

CONSERVING COASTAL MARSHES: GOOD FOR BIRDS, GOOD FOR PEOPLE

Our Vision: A healthy network of coastal marshes that support thriving bird populations throughout the Atlantic flyway.



**ATLANTIC COAST
JOINT VENTURE**

What is a Coastal Marsh?

Coastal marshes include tidally influenced salt, brackish and freshwater marshes associated with ocean, bay and river systems in the coastal plain.

Why Coastal Marsh?

Coastal marshes are among the most important habitats for birds along the Atlantic Coast. At the same time, these habitats and the birds they support are highly threatened by sea level rise and urbanization. The ACJV, including all the states and territories from Maine to Puerto Rico, is uniquely responsible for the protection of coastal marsh habitat and is positioned to provide a coordinated marsh restoration and protection effort across the flyway.

Our Goal:

Our goal is to protect, restore, and enhance coastal marshes and the populations of birds that depend on them throughout the Atlantic Flyway. We will pursue this goal by focusing on three flagship species that best represent this habitat: American Black Duck, Black Rail and Saltmarsh Sparrow. The ACJV will engage partners to develop species-specific population objectives, identify the full array of threats, and craft actions to remove or reduce those threats by protecting and restoring critical habitat that sustains their populations and benefits other marsh species.

Why These Species?

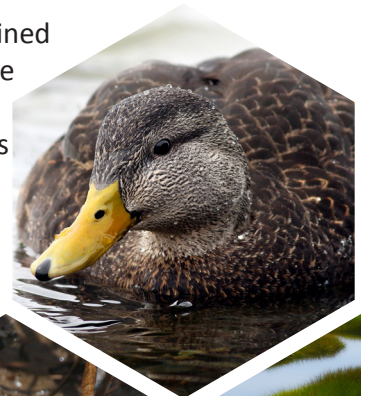
American Black Duck – an indicator of healthy low-marsh habitat, Black Duck have declined by more than 50% since the 1960s and fourteen states in the Atlantic Flyway now list the Black Duck as a species of greatest conservation need. By working together, Atlantic Coast Joint Venture partners will dedicate themselves to restoring the abundance of this species.

Black Rail – the highly secretive and poorly understood Black Rail, which depends on high-marsh habitat, is one of the most imperiled bird species in the Atlantic Flyway. Black Rail have disappeared from, or are drastically reduced in, many historical strongholds, prompting a petition for ESA listing. Restoring Black Rail sustainability will require a shared and immediate commitment to conservation of coastal marsh habitats.

Saltmarsh Sparrow – the only species endemic to the ACJV – found nowhere else on earth – Saltmarsh Sparrow has been declining at an alarming rate. An estimated 80% of the population has disappeared in just the last 15 years. Focused and coordinated conservation actions are critical to halt the dramatic decline in saltmarsh sparrow populations.

A Healthier Future for Birds and People

Coastal marshes provide so much more than just bird habitat. This ecosystem is the foundation for a healthy coastal environment for wildlife and people alike. Marshes are an insurance policy that protects our coastal real-estate from flooding, provides clean water and supports multi-billion dollar fishery and tourism industries. Investing in our marshes is good for wildlife and good for people.



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Photo credit:

Front, from top left to right: Saltmarsh habitat in Massachusetts, @slack12-Creative Commons; Black Rail, @Brian Tang/www.hardrain.me; Girls scouts restoring marsh plants, Chesapeake Bay Program; Migrating marsh study, GTM NERR; Saltmarsh Sparrow, @Brian Henderson; Lesser Yellow-legs in marsh, @Christopher Eliot, Creative Commons; Flood protection at Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS; Black Duck, @Fyn Kynd Photography; Marsh restoration, Corps New England

Back, from top to bottom: Black Duck, @Fyn Kynd Photography; Black Rail, @Brian Tang/www.hardrain.me; Saltmarsh, Jack Flannegan; Saltmarsh Sparrow, @Brian Henderson