

# Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

## *Release of the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan*

### **Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan is Now Available!**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, we, our) is pleased to announce the release of the final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the 7,921-acre Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (Monomoy NWR, refuge) in Chatham, Massachusetts. This CCP represents our 15-year management plan for the refuge. The plan furthers the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System); provides direction to achieve the refuge's purposes, vision, and goals; protects the values and character of the Monomoy Wilderness Area; and, contributes to the goals of State and regional conservation plans. Implementing the plan will help achieve the refuge's important role in conserving and managing wildlife and wilderness resources in coastal New England.

### **How to Access the Final Plan**

You may view or download the final CCP from our website at: [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Monomoy/what\\_we\\_do/conservation.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Monomoy/what_we_do/conservation.html). You may also request a printed copy or CD-ROM version by contacting refuge staff (see Contact Information below).

### **Public Comments on the Draft and Final Plans**

We released both a draft and a final CCP and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) for public review and comment. The draft plan was released



*Sunset over Monomoy Light Station on South Monomoy Island*

Ravin Thomasson

for a six-month comment period from April 10 to October 10, 2014. We heard from over 290 commenters. Based on this public input, and additional environmental review, important changes and clarifications were made to the Service's preferred management alternative (Alternative B) in the final CCP/EIS to account for new information and to best meet the refuge's purposes under law. Appendix K in the final CCP/EIS includes our response to public comments and highlights the changes we made. The final CCP/EIS was also released for review for 37 days, from October 30 to December 7, 2015. Thirty-four commenters responded during this time. We thank everyone who took the time to share their thoughts and opinions with us.

### **Final Plan Decision**

Our regional director selected alternative B, the Service-preferred alternative from the final CCP/EIS, for implementation. The final CCP includes further clarifications in response to public comments received during the final review period. The clarifications are summarized in Appendix N, "Record of Decision" in the final CCP.

Alternative B was selected for several reasons. First, we believe it best achieves the refuge's purposes and goals, contributes to the Refuge System mission, and makes a significant contribution to conserving wildlife and wilderness resources in coastal New England. We also believe this alternative most effectively addresses the issues and concerns raised during the planning process by State agencies, the town of Chatham (Town), local residents, and other stakeholders. The full basis and rationale for our decision is documented in the Record of Decision.

### **Highlights of the Final Plan**

Here is a brief summary of our planned management for Monomoy NWR. For more detailed information, please refer to the final CCP.

### **Habitat and Population Management**

- We will take a more active role in habitat and species management both on and off the refuge, and increase collaborations with State agencies and other conservation partners.
- Our highest priority will be the protection of dynamic coastal beach and dune systems and the focal



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*Birdwatching on Monomoy NWR*

### Refuge Goals

**Goal 1:** Perpetuate the biological integrity and diversity of coastal habitats to sustain native wildlife and plant communities, including species of conservation concern.

**Goal 2:** Provide the public with wildlife-dependent recreational, interpretive, and environmental educational opportunities to enhance awareness and appreciation of refuge resources and to promote stewardship of the wildlife and habitats of Monomoy NWR.

**Goal 3:** Communicate and collaborate with local communities, Federal and State agencies, and conservation organizations to promote natural resource conservation and support the goals of the refuge and the mission of the Service.

**Goal 4:** Ensure that the spirit and character of the Monomoy Wilderness are preserved.

**Goal 5:** Protect cultural resources that exist on the refuge.

**Goal 6:** Develop and maintain a diverse and inclusive workplace with sufficient resources, including infrastructure and equipment, to work productively toward fulfilling the refuge mission.



*Gulls at Monomoy NWR*

species that rely on them for critical nesting, resting, foraging, and staging habitat.

- We will continue to annually identify and symbolically fence important wildlife habitat, including sensitive beaches and dunes used by nesting and migrating birds and other wildlife, to minimize adverse impacts from public use.
- We will increase our inventory and monitoring efforts. We will use this information to adapt management to be more effective and proactive in protecting resources and allowing public uses to the extent compatible.

### Visitor Services

- We will increase opportunities for priority wildlife-dependent public uses, especially improving programs or infrastructure for environmental education, interpretation, and nature photography.
- We will continue to allow recreational fishing and hand-harvest of subterranean clams following Town, State, and refuge regulations, under stipulations to ensure compatibility.
- Horseshoe crab and mussel harvesting will be prohibited, as will salting for razor and sea clams above MLW. Also, no mechanized equipment may be used for harvest or transport of any fisheries above MLW in the refuge wilderness area.
- Other fisheries regulated by other Federal or State agencies, and/or the Town, can occur with no special regulation or oversight from the Service at this time.
- We will initiate additional planning to assess our proposal to establish a waterfowl hunt program.

- We will institute a concession to provide boat transportation to the Monomoy Islands.
- We will implement a fee and time limit for parking at refuge headquarters from June 1 to Sept. 15 to facilitate visitor turnover during peak season.

### Community Relationships

- We will continue to support our 2015 memorandum of understanding with the Town, which establishes an administrative management boundary along Nauset/South Beach.
- We will establish annual meetings, at a minimum, with the State and Town to discuss fishing and shellfishing programs and opportunities.
- We will enhance local community outreach and partnerships, continue to work with and support our Friends group, and strive to improve relationships with our neighbors in the Cape Cod and Islands region.

### Wilderness Management

- We will continue managing Monomoy Wilderness Area to maintain wilderness values and character.
- We will manage the two wilderness exclusion areas, Inward Point and Powder Hole, so as not to diminish their future eligibility as designated wilderness.

### Implementing the Plan

We will begin implementing projects outlined in the CCP as soon as funding and staffing allows. To successfully accomplish those projects and achieve our vision and goals, it is critical that we continue to maintain our invaluable partnerships, as well as develop new ones. We encourage you to stay involved during the plan's implementation.



*Ruddy turnstone with horseshoe crab*

**Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge 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.*

**Contact Information**

To learn more about the refuge, please visit our website at: <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Monomoy/>.

Or, contact us at the refuge office:  
**Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge**  
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 Chatham, MA 02633  
 Office: 508/945 0594  
 Fax: 508/945 9559  
 Email: r5rw\_mnwr@fws.gov

**Federal Relay Service for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing**  
 Phone: 1 800/877 8339

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Carolina Linder/USFWS

*Nesting Common tern*



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*Area closure sign to protect nesting birds*



Peter Paton

*Tagging an American oystercatcher to track its movements*



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*South Monomoy Island hosts one of the largest common tern breeding colonies on the East Coast*

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