

Nature Trust Celebrates New Protected Lands in the 100 Wild Islands

Halifax, NS (February 3, 2017)—The Nova Scotia Nature Trust announced a new protected area today in the spectacular 100 Wild Islands. The 40 acre conservation lands on Gerard Island brings 85% of the eastern shore’s nationally significant, wild and beautiful coastal archipelago under protection.

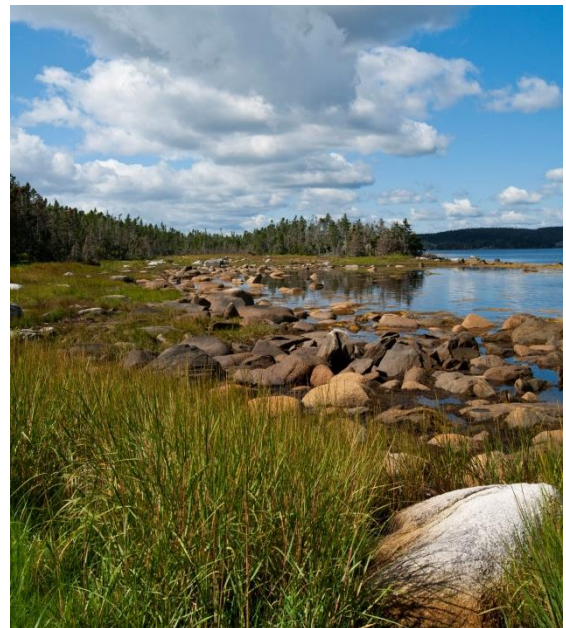
Well-loved by adventurous wilderness sailors, sea kayakers and generations of local families alike, the 100 Wild Islands, about an hour east of Halifax, form one of the continent’s last vast, ecologically rich and wild coastal archipelagos. The Nature Trust launched a bold and ambitious campaign just a few years ago, aimed at protecting the entire 7000 acre, 282 island coastal wilderness.

This latest addition to the 100 Wild Islands is 40 acres in size and encompasses over a kilometer of shoreline on Gerard Island, one kilometer offshore from Popes Harbour. The property was acquired through purchase.

The 800 acre Gerard Island is one of the largest islands in Nova Scotia. It is nestled between the Nature Trust’s Shelter Cove Conservation Lands and the provincially protected Taylor Head Provincial Park.

Ecologically rich and diverse, Gerard Island encompasses large areas of undisturbed coastal forests, bogs, barrens, cobble beaches, wetlands, eelgrass meadows and saltmarsh, including the well-known 15 acre landmark, “the Mud Hole.”

Gerard and the surrounding islands provide important habitat for well over 100 species of nesting and migratory birds. The unique shallow rock-strewn bay known as “The Bawleen,” between Gerard, Phoenix and Stoney Island shelters terns, eiders, eagles, osprey and endangered harlequin ducks and a significant seal population.



Coastline on Gerard Island. Photo by Peter Green



Harlequin Ducks. Photo by Scott Leslie

With some of Nova Scotia’s only remaining undisturbed maritime coastal boreal forests, the island also provides refuge to boreal songbirds that are increasingly rare on the mainland.

The boreal rainforests found on the island also support provincially rare lichens and potential habitat for the nationally endangered Boreal Felt lichen. The waters surrounding the island provide habitat for a rich diversity of marine life, including porpoises and sea turtles.

Over 87% of Gerard Island has now been protected or is in the process of being protected, including efforts by the Nature Trust’s provincial and municipal partners.

Incredible progress has been made in protecting the entire island wilderness in just a few years since the Nature Trust publicly launched the 100 Wild Islands Campaign. In partnership with the Province and conservation-minded landowners, 5600 acres of island wilderness in the 100 Wild Islands have been protected to date.

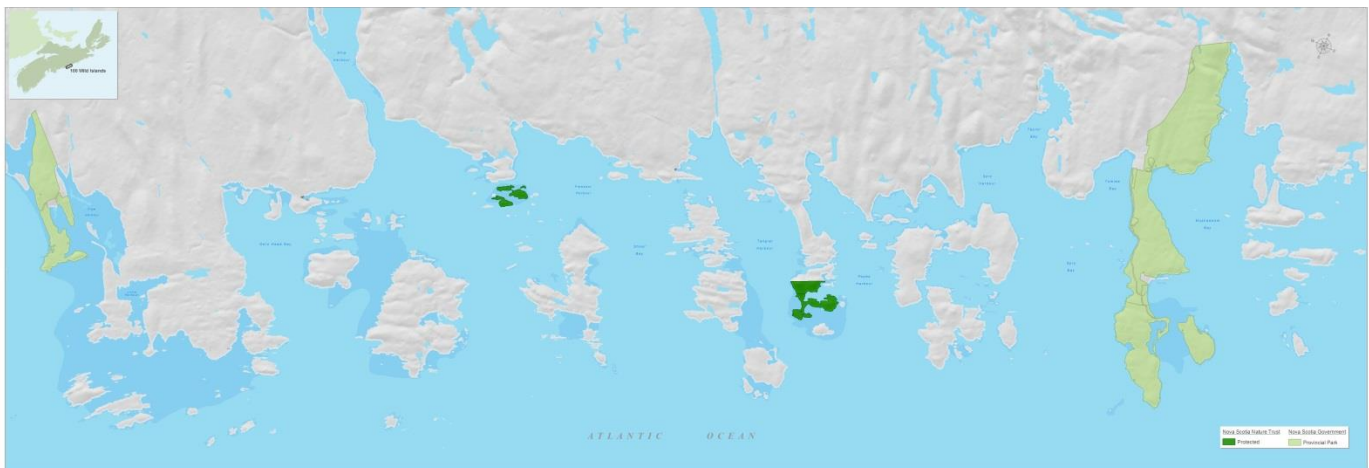
“With today’s Gerard Island announcement, we hit the exciting milestone of 85% of the world class 100 Wild Islands coastal wilderness being protected,” noted the Nature Trust’s Executive Director Bonnie Sutherland.



Seals basking in the 100 Wild Islands Photo by Nick Hawkins

According to Sutherland, other island conservation opportunities lie on the horizon.

Eastern Shore Protected Areas 2013



Eastern Shore Protected Areas 2017



The Nature Trust has been astounded by public response to the 100 Wild Islands campaign. Enthusiastic endorsement and financial support has come in from individuals, families and businesses from all across the province and from across the country and beyond. Renowned conservation icons like Yvon Choinard and Margaret Atwood, have been joined by long-time local families, big corporate donors, small businesses and community organizations, academics, scientists, paddlers and anglers, artists, and proud grandparents. All with their own unique story and reason to protect the islands. Many of these fascinating stories and perspectives are captured in the Nature Trust's "Faces of the 100 Wild Islands" video series (www.100wildislands.ca/faces)

"The 100 Wild Islands is clearly resonating with all kinds of people captivated by this little known yet incredibly important part of our coastal legacy," Sutherland noted. "People want to be a part of this good news legacy story, and to ensure the 100 Wild islands are protected, forever."

The Nature Trust is extremely grateful to the many, many people who are making the 100 Wild Islands dream a reality. [Major 100 Wild Islands campaign supporters](#) include: Paul Gauthier, the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, Halifax, TD Bank Group, anonymous donors, the Wilson Family, Martha McCain, Clearwater and the Hansen-MacDonald family, the John and Barbara Poole Family Funds at the Edmonton Community Foundation, Jim Lawley and Eric Thomson, Environment Canada's EcoAction Community funding program, MEC, Yvon and Malinda Chouinard, the McCain Foundation, Paul and Sue Scott, Dave Hebb, Fred and Nancy Chipman, Sherry Porter and Doug Hall and several anonymous donors.

Nova Scotians are invited to help protect the 100 Wild Islands legacy by donating to the campaign or volunteering to help keep the 100 wild islands wild, forever. Visit: www.100wildislands.ca for details.



Aerial view of newly protected lands on Gerard Island. Photo by Peter Green