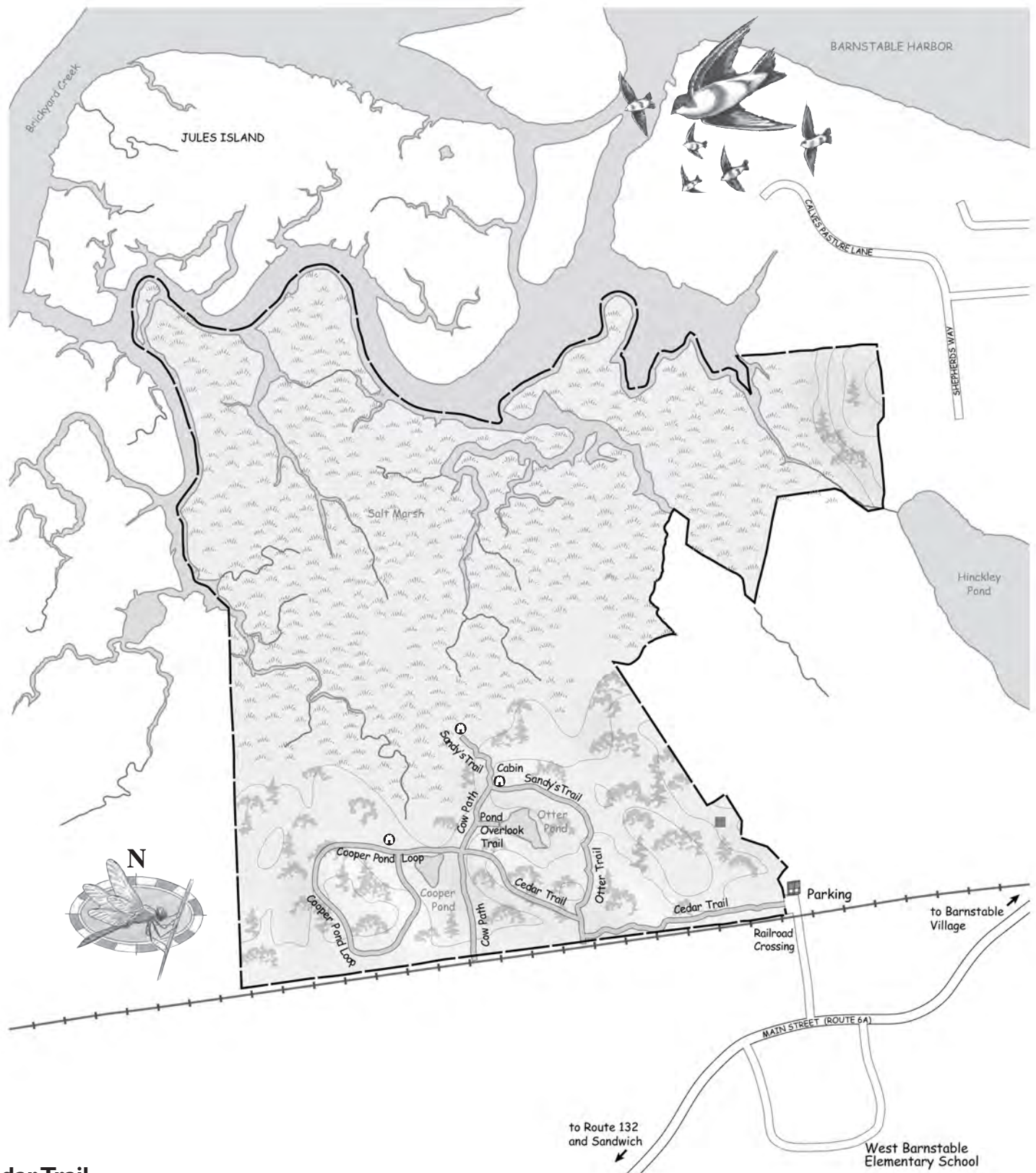


# BARNSTABLE GREAT MARSH WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



## Cedar Trail

From the parking area, walk west through an early successional woodland mix of cedars, pines, and oaks. Old rock walls mark former old pasture and property lines.

## Otter Trail

The Otter Trail, so named for the presence of otters in and around the sanctuaries water bodies, is a short connector trail between Cedar Trail and Sandy's Trail. Otters are most likely to be spotted in February and March, when individuals pair up and search for den sites. Look for them in Otter Pond and along the salt marsh creeks.

## Sandy's Trail

Sandy's Trail continues through the woodland; Otter Pond can be seen to the left. At a clearing is a historic cabin. The marsh can be seen through a break in the vegetation. The trail continues around the cabin and down a slope to the edge of the marsh. Cooper Island

lies straight ahead and Sandy Neck Barrier Beach extends in the distance. The straight-line ditches were earlier attempts to drain mosquito pools.

## Cow Path

Return to the cabin and continue a short distance on Cow Path to the Pond Overlook Trail. Enjoy the peace of Otter Pond—you may see a Green Heron.

## Cooper Pond Loop

This trail turns west from the Cow Path. As you go down a small slope, Cooper Pond will be on the left. A small footbridge crosses the stream outlet for this spring-fed pond. Farther ahead is another view of the Marsh. The trail continues through secondary woodlands, coming back to Cooper Pond. Note the variety of lichens and mosses as well as the boulders left behind by the last glacier.

# Welcome



A short walk through the woodlands will bring you to the edge of the salt marsh. Enjoy the ever-changing beauty of one of the most productive ecosystems on earth.

On a summer's day, the green swath of a salt marsh can look deceptively uniform and calm. It is, in fact, made up of countless individuals and species of animals, plants, and microbes. The number and composition of these organisms changes with the twice-daily tides, the seasons, and the weather. The dominant plants are species of cordgrass (*Spartina spp.*). They take hold in the quiet waters of tidal mudflats. Some species require daily tidal inundations; others grow farther upland where tidal flooding is less frequent. Until the mid-20th century, salt marsh hay was regularly harvested for livestock feed and bedding, insulation, mulch, and packing material. Other less obvious plants include Sea Lavender with its airy stems. In late summer, their tiny flowers add a graceful lavender blush to the

marsh. In fall, glassworts, with their plump, pickle-like stems, provide red accents as the marsh grasses gradually turn golden brown.

All these plants and more provide vast habitat for myriad vertebrate and invertebrate animals. Snails glide quietly along prickly grass stems; crabs burrow into and scurry across the spongy mudflats; shellfish such as clams and mussels rest and feed in the gooey mud. The warm, protected waters and meandering tidal creeks provide nursery areas for many species of larval fish, including flounder, Bluefish, and Striped Bass.

This sanctuary was established through the generosity and vision of the Chase and Ferguson families. Expansion of the protected land was made possible through the continued generosity of the Ferguson family and the thoughtful contributions from the Greeley family. Through the foresight of these three families, over 120 contiguous acres of salt marsh, freshwater wetland, and upland are preserved at Barnstable Great Marsh Sanctuary.



## BARNSTABLE GREAT MARSH

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**Trails:** Open every day, dawn to dusk

From the Mid Cape Highway (Route 6) take Exit 6 on to Route 132 North. Follow to Route 6A in Barnstable and take a right. Travel one mile heading east and look for 2444 and the Sanctuary sign on the left just after Barnstable West Barnstable Elementary School entrance. Follow driveway to parking area. Parking area can accommodate roughly 4 vehicles, please be courteous and avoid blocking private driveways.

Mass Audubon works to protect the nature of Massachusetts for people and wildlife. Together with more than 100,000 members, we care for over 34,000 acres of conservation land, provide educational programs for 200,000 children and adults annually, and advocate for sound environmental policies at the local, state, and federal levels. Mass Audubon's mission and actions have expanded since our beginning in 1896 when our founders set out to stop the slaughter of birds for use on women's fashions. Today we are the largest conservation organization in New England. Our statewide network of wildlife sanctuaries welcomes visitors of all ages and serves as the base for our conservation, education, and advocacy work. To support these important efforts, call 800-AUDUBON (283-8266) or visit [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org).



## BARNSTABLE GREAT MARSH Wildlife Sanctuary



Photos © Bob Slott

## TRAIL MAP

