

Tracks in the Sand

Out on the dunes, there is little shade and it can get hot in the sun, so animals don't hang around much during the day. However, you can spot the traces of their travels by the tracks they leave in the sand.

Can you find any of these tracks?



● Six-lined Racerunner



● Snake



● Fox



● Rabbit



● Deer



● Raccoon

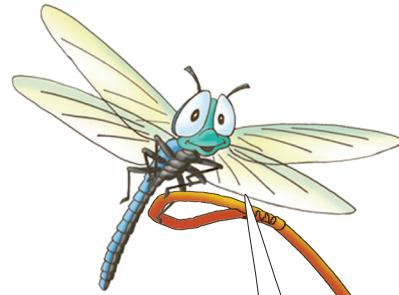


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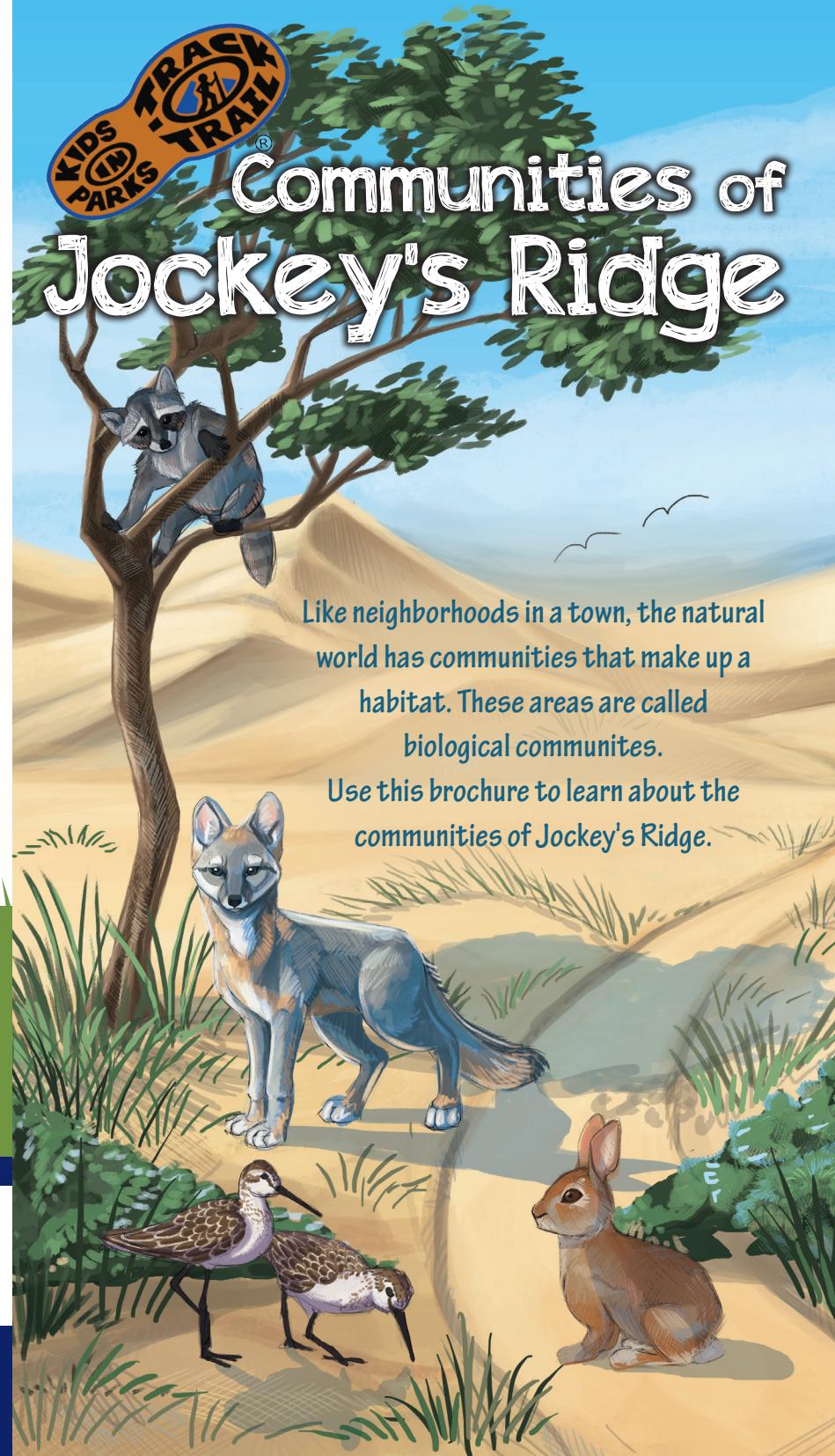


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Communities of Jockey's Ridge

Like neighborhoods in a town, the natural world has communities that make up a habitat. These areas are called biological communities. Use this brochure to learn about the communities of Jockey's Ridge.



What is a Biological Community?

In the natural world, biological communities are places where various organisms interact with each other and their environment. These communities are also called ecosystems. At Jockey's Ridge, there are three main biological communities: the sand dunes, the maritime shrub thicket, and the sound.

Roanoke Sound

The Roanoke Sound is an estuary that separates Roanoke Island from Bodie Island. Here the water is brackish, meaning there is a mix of fresh water and saltwater. The Roanoke Sound provides for a variety of marine life, like blue crabs and oysters. Oysters are especially important to the sound's ecosystem as oyster reefs help protect marshes from damaging waves, and oysters can filter dirty water.

Follow the trail toward the Roanoke Sound to see the restored oyster reefs and marshes. Reefs and marshes also help protect the sand dunes.

Sand Dunes

Dunes are loose hills of sand built by the wind. The wind lifts dry sand and transports it up the beach and deposits it at an obstacle such as vegetation. There, the sand gathers to form the dune.

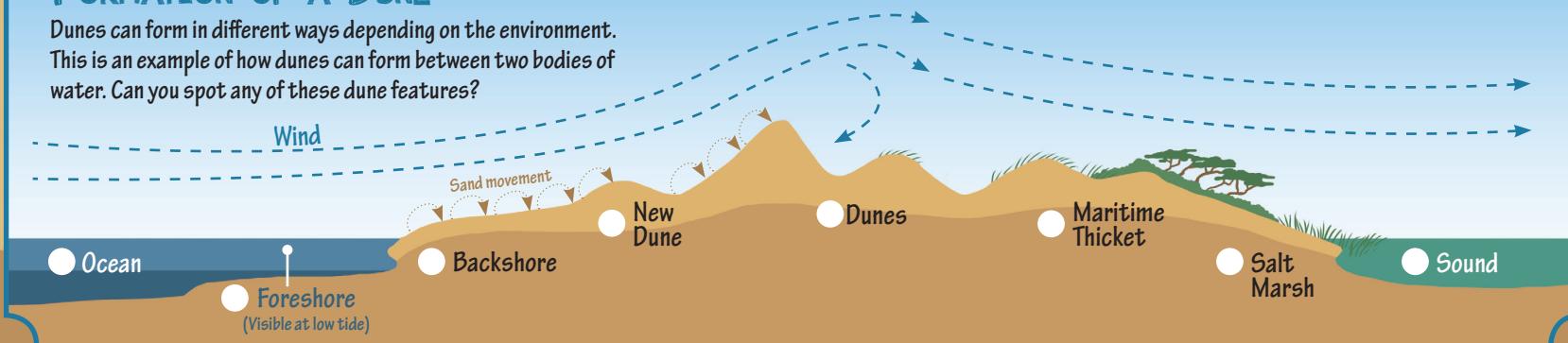
Look closely at the sand in a windy spot, can you see the grains moving? Where the sand shifts the most, usually on the highest points of the dune, vegetation can't grow. But on smaller dunes, in areas where there is less wind, grasses can grow. Low areas around the dunes can also hold water, creating vernal pools which will appear seasonally.

ROANOKE ISLAND

On average, the water in the sound is 5 feet deep!

FORMATION OF A DUNE

Dunes can form in different ways depending on the environment. This is an example of how dunes form between two bodies of water. Can you spot any of these dune features?



Maritime Shrub Thicket

The maritime shrub thicket consists mostly of shrubs, but some trees are able to grow here as well. However, due to constant wind blowing sand and salt, vegetation growth is short and stunted. Most of the plants you'll find in the thickets are evergreen. The leaves develop a natural waxy coating for protection against the harsh wind and salt spray.

Thickets tend to grow where the winds are not as strong, providing stabilization to the dune. They also provide protection and food for many animals.

Can you find any of these plants?



LIVE OAK



WAX MYRTLE



PERSIMMON



YAUPON



BLACK CHERRY



WILD GRAPE