

Salt Marsh

Salt marshes are marshes with a water salinity levels of 20 parts per thousand (ppt) or higher. They are characterized by a dominant species, *Spartina alterniflora*, sometimes called oyster grass or smooth cordgrass. It is a tough, salt-tolerant grass. Other plants that live in a salt marsh include black mangrove, saltmeadow cordgrass, and black rush. Salt marshes are home to animals such as the diamondback terrapin turtle, shrimp, fiddler crabs, oysters, salt marsh snakes, blue crabs, speckled trout, and ibis.

The salt marsh has the fewest species of all the wetland habitats. The species surviving in the salt marsh have special adaptations enabling them to survive harsh, saline conditions. Salt marshes can be damaged or destroyed by human activities, including oil spills, agricultural drainage, and development. Climate change and sea level rise also threaten salt marshes, particularly if natural features or human developments prevent their landward retreat.