

Fox Run

Fox Run Conservation Area (formerly named the Curtis Conservation Lands) acquired in 2004, is a densely forested area with maple, oak, and beech trees. It is teeming with wildlife, particularly local and migrating birds. It includes upland areas as well as very active wetlands. Portions of these wetlands are classified as white cedar swamps, which are very rare and special on a barrier beach ecosystem such as Provincetown. The property abuts the Old Colony Nature Pathway, and includes a walking trail.

Directions: Fox Run is accessible from the Old Colony Conservation Pathway and closest to the Howland St. entrance/exit..

Fox Run's White Cedar swamp is of particular importance. This type of habitat has been steadily diminishing with the start of European colonization and continued encroachment. The diaries of early explorers and colonists (Archer 1602 and Brereton 1602 [in Emerson 1981]; Emerson 1981) would suggest that Cape Cod and the Elizabeth Islands once had a great many Cedar stands.

The White Cedar Swamps of Cape Cod generally exist in glacial kettles. Cedars cluster on hummocks that are scattered throughout the basin. On these hummocks one might expect to find ericaceous shrubs, sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) and ferns atop a sphagnum carpet.

In Massachusetts, the northern parula warbler (*Parula Americana*) now primarily breeds in a few white cedar swamps, due to the rapid loss of its preferred nesting materials from outside the swamps (the lichen *Usnea*).

White cedar foliage and twigs is a preferred winter browse for white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). One would also expect to find Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) and meadow mouse (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) feeding on white cedar seedlings.



A White Cedar swamp



A Northern Parula (*Setophaga Americana*) feeding its offspring which is nested in a nest of *Usnea*.



A pregnant fox has been observed in these woods, hence the name Fox Run.

