

Planning Update

Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge Complex Fall 2001

Planning Process

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is in the midst of a planning project for Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The resulting document will be a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) for the Refuge Complex. The CCP/EIS will include our strategy for protecting the wildlife habitat values of Maine's coast, including coastal seabird nesting islands.

We will complete a draft CCP/EIS in 2002. Until then, we will be developing management alternatives, and comparing the environmental benefits and consequences of each. We will also complete compatibility determinations and a Land Protection Plan.

Compatibility determinations ensure that refuge uses do not interfere with refuge purposes or the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. We will write them for each use allowed under the Service's Proposed Action.

The Land Protection Plan will outline our preferred strategy for protecting 191 Maine coastal islands that are currently lacking protection for nesting seabirds, wading birds, and bald eagles.

Highlights of our draft alternatives are at the end of this update.

Newly Acquired Islands

The Service recently acquired Schoppee and Little Marshall islands. With the addition of these islands, the Refuge Complex now encompasses 40 islands along the coast of Maine.

Both islands were acquired to protect eagle nesting areas and are made up of predominantly spruce/fir forest habitat. Schoppee is a 17.8-acre island in the town of Roque Bluffs, Washington County. Little Marshall is a 14-acre island in the town of Swans Island, Hancock County.



Old Man Island. *USFWS Photo.*

Wilderness Review

None of the Refuge Complex is federally designated as wilderness. We conducted a wilderness inventory of all refuge lands as part of this planning process. Sixteen refuge islands meet the basic criteria for wilderness and could be managed as such without limiting our ability to meet other objectives. We will recommend these 16 islands for wilderness designation under our Proposed Action.

We will conduct a wilderness review of newly acquired refuge units in conjunction with the next CCP in approximately 15 years.

Economic Analysis

Charles Colgan, Professor of Public Policy and Management at the University of Southern Maine, will complete an economic analysis for the CCP/EIS. His analysis will cover property tax impacts of refuge land ownership and management, and the economics of seabird viewing on refuge islands.

Partnerships

The Refuge Complex maintains strong partnerships with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, the National Audubon Society, the Gulf of Maine Program (USFWS), the Maine Island Trail Association, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and other land trusts. These partners are vital to the success of our land acquisition, environmental education, and biological programs.

Coastal Education Center

We are still searching for a suitable site for a Coastal Education Center, which would anchor our public use and outreach programs. We began planning for the Center with information-gathering and vision-setting meetings held with partners this past spring. We will continue planning this summer and formalize our proposals by December. The facility will be a resource for visitors to Maine and members of the local community.

Vision and Goals

Refuge Complex Vision

A collection of offshore nesting islands and mainland units, Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge Complex spans 150 miles of the Maine coast and supports diverse biological communities. These communities contain an impressive assemblage of native fish, wildlife, and plant species, including seabirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, migratory songbirds, raptors, amphibians, reptiles, and rare and declining plants.

We will continue to actively protect, restore, and manage coastal islands, intertidal estuaries, freshwater wetlands, maritime forests, and open fields. Our land acquisition efforts will ensure these biological communities are sustained in perpetuity. With the help of our conservation partners, we will apply sound scientific principles to maintain the long-term health and integrity of these vital areas.

We will enhance stewardship of coastal resources by providing compatible, traditional and priority public uses. A new, centrally located Refuge Office and Coastal Education Center will encourage new partnerships and allow our outreach and environmental education programs to expand. The Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge Complex will advance wildlife conservation along the coast of Maine and promote the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Refuge Complex Goals

We have revised the goals for the Refuge Complex to better organize our objectives and strategies.

Goal 1: Perpetuate the biological diversity and integrity of upland cover types on the Refuge Complex's mainland coast to sustain high quality habitat for migratory birds.

Goal 2: Maintain high quality wetland habitat on the Refuge Complex's mainland coast, primarily to benefit migratory birds of high conservation priority, while also supporting other native, wetland-dependent species of concern.

Goal 3: Perpetuate the biological diversity and integrity of upland cover types on the Refuge Complex's coastal islands to sustain high quality habitat for nesting bald eagles and migratory songbirds and raptors, and to protect rare plant sites.

Goal 4: Protect the high quality wetland habitats on the Refuge Complex's coastal islands to benefit nesting and migrating shorebirds and waterfowl.

Goal 5: Protect and restore nesting seabird populations on the Refuge Complex's coastal islands to contribute to regional and international seabird conservation goals.

Goal 6: Promote enjoyment and stewardship of coastal Maine wildlife and their habitats by providing priority, wildlife-dependent recreational and educational opportunities.

Goal 7: Protect the integrity of coastal Maine wildlife habitats through an active land protection program.

Goal 8: Communicate and collaborate with local communities, federal, state and local representatives, and other organizations throughout coastal Maine to further the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Hunt Plan

Under our recently approved hunt plan, parts of the Refuge Complex will be open to hunting for migratory game birds and waterfowl, and small and big game in fall 2001.

Highlights of the Draft Alternatives

The following table shows how our alternatives will address some of the key issues identified by the planning team and the public. Alternative A is the "No Action" alternative, which represents our current management activities. Alternative B is the "Service's Proposed Alternative," representing our preferred actions and strategies.

The draft CCP/EIS will address more issues than we have included here. The plan will fully develop the five alternatives, identifying objectives, actions, and strategies for meeting each of our goals. We will also analyze the environmental consequences of each alternative.

Direct questions and comments to:

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Highlights of the Draft Alternatives

Issue	Alternative A <i>Current Management</i>	Alternative B <i>The Service's Proposed Alternative</i>	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
<i>How will we protect the coastal nesting islands, given the finite number of islands suitable for seabird, wading bird, and bald eagle nesting?</i>	<p>40 islands are currently managed by the Service; 37 in fee title, 2 in conservation easement, and 1 under a Memorandum of Understanding</p> <p>Continue coordination with the Service's Gulf of Maine Program Office (GOMP) to identify nationally significant coastal nesting islands in need of long-term protection (currently 191 identified)</p>	<p>By 2017, acquire up to 90 additional nationally significant islands in need of long-term protection.</p> <p>This alternative assumes that the remaining 101 nationally significant islands will be protected by our conservation partners.</p>	<p>No additional island acquisition by the Service; the number of Service-owned islands would remain at 40.</p> <p>This alternative assumes nationally significant islands are best served by conservation partner ownership. The Service, however, would continue to identify important islands needing protection and assist partners in seeking funding options.</p>	<p>Acquire all 191 nationally significant islands in need of long term protection.</p> <p>This alternative assumes nationally significant islands are best served by Service ownership and assumes a significant increase in funding and staffing. Staff involvement in outreach to island owners would dramatically increase.</p>	Same as Alternative C.
<i>How will we affect public access to coastal nesting islands?</i>	<p>Non-nesting islands remain open year round for day use, assuming no sensitive areas, species or habitats of concern are present. Three islands are currently open year round for day use public access: Cross, Scotch, and Bois Bubert islands. A portion of Halifax Island is open for day use; most is closed to protect botanical resources.</p> <p>Continue seasonal closures on all seabird nesting islands: April 1 to August 31.</p> <p>Continue seasonal closure at active bald eagle nesting sites: February 15 to August 31.</p> <p>Continue seasonal closures at historical eagle nesting sites from Feb. 15 to May 1 to encourage re-nesting. On May 1 each year, determine whether eagle activity warrants an extended closure.</p> <p>Seal Island is closed year round due to unexploded ordnance.</p> <p>Access to newly acquired refuge lands will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>In addition to Alternative A:</p> <p>By 2003, post interpretive and regulatory signs on all refuge islands.</p> <p>By 2003, hire Park Ranger to patrol refuge islands.</p> <p>By 2004, implement Leave No Trace program; develop and implement monitoring protocols.</p> <p>By 2005, establish an Island Stewardship program on 5 refuge islands in cooperation with Maine Islands Trail Association (MITA) and other conservation partners.</p>	Same as Alternative B	<p>Evaluate each refuge island separately to determine the most effective public access closure period for protecting the species nesting there. Closure periods may extend outside of the currently used Feb. 15 to August 31 dates, if appropriate.</p> <p>This approach necessitates an extensive signage program (by 2007), intensive outreach and partnership coordination effort, and monitoring of public use (by 2006) to ensure effective implementation.</p> <p>Implement additional island closures as necessary to protect sensitive areas (vegetation or other species or habitats of management concern).</p>	<p>By 2005, close all refuge islands to public access year round. Islands would be managed as sanctuaries, where human intervention and presence are minimized.</p> <p>The only public access would be through staff-led programs or organized under special use permits.</p>

Highlights of the Draft Alternatives

Issue	Alternative A <i>Current Management</i>	Alternative B <i>The Service's Proposed Alternative</i>	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
<i>How will we manage island habitats to protect nesting seabirds?</i>	<p>Manage 6 existing seabird restoration projects in cooperation with Audubon Society, including bird censuses, vegetation management, lethal and non-lethal predator management, and controlling access to minimize disturbance.</p> <p>Vegetation management to benefit nesting seabirds is occurring on 3 refuge islands and includes use of mechanical, chemical, fencing, and burning strategies.</p>	<p>In addition to Alternative A:</p> <p>By 2003, complete a Refuge Complex Habitat Management Plan which will detail strategies on achieving high quality seabird nesting habitat. Utilize sheep grazing as a vegetation management tool, in addition to mechanical, chemical, burning and fencing strategies.</p> <p>By 2004, with development of Refuge Complex Inventory and Monitoring Plan, establish protocol to evaluate not only the number of seabirds responding to habitat restoration, but also the overall species composition and distribution. Adapt management to monitoring results.</p> <p>By 2015, establish 6 new seabird restoration projects, in cooperation with partners, and enhance existing 6 seabird restoration sites (12 sites total). The objective with new restoration sites is to maintain or increase species diversity at individual sites, increase productivity and fledging rates, and improve the overall distribution of nesting seabirds in the Gulf of Maine.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B, except:</p> <p>By 2005, initiate 2 new seabird restoration projects (8 sites total) on existing refuge islands, in cooperation with partners. Objectives for these 2 new seabird sites are the same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B, except:</p> <p>By 2015, initiate 12 new seabird restoration projects (18 sites total), involving a significantly increased partnership effort.</p> <p>Develop individual, island-specific Habitat Management Plans, establishing population and habitat management goals and objectives for not only seabirds, but other target species and habitats as well.</p>	<p>By 2003, eliminate herbicide use, sheep grazing, mowing, and burning.</p> <p>By 2003, complete a Refuge Complex Habitat Management Plan, emphasizing a "custodial," low-intervention management approach.</p> <p>By 2005, decrease intensity of management for the 6 existing seabird restoration projects. Conduct primarily non-lethal gull control for seabird nesting site protection.</p>
<i>How will we manage sheep grazing on refuge lands?</i>	<p>Work with landowners to ensure sheep grazing on refuge lands (Metinic and Little Nash islands; where the Service only owns portions of the islands) is not adversely affecting nesting seabirds.</p> <p>Monitor vegetation plots in sheep exclosures, comparing grazed vs. ungrazed areas and effects on nesting habitat quality.</p> <p>Use exclosure fencing, where appropriate, to protect active seabird nesting colonies from disturbance and trampling by sheep, and to provide cover for nesting. Evaluate effectiveness of fencing.</p>	<p>In addition to Alternative A:</p> <p>By 2003, complete special use permit with sheep owners on Metinic and Little Nash islands. Objective would be to use sheep to manage vegetation at seabird nesting sites. Experiment with timing and intensity of grazing, and fencing. An adaptive management approach is necessary due to the unique situation (island habitat, tradition of grazing, and shared ownership of the island).</p> <p>By 2003, develop Refuge Complex Habitat Management Plan incorporating objectives and strategies for vegetation management, including sheep grazing.</p> <p>By 2004, with development of the Refuge Complex Inventory and Monitoring Plan, establish monitoring and evaluation protocol to determine effects of grazing on nesting seabirds, soils, and plant species composition, density, and structure. Establish thresholds of acceptable change to resources.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>Discontinue sheep grazing on Refuge land by 2003.</p>

Highlights of the Draft Alternatives

Issue	Alternative A <i>Current Management</i>	Alternative B <i>The Service's Proposed Alternative</i>	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
<i>How will we build partnerships to help achieve our goals, in particular, protecting coastal wildlife habitats and supporting priority wildlife-dependent uses?</i>	<p>Maintain strong island protection partnership with the Service's Gulf of Maine Program (GOMP), Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), local land trusts, and private landowners.</p> <p>Coordinate with interagency Maine Wetlands Coalition to identify priority mainland coastal wetlands for protection through Service acquisition and restoration.</p> <p>Maintain environmental education partnerships with Chewonki Foundation, Damariscotta River Association, National Audubon Society, and Hurricane Island Outward Bound School.</p> <p>Establish a Refuge Complex Friends group.</p> <p>Maintain Island Stewardship Program with Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) on 2 islands.</p>	<p>In addition to Alternative A:</p> <p>Maintain, or establish new, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with universities and colleges, the National Park Service (NPS), National Audubon Society, Humboldt Research Station, MDIFW, other Service programs, and other partners to cooperatively accomplish biological and human dimensions monitoring, inventorying, and research needs.</p> <p>By 2003, conduct regular briefings with Congressional offices, including annual trips to Capitol Hill.</p> <p>By 2005, in cooperation with MITA or other partners, establish an Island Stewardship Program on 5 new refuge islands.</p> <p>By 2005, expand the Refuge Complex Friends group by adding a second chapter.</p> <p>By 2007, create an internship program using college students to work at the Coastal Education Center or in field programs for a semester.</p> <p>By 2007, hire a summer intern to provide interpretation on tour boats visiting the refuge. Produce refuge interpretive panels to be displayed in tour boat offices or on boats.</p> <p>By 2008, establish formal relationship (MOA or MOU) with Friends of Nash Island Lighthouse. Also establish a Friends Group for lighthouses on Two Bush, Matinicus Rock, Egg Rock, and Libby islands.</p>	Same as Alternative B.	<p>In addition to Alternative B:</p> <p>By 2008, hire enough summer interns to provide interpretation for all seabird tour boat operations out of Bar Harbor.</p> <p>By 2008, expand the Refuge Complex Friends group by adding a third chapter.</p>	<p>Continue to coordinate with interagency Maine Wetlands Coalition to establish priority wetlands for protection through Service acquisition and restoration.</p> <p>As opportunities arise, establish MOUs with local universities and colleges to cooperate in baseline inventories and monitoring.</p>

Highlights of the Draft Alternatives

Issue	Alternative A, <i>Current Management</i>	Alternative B, <i>The Service's Proposed Alternative</i>	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
<i>How will we curtail inappropriate, non-wildlife dependent activities on refuge lands?</i>	<p>Develop an active Friends group to assist with education and outreach in the community.</p> <p>Post new refuge units with boundary signs as soon as possible after acquisition. Place refuge identification signs, with information about permitted or prohibited uses, at strategic access points on mainland and island units.</p> <p>Monitor refuge lands with assistance from land trust partners, ferry operators, adjacent landowners and volunteers.</p> <p>Hire seasonal biological technician on Petit Manan Point Division to maintain a presence there.</p> <p>Partner with other law enforcement (LE) agencies such as Maine Marine Resources Department, MDIFW-Warden Service, and Maine State Police.</p> <p>Continue to maintain staff credentials in law enforcement, a collateral duty for 2 staff members.</p> <p>Maintain informational kiosk at Petit Manan Point Division, and continue to post current regulations.</p> <p>Install new informational kiosks at refuge offices in Rockport and Milbridge, and a parking area at the Gouldsboro Bay Division.</p>	<p>In addition to Alternative A:</p> <p>By 2003, install refuge boundary signs at secondary access point to Gouldsboro Bay Division.</p> <p>By 2005, hire full time Park Ranger, to conduct educational and outreach programs and to patrol islands and mainland units during summer and fall months.</p> <p>By 2005, purchase supplemental, automated phone service for both refuge offices to announce current refuge regulations, island openings/closings and upcoming events.</p> <p>By 2006, partner with seabird tour boats and/or Friends group in seeking challenge grant that would fund an on-board refuge interpreter and a refuge display.</p> <p>Install gates at Sawyers Marsh Division access points.</p> <p>By 2005, replace all existing refuge island identification signs with improved design, including the new closure dates.</p>	Same as Alternative B.	<p>In addition to Alternative B:</p> <p>By 2002, require groups of 6 or more to obtain a special use permit prior to visiting islands (day use).</p> <p>By 2005, hire 2 full time Park Rangers for increased LE patrols.</p> <p>By 2005, obtain AM radio frequency for visitors to tune in for current refuge information (e.g., regulations, openings/closings, events, etc.).</p> <p>By 2005, pursue agreement with Town of Gouldsboro to allow the installation of gates at either end of Old County Road and limit vehicle use to emergency vehicles and private abutters only.</p>	<p>Conduct outreach and education (news releases and news columns).</p> <p>Monitor refuge lands with assistance from land trust partners, ferry operators, adjacent landowners, and volunteers.</p> <p>Partner with other LE agencies such as Maine Marine Resources Division, MDIFW-Warden Service, and Maine State Police.</p> <p>LE would be a collateral duty for some staff members.</p> <p>By 2005, hire one Refuge Law Enforcement Officer.</p>

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Issue	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
	<i>Current Management</i>	<i>The Service's Proposed Alternative</i>			
<p><i>How will we manage compatible, traditional or non-priority public uses on refuge lands?</i></p>	<p>Require special use permits for all "for-profit" island users.</p> <p>Allow dog walking on leash, on designated refuge mainland trails; dogs are not allowed on refuge islands.</p> <p>Continue to allow the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) to administer camping opportunities on Hailfax and Bois Bubert islands. Coordinate with MITA to monitor number of users and impacts.</p> <p>Allow berry picking by hand (no rakes) for personal use on Petit Manan Point Division.</p> <p>Allow trapping by licensed trappers, for management purposes only.</p>	<p>With the exception of the following, implement the same as Alternative A:</p> <p>By 2003, phase-out camping on refuge islands. Islands acquired in the future would also be closed to camping.</p> <p>By 2005, establish Island Stewardship Program with MITA or other partners on at least 5 more islands to conduct resource monitoring and make contacts with day users.</p> <p>Evaluate impacts on Service trust species from intertidal resource harvesting (e.g., clam digging, periwinkling, etc.)</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>Require special use permits for all "for-profit" island users.</p> <p>Allow dog walking on leash, on designated refuge mainland trails; dogs are not allowed on refuge islands.</p> <p>Issue special use permits for camping on Bois Bubert and Halifax islands. Monitor number of users and impacts.</p> <p>Allow berry picking by hand (no rakes) for personal use on Petit Manan Point Division.</p> <p>Conduct trapping using refuge staff or licensed trappers for management purposes only.</p>	<p>By 2005, close all refuge islands to public use year-round.</p>
<p><i>(These are established or existing uses that are not a priority, but may be compatible)</i></p>					
<p><i>How will we provide and maintain high quality programs for wildlife observation and photography?</i></p>	<p>Mainland and island units are open, or seasonally open, to wildlife observation and photography.</p> <p>Maintain two hiking trails on Petit Manan Point Division open to day use year round: Hollingsworth Memorial and Birch Point trails.</p> <p>Conduct occasional meetings with tour boat operators visiting Cross, Egg Rock, and Petit Manan islands. Provide weekly updates on the status of nesting birds on Petit Manan Island to companies visiting the island.</p> <p>Allow commercial photographers to access closed areas under special use permit.</p> <p>Use volunteers, interns, and electronic trail counters to intermittently monitor trail and road usage on Petit Manan Point Division to determine level of use, timing of use, and capacity.</p>	<p>In addition to Alternative A:</p> <p>By 2002, only allow commercial photographers to access closed areas under a special use permit when there is a direct benefit to the Service.</p> <p>By 2003, establish a new trail and parking area on the Gouldsbouro Bay Division.</p> <p>By 2003, annually, provide information about the refuge. to all tour boat operators who take the public to refuge islands.</p> <p>By 2004, with development of Refuge Inventory and Monitoring Plan, establish strategies to begin to annually evaluate the "quality" of these programs and to establish thresholds for resource impacts.</p> <p>By 2008, construct one barrier-free observation platform and photo blind on a mainland division.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>By 2005, evaluate compatibility of opening Petit Manan Island and other select refuge islands to photo blind tours.</p> <p>By 2006, place web cameras on one or more seabird nesting islands.</p> <p>By 2008, construct two additional photoblinds on mainland division(s).</p>	<p>Same as Alternative A, except that islands would be closed to public access by 2005.</p> <p>Wildlife observation and photography opportunities on refuge islands would be staff-led or organized under special use permits.</p>

Highlights of the Draft Alternatives

Issue	Alternative A	Alternative B,	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
	<i>Current Management</i>	<i>The Service's Proposed Alternative</i>			
<i>How will we provide and maintain high quality environmental education and interpretation programs?</i>	<p>Maintain existing kiosks on Petit Manan Point Division and trail interpretation signs on the Hollingsworth Memorial Trail.</p> <p>Conduct 2 -to-3 staff- and volunteer-led interpretive programs on refuge and partner lands.</p> <p>Meet annually with Bar Harbor-based seabird tour boat operators, ensuring the information they distribute is accurate; provide weekly updates of seabird activities during nesting season.</p> <p>Hire an interpretive summer intern (shared with the biological program) for the Petit Manan Point Division.</p> <p>Recruit and train volunteers to run interpretive and environmental education programs</p> <p>Develop interpretive signs for Halifax Island focusing on the rare plant community there.</p> <p>Support teacher-led, on-site environmental education, providing greeting or introduction by refuge staff or volunteers when requested.</p> <p>Cooperate with the National Audubon Society and Damariscotta River Association to develop classroom environmental education programs and ensure the Service's messages are shared.</p> <p>Continue special use permit with Humboldt Research Station, which includes an outdoor laboratory and classroom.</p> <p>Maintain partnerships with Chewonki Foundation, Hurricane Island Outward Bound school, and local schools to conduct field-based environmental education programs.</p>	<p>In addition to Alternative A:</p> <p>By 2003, develop a Refuge Complex Visitor Services Plan.</p> <p>By 2003, create an interpretive trail at the Gouldsboro Bay Division. Continue to pursue parking lot options.</p> <p>By 2004, conduct environmental education events with local schools in conjunction with International Migratory Bird Day and National Wildlife Refuge Week.</p> <p>By 2004, with development of Inventory and Monitoring Plan, establish protocol to monitor and evaluate the quality of the environmental interpretation and education programs.</p> <p>By 2004, produce refuge interpretive panels for at least one tour boat operator's office and boats.</p> <p>By 2005, hire 3 additional outdoor recreation planners and at least two summer interns to implement programs.</p> <p>By 2005, hold at least one teacher workshop annually in the Milbridge area.</p> <p>By 2005, enhance interpretation on the Birch Point Trail, Petit Manan Point Division, by developing at least one overlook with interpretive panels.</p> <p>By 2005, construct two trail-side interpretive overlooks at the Gouldsboro Bay Division.</p> <p>By 2005, install refuge interpretive panels at 3 coastal roadside rest areas.</p> <p>By 2006, build a Refuge Coastal Education Center in the Rockland area to provide interpretive and environmental education programs.</p> <p>By 2006, establish a partnership with NPS Schoodic Point facility to assist in managing their Learning Facility for research and environmental education.</p> <p>By 2007, hire a summer intern to provide interpretation on the seabird tour boats from Bar Harbor.</p> <p>By 2008, develop a computer-based environmental education program about the refuge and seabird restoration for use in classrooms.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>In addition to Alternative B:</p> <p>By 2006, hire at least 2 summer interns to provide interpretive services on the refuge's mainland divisions and assist with environmental education programs.</p> <p>By 2007, construct a parking lot and interpretive trail with overlook at the Sawyer's Marsh Division.</p> <p>By 2007, install refuge interpretive panels at 3 additional rest areas along the coast and 3 Maine State Tourism Centers.</p> <p>By 2008, hire enough summer interns to provide interpretation for all tour boat operations that visit refuge islands.</p> <p>By 2008, develop a web-based environmental education program whereby students around the world can see puffins in their burrows or a view of the seabird colony from Petit Manan Light. Research data would be posted on the site, and students would be led through lessons using the data.</p>	<p>Maintain existing interpretive infrastructure (trails and kiosks on Petit Manan Point), but there would be no expansion of interpretive opportunities.</p> <p>The Coastal Education Center would not be built, and there would be limited pursuit of partnerships for environmental education.</p> <p>By 2005, post all refuge islands, which would be closed to public use year round.</p>

Highlights of the Draft Alternatives

Issue	Alternative A <i>Current Management</i>	Alternative B <i>The Service's Proposed Alternative</i>	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
<i>How will we provide and maintain high quality hunting and fishing opportunities?</i>	<p>Implement the January 2001 Hunt Plan for the Refuge Complex which includes:</p> <p>Migratory game birds and waterfowl, and small and big game on Sawyer's Marsh Division and Gouldsboro Bay Division.</p> <p>White-tailed deer hunting on Bois Bubert Island.</p> <p>Migratory waterfowl hunting on 22 refuge islands.</p> <p>Refuge lands do not afford any fishing opportunities; surf fishing and shoreline fishing is negligible.</p>	<p>In addition to Alternative A:</p> <p>By 2003, evaluate other opportunities for deer hunting, including on Petit Manan Point.</p> <p>By 2003, develop a Refuge Complex Visitor Services Plan and establish protocols for monitoring effectiveness and quality of hunting program.</p>	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.	No hunting would occur as this alternative imposes strict public use restrictions, and the limited staff could not administer a high quality hunt program.
<i>Which islands will be evaluated for their wilderness potential?</i>	No refuge islands are currently designated as wilderness.	<p>By 2003, recommend 16 islands for wilderness designation.</p> <p>Undertake another Wilderness Review as part of the next Comprehensive Conservation Plan (around 2017).</p>	Same as Alternative B.	<p>By 2003, recommend 16 islands for wilderness designation.</p> <p>Semi-annually, review newly acquired islands for wilderness potential.</p> <p>(note: the Service would potentially acquire up to 191 additional islands under this Alternative)</p>	<p>By 2003, recommend 20 islands for wilderness designation. This alternative assumes that curtailing seabird restoration projects on 4 refuge islands, including associated infrastructure, adding to their wilderness character.</p>