakeholders. The purpose of the upcoming meetings is for the Service to listen to you. We believe that we have a good understanding of the issues that are ahead of us....but we want to be sure. We will post our lists of issues for each of the refuges on our website

<http://monomoy.fws.gov/plan.html>.

The meetings will provide an opportunity for input into the list of issues that we need to address, as well as provide information that may be available to us in formulating the plan.

## Public Meetings!

We will host public scoping meetings on April 5 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Eldredge Library and from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Chatham High School Cafeteria.

We will also host meetings at the Community Center in Chilmark on April 6 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

In addition, we will hold a meeting at the Town Hall in Sudbury on April 7 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The meetings will include a brief presentation followed by small working groups; we will finish with an opportunity to ask questions about the CCP process and schedule. Come help shape the future of your national wildlife refuges!

## Contact Information

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## The Consensus Building Institute

The Service has contracted a non-profit, independent, non-partisan facilitator, the Consensus Building Group, Inc. (CBI), to reach out to groups of stakeholders that the decisions in the CCP likely will affect, and to advise us on the best methods for gathering feedback from all of our stakeholders and providing information about the CCP to the public.

CBI brings great expertise to natural resources facilitation, and we are excited to have them on board. CBI has worked for the National Park Service on Fire Island National Seashore on Long Island, and for the Massachusetts Military Reservation in Bourne, Sandwich, Falmouth, and Mashpee. CBI interviewed a range of stakeholders to help start the rescoping in late 2004. A summary of their findings is available at <http://monomoy.fws.gov/cbi.htm>

## CCPs for other refuges

Three other refuges from the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex recently underwent the CCP process: Assabet River, Great Meadows, and Oxbow. We released their CCPs to the public on January 10, 2005. You can view or download their plans at <http://library.fws.gov/ccps.htm>.

## About the Refuges

### *Monomoy NWR*

Monomoy NWR is located at the “elbow” of Cape Cod and contains 7,604 acres in a combination of land and open water. Monomoy consists of an assembly of barrier islands that includes some of New England’s last remaining wild seacoast. It is a dynamic, wilderness

## Photo Contest! Photographers wanted!!

A photograph taken by YOU could grace the cover of the draft and final CCPs. Photographs must be of the landscape or of the wildlife known to inhabit or visit Monomoy or Nomans Land Island refuge. We will use additional photos throughout the documents, as well as on their covers. This spring, we will post more information on our website, <http://monomoy.fws.gov/>

system of ocean, intertidal flats, salt and freshwater marshes, dunes and freshwater ponds, provides vital habitat for a vast array of diverse species. With the exception of approximately 300 acres, all of the land area is a designated Federal Wilderness Area.

In addition to the nesting birds that use Monomoy (outlined below), the refuge is an important site for migratory shorebirds, as well as the largest haul-out site in Massachusetts for gray seals.

## The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

### *2004 Nesting Season Summary*

The diverse species nesting on the refuge included 27 pairs of federal-listed threatened piping plovers; 10,299 pairs of common terns (Monomoy NWR hosts half of the tern population in Massachusetts and is the largest common tern colony on the Atlantic coast); 25 pairs of federal-listed endangered roseate terns; 1,322 pairs of laughing gulls; 200 pairs of black-crowned night-herons; 69 pairs of snowy egret; 5 pairs of great egret and 1 pair

of glossy ibis. In addition, six pairs of black skimmer and 34 pairs of American oystercatcher nested on the refuge.

### *Nomans Land Island NWR*

Nomans Land Island NWR is an uninhabited island that contains one of the last relatively untainted island ecosystems with very little evidence of human presence. The 628 acre island is located approximately 3 miles south of Martha’s Vineyard and was transferred to the Service in 1998. It was formerly used as a target range for the U.S. Navy.



Cliffs at Nomans Land Island USFWS Staff photo

During the 2004 field season, our biological staff continued important work on Nomans Land Island with continued assistance from field experts. Work included capturing and banding peregrine falcons, mapping and managing invasive species. Biological monitoring efforts included breeding bird surveys, marshbird surveys, lichen surveys, and algae surveys.

## Opportunities for input throughout the process!

We will be coming back to the public and providing opportunities for input throughout the CCP process.

Tentative milestones and times for input (to be adjusted as we move through the process):

As we develop Goals & Objectives for the refuges – Summer/Fall 2005

To gather ideas about strategies to reach our Goals & Objectives –Spring 2006

When we have developed a draft CCP – Winter 2006