



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# **Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge**

*Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan  
and Environmental Impact Statement*

*Volume 1—Chapters 1 through 6  
including Bibliography, Acronyms, and Glossary*

*October 2015*



*Front and back covers:*

*Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge*  
Kate Iaquinto/USFWS

*Insets:*

*Northeastern beach tiger beetle*  
USFWS

*American oystercatcher*  
Kaiti Titherington/USFWS

*Roseate tern (bottom right)*  
Kirk Rogers/USFWS

*Piping plover (bottom center)*  
Gene Niemien/USFWS

*Horseshoe crab (bottom left)*  
Gregory Breese/USFWS



*This blue goose, designed by  
J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become  
the symbol of the National Wildlife  
Refuge System.*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of over 150 million acres including over 560 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. The Service also operates 70 national fish hatcheries and over 80 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign 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 wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) provide long-term guidance for management decisions on a refuge and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes. CCPs also identify the Service's best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. CCPs do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

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### **Vision Statement**

Extending from the elbow of Cape Cod, Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge consists of an assembly of barrier beaches that includes some of New England's last remaining wild seacoast. This dynamic, wilderness system of ocean, intertidal flats, salt and freshwater marshes, dunes and freshwater ponds, provides vital habitat for a vast array of diverse species. Monomoy NWR is world-renowned for its range of seasonal wildlife inhabitants. Seabirds, waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, land birds, horseshoe crabs, and seals rely upon the refuge for survival during various times of the year. Given the vital role that these lands and waters play in the survival of so many endangered, threatened, and special species, wildlife conservation and management will always be our first priority at Monomoy NWR.

The unique area that is Cape Cod allows us to reach large numbers of visitors from all over the world. Visitors will learn about the rich history of the refuge, experience unique recreational opportunities, view wildlife in a natural setting, and learn about the positive and negative impacts of human interactions with the refuge. Visitors will understand and appreciate how we manage the refuge, its habitats, and wildlife species. We will ensure that the number of visitors on the refuge is appropriate so as not to detract from a rich wilderness and wildlife experience.

As a regional and national role model, the refuge will provide scientific and technical leadership for wildlife and resource management that is adaptable to changing conditions. Talented, knowledgeable staff will continue to develop and foster partnerships with local, regional, national, and international organizations to assist in the management of Monomoy NWR and inform the conservation community of the work that we do. Monomoy NWR will continue to play a crucial role in the National Wildlife Refuge System by protecting this critical nesting, feeding, and resting area for migratory birds along the Atlantic Coast.





## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

## *Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*

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### Summary

**Type of Action:** Administrative—Development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan

**Lead Agency:** U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

**Location:** Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge  
Chatham, Massachusetts

**Administrative Headquarters:** Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
Sudbury, Massachusetts

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This final comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and environmental impact statement (EIS) analyzes three alternatives for managing the 7,921-acre Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (NWR, refuge) over the next 15 years. This document also contains 12 appendixes that provide additional information supporting our analyses. Following is a brief overview of each alternative:

**Alternative A:** Current Management—Alternative A satisfies the National Environmental Policy Act requirement of a “no-action” alternative, which we define as “continuing current management.” It describes our existing management priorities and activities for Monomoy NWR, and serves as a baseline for comparing and contrasting alternatives B and C.

**Alternative B:** Enhanced Management of Habitat and Public Uses (Service-preferred Alternative)—Alternative B represents an extension and progression of all areas of refuge management. Under alternative B, new biological program activities would be initiated. Special emphasis would be placed on obtaining baseline data of wildlife populations and habitat conditions, or filling in information gaps as needed. The new information would be used to develop the detailed step-down plans proposed under this CCP. Wildlife population and

habitat monitoring surveys and inventories would be continued on an on-going basis to provide the data needed to evaluate the effectiveness of refuge programs and practices, and to adapt management as warranted to achieve long-range refuge goals and objectives.

Under alternative B, new compatible wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities would be provided consistent with wilderness designation. Emphasis would be placed on providing enhanced, but sustainable, opportunities for all six priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses defined in the Administration Act. Many existing refuge uses would continue and a few new uses are proposed. Also, some uses currently occurring on the refuge would be curtailed. All uses would be managed to preserve wilderness character in the Monomoy Wilderness Area. Staffing would be modestly increased to accommodate new programs and activities, and proposed new visitor contact facilities would provide better access to information and support quality educational and interpretive programs.

**Alternative C: Natural Processes**—Alternative C proposes less intensive management on all refuge lands. It would be guided by a philosophy of allowing natural processes and succession of habitats to progress, consistent with preserving wilderness character, and to the extent that it does not compromise refuge purposes and goals. Generally, wildlife and habitat management, and inventories and monitoring efforts, would be reduced from those planned under alternative A. We would manage the refuge visitor services program with an emphasis on providing opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation that uses primitive tools and non-motorized equipment, provides solitude, and increases emphasis on non-motorized access to the Monomoy Wilderness Area.

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