

What you can see at a



Scarborough Marsh
Audubon Center

SALT MARSH

American Black Duck



Photo: Brendan Fogarty

Resembling Mallards, these ducks are distinguished by chocolate-brown flanks, a pale grayish face, and an olive-yellow bill.

Double-crested Cormorant



Watch for them perched on the sign post with their wings outstretched to dry. Look for their black glossy feathers and a hooked brown beak.

Eastern Willet



These birds call “WILL WILLET.” They are drab except when they hover and expose their flashy black and white striped wings.

Glossy Ibis



Photo: Duncan McCaskill/Flickr

Usually wading in marshes probing for insects, these birds have a blackish color, brownish neck and head, and a long curved bill.

Great Blue Heron



Photo: BigYearBirding.com, 2018

This fish-eating bird has a wingspan of 72 inches and height of 50 inches, making it the largest wading bird in North America.

Great Egret



Photo: Keith Carver

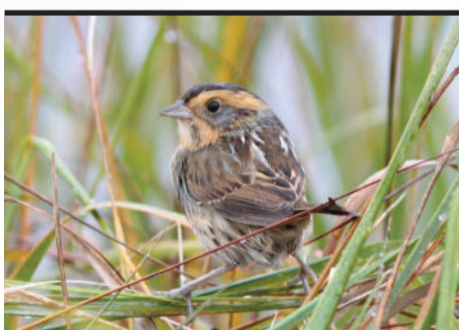
In contrast to the smaller Snowy Egret, this bird has a yellow bill, black legs and feet, and a wingspan of over four feet. It forages for small fish.

Least Tern



This endangered bird's distinctive black cap ends at a white forehead. The bill is yellow with a black tip.

Nelson's Sparrow



This sparrow can be recognized by its bluish bill and whitish belly, as well as by its distinctive song, sounding like water hitting a hot pan.

Osprey



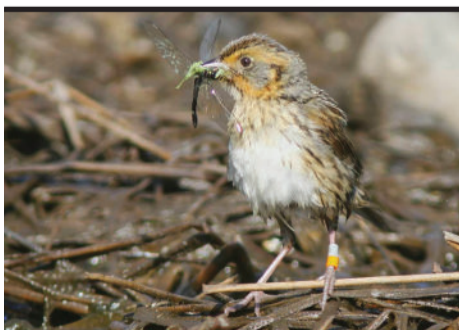
These birds can be identified by their dark brown top, white underside, and white head. They often hover while looking for fish.

Red-winged Blackbird



Found throughout the marsh, males sport a red and yellow shoulder patch, while females are brown to help camouflage themselves.

Saltmarsh Sparrow



A solitary and secretive bird, it has a dark gray-brown body with white stripes and an orange triangle on its face.

Snowy Egret



This iconic marsh bird has a black bill and yellow toes—which it wiggles in the water to attract fish.

Greater Yellowlegs



Note their long neck and bill, gray and brown feathers, white rump, and—you guessed it—their long yellow legs.

Semipalmated Plover



Characterized by a single band across the chest, this bird can be found in the marsh for spring and fall migration.

Short-billed Dowitcher



This bird passes through Maine for spring and fall migration. It has a plump body and bill twice the length of its head.

Harbor Seal



They sometimes come into the marsh chasing fish. They grow up to six feet long and can weigh 300 pounds.

Mink



A member of the weasel family, this mammal hunts the edges of the marsh and is a good swimmer.

Muskrat



It is a brown mammal that is 20-35 inches long. The thin tail—comprising half of that length—helps it swim.

Mummichogs



It is the most common fish of a salt marsh and therefore, an important food source for wading birds. It is one-to-three inches long.

Stickleback



This small fish has spines on its back. The male turns red on the bottom and takes care of the young.

Striped Bass



It has a streamlined body marked with dark stripes running from behind the gills to the base of the tail. Sizes range between eight and 40 pounds.

Algae



Producing more oxygen collectively than any other plant, algae is a nutrient-rich food source for many animals, including ducks and small fish.

Mud



The marsh sucks up water at high tide and slowly drains it as the tide goes down, filtering the water and frequently leaving salt deposits on the mud.

Why a salt marsh is important

- The marsh offers a quiet resting and feeding area for migrating birds.
- It provides a nursery and shelter for animals.
- It filters sediments and pollutants from water.
- The vegetation absorbs storm water which prevents damage.
- For people, the marsh remains a peaceful place to enjoy wildlife watching, fishing, boating, and exploring nature.

Saltmarsh Cordgrass



Able to be submerged in brackish water for many hours at a time, this is the grass that you see closest to the water.

Saltmarsh Hay



The stems of this grass common to saltmarshes are hollow, allowing the grass to bend with wind and water action.