



Crab Meadow Salt Marsh Monitoring



A channel at Crab Meadow Marsh. This wetland is one of a few large areas of undeveloped salt marsh ecosystem remaining on the North Shore of Long Island. **Credit:** Jonah Saitz/USFWS.

Quick Facts

- ▶ The marsh is roughly 250 acres and is owned by the Town of Huntington, NY.
- ▶ On the north side of the marsh, you will find a barrier beach, home to terns, piping plover, the American oystercatcher, and other species.
- ▶ On the south side, the marsh abuts the Crab Meadow Golf Course and Makamah Park Preserve.

IMPACTS OF SEA LEVEL RISE

Sea level rise is happening faster on the Northeastern United States compared to other parts of the world. Increased storm events combined with rising seas are leading to decreased resiliency of marshes. The 2015 Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan marks Crab Meadow Marsh as an area of significant marsh loss in New York. Restoration options will be considered following a complete assessment of the site.

THE LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY (LISS)

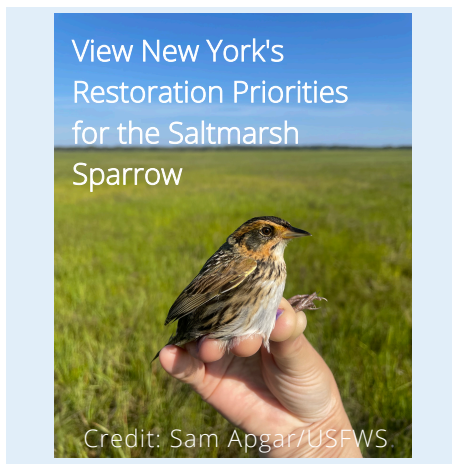
LISS funds an interagency agreement between the Environmental Protection Agency and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to perform salt marsh data collection to support coastal resilience in the Sound. During year one of the project period, staff with the Service's Southern New England Coastal Program with expertise in wildlife biology, tidal wetland restoration, GIS, and hydrology, completed a characterization of priority sites in CT and NY.

PROTECTING SALTMARSH SPARROWS

The Saltmarsh Sparrow, *Ammospiza caudacuta*, is a High Priority Species of Conservation Need in New York. The Atlantic Coast Joint Venture partnership is building a road map for the species' conservation. Crab Meadow Marsh is one of four priority marshes on the north shore chosen to restore high-quality sparrow nesting habitat and long-term marsh resilience.

GOALS FOR MONITORING

- ▶ Understand current site conditions as measured by vegetation, elevation, hydrology, avian diversity, and saltmarsh sparrow breeding activity.
- ▶ Understand how conditions have changed over time.
- ▶ Leverage findings from monitoring to plan for future restoration.

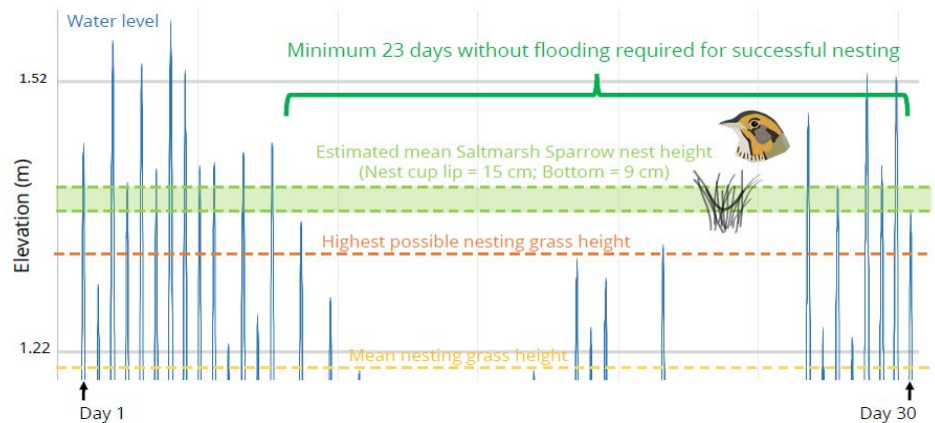


Fellow Kenzie Payne collects hydrology and elevation measurements at Crab Meadow Marsh. Credit: Jonah Saitz/USFWS.

WHY BIRDS?

Birds respond quickly to changes in their environment and play an important ecological role. They are also easy to observe and can signify changes in the environment from climate change. Saltmarsh sparrows can be an early warning signal of increased flooding.

Waterlogger and vegetation elevation data show that water levels at the marsh likely exceed possible nest heights during the critical reproductive period, making sparrow nest survival unlikely and leaving little habitat for nesting.



A conceptual diagram of saltmarsh sparrow breeding ecology. Credit: Alison Kocek and Sam Apgar/USFWS

QUESTIONS?

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