

Points of Interest

1. *Estuary*: Mixing of inland fresh water and salt water from the ocean. In the distance are Little Narragansett Bay and Watch Hill, RI.
2. *Culvert*: Installed in the late 1970s to allow free movement of tidal water. The increased tidal flushing allows native plants to thrive.
3. *Common Reed Grass*: An invasive species that grows in elevated marsh areas. The growth of this plant is managed by allowing salt water into the marsh.
4. *Salt Panne*: A shallow depression on the marsh surface. The plants that live here are uniquely adapted to high levels of salinity and extreme temperatures. Salt pannes provide feeding habitat for shorebirds, wading birds and waterfowl.
5. *Upland Hardwood Forest*: Farther away from the salt water, larger hardwood trees are able to grow.
6. *Fields*: These field openings are maintained to provide food and cover for wildlife such as eastern bluebirds, blue-winged warblers, cottontail rabbits, and bobwhite quail. Controlling non-native, invasive plants is the primary management objective at this site.
7. *Barn Owl Nest Box*: This box was built by a local boy scout for an Eagle Scout project. The barn owl is a state-endangered species.
8. *Cemetery*: This colonial-era cemetery dates back to the 1600s.
9. *Osprey Nesting Platform*: Once threatened with extinction, the osprey has made a dramatic comeback with help from protective laws (most importantly, the ban on the use of the pesticide DDT) and the installation of nesting platforms.
10. *Mosquito Ditches*: These ditches were dug in the early 1900s to drain water from the marsh surface in an attempt to eliminate mosquito-breeding habitat.

Historical Information

Barn Island Wildlife Management Area is a 900+-acre state-owned property bordering Little Narragansett Bay. State acquisition of this land began in 1944 and is an ongoing process. A major portion of this area was purchased with funds derived from an excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. The management goals for Barn Island are to maintain and enhance the biological values of the area while providing a variety of wildlife-based outdoor recreation opportunities such as hunting, fishing, boating, birdwatching, nature photography and hiking.

Saltwater and freshwater marshes, mixed hardwood forest, and open fields are all part of Barn Island's ecology. This makes Barn Island home to a wide variety of plants and animals such as waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, songbirds, hawks, owls, deer, turkeys, amphibians and reptiles.

In the early 1900s, mosquito ditches were dug to drain water from the marsh surface for the purpose of eliminating mosquito-breeding habitat. These ditches, however, drained so much water that the ecology of the marsh was significantly altered. A new, more ecologically sound method, known as Open Marsh Water Management, is now being used to restore saltmarsh habitat and control mosquito breeding. Using this method, a network of shallow ponds with inter-connecting channels is created to hold water on the marsh surface. These open water areas provide habitat for minnows, which feed on mosquito larvae.

Most hunters are required to wear fluorescent orange. As a safety precaution, you are encouraged to do the same during the hunting season. For hunting season dates, refer to the Connecticut Hunting & Trapping Guide, available from town clerks or at website www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr.

Barn Island

Wildlife

Management

Area

Stonington, CT



Trail Map

*Brochure courtesy of Philip Banker
Boy Scout Troop 17-G
Groton, CT*

For additional information, contact the State of Connecticut, Department of Environmental Protection - Bureau of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division at (860) 295-9523.