



Conserve, protect, restore, and enhance
the Scarborough Marsh watershed.

Scarborough Marsh — A Resource to Treasure!

In the midst of a still developing landscape just south of Portland, Scarborough Marsh is Maine's largest and best known salt marsh. The 3,100 acre Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area, owned and managed by the State of Maine, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, includes approximately 2,700 acres of salt marsh, five tidal rivers, several smaller streams, some coastal freshwater marsh, tidal flats, and less than 200 acres of upland habitat.

The Scarborough Marsh is a regionally and internationally significant resource.

The Scarborough Marsh accounts for **15% of the state's total tidal marsh area**, making it the largest contiguous marsh system in the State of Maine. The Scarborough Marsh **supports a variety of human activities**, including canoeing and kayaking, bird watching, clam digging and fishing for fun or for profit, and hunting. The open skies, grassy expanses, coastal vistas, and changing waterlevels appeal to many, and the play of light and shadow challenges painters and photographers alike. The Scarborough Marsh offers schoolchildren an ideal "outdoor classroom", too. The marsh is **valued and enjoyed by tens of thousands of people each year**, and is a **valuable component of the region's tourism and commercial fishing**. Scarborough Marsh's tidal rivers and streams, salt marsh, pannes, and mudflats support commercially, recreationally, and /or ecologically valuable fish and shellfish including soft-shelled clams, sea worms, alewives, striped bass, smelt, sea run brook trout, and eel.

Tidal marshes are highly productive ecosystems, providing breeding and feeding habitat for numerous plants and animals, including several rare, threatened, and endangered species.

72% of water-dependent birds identified statewide were found at Scarborough Marsh, according to Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; and statewide surveys by MDIFW biologists at 53 salt marshes indicate that Scarborough Marsh has the **highest diversity of water-dependent bird species found in any of Maine's salt marshes**, including shorebird and wading bird species. Biological surveys confirm that black duck, blue-winged and green-winged teal, and wood duck nest in the marsh area and that the marsh is also an **important seasonal habitat for migrating species**, including the black duck which have declined dramatically. The marsh, which has been designated "essential habitat", **provides high value habitat for endangered, threatened, rare or declining plant and animal species** (including piping plovers, least terns, New England cottontail rabbit, beach plum, dwarf glasswort, and more!). The marsh also protects high value habitat for shad, river herring - alewives, blue black herring, and winter flounder.

Tidal marshes fulfill important natural functions.

Salt marshes are one of the rarest habitat types in Maine. Formed in low-lying coastal areas that are sheltered from strong winds, waves, and currents, **marshes buffer upland shorelines against erosive actions of open water, protect low-lying uplands and shorelines during storms, and maintain water quality**. Nourished by tidal flows and with rapidly growing grasses, salt marshes form the **basis of a highly productive food web**.