

[From Fall 1993]

Kid's Korner

What is a Wetland?

There are many different kinds of wetlands. In general, wetlands are places that have wet soils or are covered by shallow water at least part of the year.

On Chincoteague Refuge, two kinds of wetlands are freshwater marsh and salt marsh. The area inside Wildlife Loop is a freshwater marsh. When you are traveling on Beach Road toward the beach, the area on the right-hand side of the road surrounding Tom's Cove is salt marsh. The next time you visit the refuge, study the two kinds of marsh and see the different types of plants and animals that live in each area.

This Wetlands Word Game lists some of the benefits wetlands provide for wildlife and people.

Wetlands Word Game

For each statement below choose the object or item in the list that stands for the idea of that statement. Use the bold words to help you.

Sponge - Egg Beater - Food - House - Filter - Cradle - Pillow

1. Wetlands help to **absorb** excess water during heavy rains and spring run-off.
2. Wetlands have many plants that help to **mix** nutrients and oxygen into the water.
3. Many **young** fish, insects, birds, mammals, and others are born/hatch in and around wetlands.
4. Wetlands provide **shelter** for many animals so they can hide from enemies or ambush prey.
5. As the wetlands absorb extra water they can **remove small harmful materials** from the water helping to make it clean.
6. Wetlands provide **nourishment** for animals because of the many plants and animals that live there.

Adapted from *Wetlands, Wildlife, and You*, prepared by New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and reprinted for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

(Answers: 1. sponge - 2. egg beater - 3. cradle - 4. house - 5. filter - 6. food)

Wildlife ID

Muskrat

Musk rats are furry animals that can sometimes be seen in or near the water on the refuge. The color of their fur can range from dark brown to almost black, and they have a long, slim tail. They weigh about two pounds. Look for them in the freshwater marsh. They usually dig their dens into the sides of the dikes that form the impoundments, but occasionally you may see one of their houses in the form of a mound built in the freshwater marsh. They like to eat stems, leaves and underground parts of marsh plants such as cattails and bulrushes.

