



National Fire Plan

Prescribed Fire Helps Imperiled Seabirds, Protects Historic Structures

Petit Manan refuge initiated a spring prescribed fire program in 2000, and has burned a portion of the island every year since 2002. Its benefits have been obvious: As the overall height of the island's vegetation is significantly reduced to heights preferred by roseate terns, prescribed fire also is used to keep valuable, historic structures safe from the potentially devastating effects of wildfire. The lighthouse keeper's home, light tower, and associated structures all are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The island is one of Maine's offshore "string-of-pearls" dedicated to seabird conservation, is located about three miles south of Petit Manan Point in Steuben and has historically been one of the most important seabird colonies in the Gulf of Maine, as well as home to some significant historic lighthouses.

The Service acquired the island in 1974, and has been managing its seabird colony since 1984. Petit Manan now supports a large mixed colony that includes federally endangered roseate terns, as well as Atlantic puffins, razorbills, and Arctic terns, which are listed as threatened by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The colony also includes common terns, common eiders, laughing gulls, Leach's storm petrels and black guillemots.

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