



# Friends of Maine Seabird Islands

## 2009 Program Highlights

### Friends Play Critical Role in Acquiring Visitor Center



When the Refuge compared alternative visitor center sites in the midcoast, a beautiful building for sale just south of downtown Rockland was the preferred alternative. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cannot usually act fast enough to compete for properties that are on the market, so we stepped in and are acting as intermediaries. We secured a Purchase and Sale agreement to purchase it, and plan to resell it to the Service. Much of the due diligence (title search, contaminants survey, parking engineering, and appraisal) is almost completed and we have found the loans necessary. Although we are still raising money to cover our costs, it looks like the Maine Coastal Islands Discovery Center will be the Refuge's new home.

### Dedication of Richards Homestead

We held a special dedication ceremony to honor Roland Richards, who donated a reserved life estate on his 21-acre property on Old County Road in Rockport, Maine, in July 2008. Richards was motivated to honor his beloved wife's memory by donating the property to a wildlife organization and prevent it from being subdivided. Three of Roland's siblings, as well as FOMSI board members and refuge staff, attended the celebration. We intend to convey the Homestead to the Refuge in the future, and to work with the refuge staff to build an educational kiosk and interpretive trail so that the public may enjoy the natural beauty and sense of peace offered by this special place.



*Roland Richards with Friends President Jane Hopwood*

### Friends Board Receives Mentoring Visit

The National Wildlife Refuge Association kindly provided the board with experts to assist us in strengthening our organization. Darlene Moegerle, President of Friends of Midway Atoll, and Rob Jess, Refuge Manager of Yukon Flats NWR Complex in Alaska, visited for a weekend in November. They discussed many issues and gave us a great deal of help, and continue as our mentors - only a phone call away!

## Third Annual Seabird Adventure Cruise a Great Success!



On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, we chartered the MV Elizabeth Ann out of Port Clyde, and offered a special tour to Eastern Egg Rock narrated by Audubon and Service biologists who also demonstrated many of the “tools of the trade” – nets, bands, etc.

Available tickets sold out and the boat was full despite foggy weather. One hundred lucky folks enjoyed beer, wine and snacks on the trip out, and many got their first glimpses of puffins as many of these birds flew around the island. A highlight of the trip was when the group got to ask questions of one of the interns who has been living on the island for the past three months.

## Friends Support Island Research

This year we purchased a number of “I-buttons temperature loggers” for National Audubon researchers to use in nests on Pond Island. It is hoped that these devices will help researchers detect when nocturnal predators like owls are present and keeping birds off their nests at night.

Pond Island, located in the mouth of the Kennebec River, has been the focus of a tern restoration project which began in 1996. The island now provides important nesting habitat for Common and Arctic Terns, and Common Eiders.



*Common Tern with chick*

## Grant Funds New Tabletop Display

We received a grant from the National Wildlife Refuge Association and are producing a beautiful new display for use at fairs and events. It features a large TV screen displaying pictures of seabirds, flanked by colorful posters about the Refuge and Friends, with seabirds on flags flying above!

### ***Friends of Maine Seabird Islands Mission***

***To support Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge in its efforts to conserve, protect and enhance the rich diversity of coastal habitats, seabirds, and other wildlife.***

### ***Contact Information:***

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*Friends of Maine Seabird Islands is a community-based, non-profit conservation organization with 501(c)(3) tax status from the United States Internal Revenue Service.*