

**Game:** Salt Marsh Says

**Grades:** 4<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 30+ minutes

**Playing Area:** OPEN room or outside on grass is best

**# players:** 12+ (the more the better)

**OVERVIEW:** This game is a modification of Simon Says with several other commands. It is an elimination game based on listening skills and understanding the commands briefed by game leader. The commands are just a tricky way to explain the functions of the salt marsh as a review or an opening activity. Take your time explaining the game commands and really be thorough as this is the educational value of the game.

**TO BEGIN:**

- Leader shouts out “Salt Marsh Says!”
- Only when the leader follows with “Sploosh “can the participants begin to follow the commands.
- If leader calls “salt marsh says” followed by a command, the participant who responds by acting out the command will be eliminated and help judge.
- Commands can come in rapid fire, as long as “Sploosh” has been said after “Salt Marsh says”
- Commands can be an eliminating factor as well based on the # of participants it requires to complete the action... participant can be eliminated for too few or too many people completing the action.
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**COMMANDS** (the educational portion of this game)

*High Marsh* – (everybody)

Everyone must run towards the designated high marsh closest to the leader. High Marsh is the region of a marsh that rarely gets flooded with salt water. Taller plants, shrubs and deep roots.

*Low Marsh* – (everybody)

Everyone must run towards the designated low marsh, farthest away from the leader. Low Marsh is the region of a marsh that is in direct contact with the flowing tides and can manage salt water the best.

*Great Blue Heron* – (1) (stand on one leg, arms tucked, neck stretched)

This task requires one person. The salt marsh is a unique habitat for many different vertebrates and invertebrates. More specifically it acts uniquely as a nesting ground for migratory birds and water fowl like the Great Blue Heron. The protected waters for hunting food and the tall grasses to build nests as well as to hide young are necessary for survival of these migratory birds.

*Buffer* – (2) (one person crouches waves hands like Spartina, other person hovers and crashes like a wave!)

This task requires 2 people. A Salt Marsh plays a critical role in protecting the shores from erosion. Storms and waves crash along shorelines often carrying water past the high tide zone and taking sediments back out sea with it. Beaches and rocky shore habitats are constantly changing size and shape. A Salt Marsh, however is built to withstand storm surges, to manage flooding and to keep erosion to a minimum. Vegetation is capable of surviving salt influx and the peat filters and holds firm despite flooding. The Salt Marsh “buffers” the impacts of storms.

*Food Factory* – (3) (all three crouch and use hands from ground to face to start simulate munching and eating!)

This task requires 3 people. A Salt Marsh has an abundance of vegetation as well as its invertebrates and vertebrates. The unique mud is responsible for the success and capabilities of the marsh to hold such a high capacity of organisms. As the grasses grow tall in the peat and the animals burrow, things grow strong and then naturally die. The vegetation and the organisms begin to decay creating detritus, which is full of many nutrients. This detritus becomes the basis for the next round of vegetation and organisms to thrive on and survive. Between the abundance of plankton in surrounding salt marsh waters and the detritus, you might want to call it a “food factory!”

*Nursery* – (4) (One person stands tall and the three others crawl following in line calling “mama!” like a mother duck!)

This task requires 4 people. A Salt Marsh provides a safe, protected place for many invertebrates and vertebrates to spawn, lay eggs and reproduce. Many organisms return to an estuary and a salt marsh after spending the majority of their lives in pelagic waters to reproduce each season and then head back out to sea. In essence a salt marsh acts like a nursery!

*Filter* – (5) (three people stretch and hold hands in a line, two others cruise in and out under their linked arms)

This task requires 5 people. The Salt Marsh not only acts to protect the solid land from erosion from storms and wave action, it also acts as a filter to protect the oceans and bays from runoff from the land. Runoff is the water that flows off rooftops, across parking lots and streets. As it flows, the water grabs organic particles, motor oils on the roads, salt on the streets, litter, fertilizers and much more. It drains through the watershed and either enters the bay directly, or hopefully

reaches a salt marsh. The Peat, spongy muddy material in a salt marsh is capable of holding this polluted water, stores it and filters it before it enters the open waters. The unique plants of the Salt Marsh help manage and sequester some of the runoff contaminants.

### **TIME TO PLAY! Leader HINTS!**

- might want to do a practice run to make sure everybody kind of gets the hang of it
- it helps to say the command and how many people it involves
- take your time as the leader, but sound like there is urgency in your voice to trick the competitors!
- If participants are great listeners, you can lead to the eliminations by counting how many are left and calling a command that will result in elimination of someone
- Play until there is only one left standing....
- If they are too good and there is a tie, then settle with a simple game of rock paper scissors!

### **Example:**

- Leader shouts "Salt Marsh Says"
- Then says "Sploosh"
- To the "high marsh!!!"
- To the "low marsh "
- "blue Heron" one person!
- "Salt Marsh Says"
- "Food Factory!!!" three people!!! (if anyone flinches.... ELIMINATED!)
- "Salt Marsh Says"
- "sploosh"
- "Food Factory" three people (they may now do it)
- "Blue Heron"
- "Filter" five people (at any point if there are not enough people to perform the task, or there are too many.... they can be eliminated)
- "Salt Marsh Says"
- "Sploosh"
- tire them out by sending them back and forth...
- "high marsh"
- "low marsh"
- "high marsh"
- "low marsh"
- "Buffer!"
- "Salt Marsh Says"
- "Filter" ( if they move eliminate!)

***"Now go play and have fun!" – mary horrigan***