



# Desert Oasis?

Are you surprised to see this lush wetland in the dry dune landscape? There are three different types of wetlands found in the Province Lands, and each promotes a diversity of flora and fauna. Occasional vernal pools spring up seasonally and temporarily in wooded areas. Wild cranberry bogs can be found year-round, and experience seasonal fluctuations in moisture. Ponds like the one you see here are filled with fresh water year-round. Unlike the kettle ponds found elsewhere on Cape Cod, which were formed by large ice chunks left behind by melting glaciers, these shallow ponds evolved from depressions in the dunes. The low-lying areas collected rainwater. Over time, plant material decayed in the water, creating peat and allowing bogs to form. As more vegetation grew around the bogs they became shallow ponds like this one, teeming with plant and animal life.



cranberry plants

Dune slacks form in the lowest pockets of the open dunes. They brim with water during periods of heavy snow or rainfall when groundwater tables are high. A 2004 study found 336 dune slacks in the Province Lands that support 100 different species of plants. The most common plant may surprise you - it is the cranberry. Wild cranberry bogs dot this landscape. Animals also benefit from the dune slacks. Spadefoot and Fowler's toads breed in them, and coyotes dig into the sand at low elevations to create their own freshwater pools to quench their thirst.



wild cranberry bog in dunes



Golden club is an endangered aquatic plant that once turned these ponds into seas of gold when in bloom. Now, only a few stands remain along the edges of Blackwater Pond within the Beech Forest trail loop. Canada geese, here in unnaturally large numbers because people feed them, tear up the plant by its root. Please do not feed the geese. Feeding them contributes to the loss of these rare plants, and causes other problems. In unnatural concentrations, geese are more likely to have diseases and parasites, become aggressive, and may need to be controlled. Feeding any wildlife in the national seashore is illegal.