



# Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge

## Vernal Pools

### What are Vernal Pools?

Vernal pools are small, isolated wetlands that fill with water from rain and snowmelt in spring, and then dry out in late summer or early fall. They vary in size and shape. Even small puddles in the middle of a trail can harbor living organisms or egg masses, so be on the lookout.



### Why are They Important?

Because vernal pools are fish free, they serve as safe breeding habitat for amphibians like salamanders and frogs, who travel to these pools in the spring and deposit their eggs. The offspring will leave the pool before it dries up.

### Signs of Life

They look inconspicuous, but vernal pools are teeming with life. Be on the look out for amphibians like wood frogs and spotted salamanders, as well as smaller organisms like fairy shrimp. Look for large, gelatinous egg masses containing thousands of tiny frog or salamander eggs. These will often be attached to branches or other vegetation.

