



Salt Marshes: A Natural and Unnatural History

Judith S Weis, Carol A Butler

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Tall green grass. Subtle melodies of songbirds. Sharp whines of muskrats. Rustles of water running through the grasses. And at low tide, a pungent reminder of the treasures hidden beneath the surface. All are vital signs of the great salt marshes' natural resources.

Now championed as critical habitats for plants, animals, and people because of the environmental service and protection they provide, these ecological wonders were once considered unproductive wastelands, home solely to mosquitoes and toxic waste, and mistreated for centuries by the human population. Exploring the fascinating biodiversity of these boggy wetlands, *Salt Marshes* offers readers a wealth of essential information about a variety of plants, fish, and animals, the importance of these habitats, consequences of human neglect and thoughtless development, and insight into how these wetlands recover.

Judith S. Weis and Carol A. Butler shed ample light on the human impact, including chapters on physical and biological alterations, pollution, and remediation and recovery programs. In addition to a national and global perspective, the authors place special emphasis on coastal wetlands in the Atlantic and Gulf regions, as well as the San Francisco Bay Area, calling attention to their historical and economic legacies.

Written in clear, easy-to-read language, *Salt Marshes* proves that the battles for preservation and conservation must continue, because threats to salt marshes ebb and flow like the water that runs through them.

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