

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR ISLAND-NESTING SEABIRD MANAGEMENT IN MAINE

Prepared by: R. Bradford Allen
November 1993

Problem 1: Criteria for identifying and maintaining seabird, nesting habitat through habitat protection initiatives is not fully developed.

Strategy 1.1: Develop a habitat management system that identifies seabird, nesting islands and incorporates all habitat protection strategies (e.g. acquisition, zoning, NRPA significant wildlife habitats, easements, municipal resource protection zones, landowner agreements, etc.) to meet island-nesting seabird management goals and objectives.

Strategy 1.2: Utilize current coastal island databases to identify all seabird nesting islands.

Strategy 1.3: Determine ownership of all seabird nesting islands.

Strategy 1.4: Identify islands (nesting habitat) needed to achieve goals and objectives.

Strategy 1.5: Identify privately owned islands and develop protection strategies.

Problem 2: Lack of current data on status of seabird populations and their nesting habitats on the coast of Maine and no mechanism in place to make these data available to all appropriate user groups.

Strategy 2.1: Develop standardized survey and census methodology to collect needed data on all seabird species.

Strategy 2.2: Periodically survey islands and census seabirds on the coast of Maine.

Strategy 2.3: Merge the Coastal Island Database (Rbase) with the Seabird Nesting Island Database (SAS) into one SAS dataset.

Strategy 2.4: Update island files and State GIS with latest information, including ownership and management authority.

Strategy 2.5: Make seabird island database available to user groups.

Island-nesting Seabird Problems and Strategies

Strategy 2.6: Exchange seabird data with other seabird conservation agencies.

Problem 3: Currently, no specific goals and objectives exist for island-nesting seabirds other than island-nesting terns.

Strategy 3.1: Prioritize species for assessment and management system development in a timely manner.

Strategy 3.2: Select interim goals and objectives for these priority species until assessments are written.

Strategy 3.3: Identify islands (nesting habitat) needed to achieve interim goals and objectives for these priority species.

Strategy 3.4: Identify privately owned islands and develop protection strategies.

Problem 4: Lack of resources and funding to fully implement management system to address goals and objectives.

Strategy 4.1: Secure adequate funding.

Problem 5: Conflicting goals among island-nesting species may be a problem (e.g. maintaining or increasing gull populations may affect eider, tern, petrel, etc. populations).

Strategy 5.1: Identify the problems and provide justification.

Problem 6: Human disturbances on department owned and/or managed seabird nesting islands remains a problem.

Strategy 6.1: Design and produce an appropriate sign explaining to island visitors the critical nesting period and sensitivity to disturbance of wildlife using the island during that period.

Strategy 6.2: Implement a comprehensive program of posting islands with appropriate signs.

Strategy 6.3: Develop informational and educational brochures and guides that detail the importance and sensitivity of seabird nesting islands and their associated wildlife resources.

Island-nesting Seabird Problems and Strategies

Problem 7: Oil spills could result in losses of habitat, seabirds, and seabird food resources.

Strategy 7.1: Provide seabird data to Habitat and Endangered and Threatened Species Groups for identification of significant seabird habitats.

Strategy 7.2: Develop an oil spill response plan.

Problem 8: Importance of food sources as a population limiting factor for several seabird species is not clearly understood.

Strategy 8.1: Identify major food sources for specific species and the relationship of food resources to the nesting islands.

Strategy 8.2: Determine status and vulnerability of important seabird food resources.