


# Newfoundland and Labrador's Coastal Habitat

SAM is a network of municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador that are committed to conserving wildlife habitat and practicing environmental stewardship. Find more wildlife and habitat resources at [samnl.org](http://samnl.org).

## Why is coastal habitat important


 Coastal shores are made of smaller habitats influenced by tidal and wave action.


Coastal habitat is divided into zones:


**Splash zone:** the area before the water on the shore. The water that reaches this zone is splashed from waves or natural disturbances such as storm surges.

**Intertidal zone:** the area of high tide and low tide, with an upper, middle, and lower intertidal region.

**Subtidal zone:** this area is the underwater zone and is not influenced by the tides.

 The variety in habitat that occurs in coastal zones supports a tremendous amount of life including several species at risk and endangered species.

 Coastal habitat can help to mitigate climate change by absorbing tidal energy produced by storm surges.

 Newfoundland and Labrador has a long history of commercial fishing. Over the years this has put pressure on coastal habitats. It is important to find a balance between our natural habitat and industry.



Committed to the conservation, enhancement and stewardship of habitat across Newfoundland and Labrador



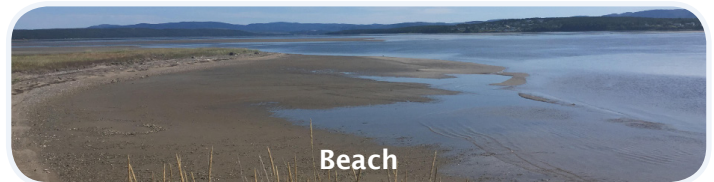
Salwater Marsh

Tidal wetlands that often contain cord grass, eel grass, and brackish water. They provide habitat for fish and migrating birds.



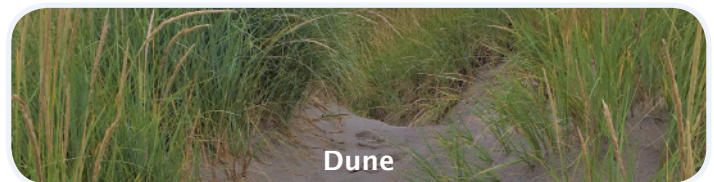
Estuary

Partially enclosed by a coastal body of water where freshwater runoff from a river or a stream meets ocean water.



Beach

Habitats made from deposits from the shoreline. The area of lowest tide and highest elevation influence by wave action.




Dune

Habitats that consist of various specialized grasses that stabilize the sand blown inland. They protect areas during flooding and high tides.

[samnl.org](http://samnl.org)

## What to look out for along Newfoundland and Labrador coasts




### Bird Species

-  Coastal habitat is very important for shorebird, waterfowl, and seagulls.
-  Birds gather in great numbers in coastal habitat, making for excellent bird watching.
-  Shorebird populations around the world are in decline. In NL many of our beaches support species of migrating shorebirds, including Piping Plover and Red Knot.



Red Knot  
*Calidris canutus rufa*




### Salt-loving Plants

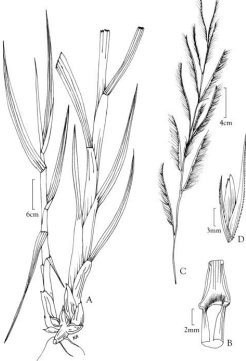
-  Plants that are salt tolerant may have thicker leaves to help retain water and a waxy coating, giving a blue hue that helps to protect from the salty water.
-  Common species found along our coast are Seabeach Sandwort, Oysterleaf, and Seaside Plantain.
-  Eel Grass, *Zostera marina*, is a submerged aquatic grass that grows in estuaries. It creates nurseries for breeding fish and waterfowl.



Seabeach Sandwort  
*Honkenya peploides*




### Climate Change Mitigation

-  Coastal habitat such as saltmarshes and dunes, act as protective barriers against waves, storm surges, and tsunamis.
-  Marsh cordgrasses grow both above and below ground, creating dense layers of roots, stems, and trapped sediment that stabilize the coastal habitat.
-  Salt marshes keep huge amounts of carbon out of the atmosphere by trapping organic matter, breaking it down, and burying it.



Committed to the conservation, enhancement and stewardship of habitat across Newfoundland and Labrador

### Salt Marshes & Estuaries

-  Marshes are the most ecologically diverse type of wetland, but the least common in the boreal forest. Salt marshes are even less common, making them important for the wildlife that depend on them.
-  Salt marshes and estuaries are intertidal zones that are regularly flooded by brackish water or seawater, and they are dominated by salt tolerant plants.
-  Many shorebirds use salt marshes and estuaries as areas to feed, rest, and nest during the year.



Black-bellied Plover  
*Pluvialis squatarola*