



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
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## **The Marsh Land as a Changing Environment**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 84.06.04  
by Margaret Flynn

The fascinating world of plants and animals that are alternately flooded by seawater and exposed to air by the rise and fall of the tides opens up a new world to a unique ecosystem that involves a complex food web.

This unit is intended for use with 6th grade students as a part of the social studies unit on Connecticut.

Lighthouse Point Park, at the mouth of New Haven Harbor with Morris Cove forming the northern boundary and Long Island as the southern boundary will be the basic resource for the 6th grade amateur naturalists. Morris Creek that flows on the eastern side of the park will be examined and explored to better understand and appreciate the balanced and continuing life of the marsh.

Upon completion of the unit the students should be able to: 1) understand what a salt marsh is, 2) identify some of the salt water plants, 3) identify some of the birds of the salt marsh, 4) identify some of the invertebrates that inhabit the salt marshes, 5) identify some of the vertebrates that inhabit the salt marsh, 6) to understand and appreciate that many forms of life can only live because of the presence of other forms of life, 7) identify some ways in which man is destroying the productive lands of the salt marshes, 8) use aerial photographs of Morris Creek and compare with topographical maps.

The students will locate Morris Creek on a topographical map and compare it with aerial photographs of the area. The first of many periodic observations at Lighthouse Point Park (Morris Creek) will take place in the early fall. During these visits, observations of salt water plants, birds, invertebrates and vertebrates will be made. Specimens will be collected and classified. The students' observations will be illustrated on charts to show the varied life sustained during the different seasons.

(Recommended for Science and Social Studies classes, grades 4 through 8)

### **Key Words**

*Ecology Environmental Science Connecticut Marshes*

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