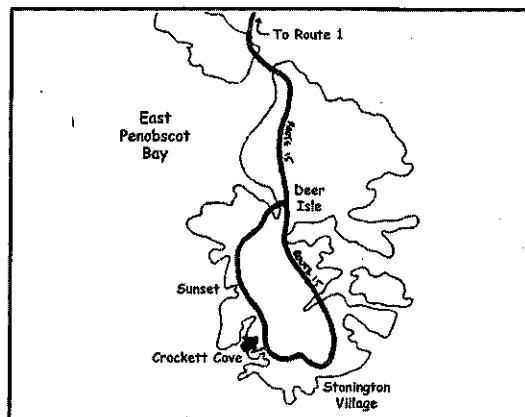


**Directions:** To reach CROCKETT COVE WOODS from Route 1, take Route 15 down the Deer Isle peninsula, taking the right turn towards Sunset in Deer Isle Village. About three miles beyond the Sunset Post Office, turn right on Whitman Road. Another right turn onto Crockett Cove Road brings you to the preserve entrance, marked by a small sign and registration box. There is parking space for a few cars. Crockett Cove Woods is also accessible from Barbour Farm Road. From Stonington, travel about 2 miles west on the Shore Road until you reach Whitman Road on the left (just after the Airport Road).



## Crockett Cove Woods

### Self-Guiding Nature Trail



A dense spruce and fir forest covers this 98-acre preserve on Deer Isle. On the island's north shore, along Eggemoggin Reach, the trees are mostly white pine mixed with oak and other hardwoods. Here along the southwest shore, lichens and mosses thrive in the cool moist air of this coastal "fog forest." A wide variety of coniferous forest birds can also be seen here.

The preserve and its trails are maintained and managed by local volunteers and Conservancy staff. In 1975, Crockett Cove Woods Preserve was donated to The Nature Conservancy by artist and builder Emily Muir of Stonington. This brochure is dedicated to her.



#### The Nature Conservancy in Maine

Fort Andross  
14 Maine Street, Suite 401  
Brunswick, ME 04011  
(207) 729-5181  
[www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

## The Nature Trail

Crockett Cove Woods is exposed to the prevailing southwest winds bringing moisture from the ocean. Its trees hold onto the fog so characteristic along the Maine coast. Mosses cling in blanket-like layers to large granite boulders left by the departing glaciers. Old man's beard lichen hangs delicately from the trees. This preserve is at its best on a wet day when the colors are more vibrant. It is, in essence, a coastal fog forest. As part of a more extensive trail system, the quarter-mile nature trail winds through the forest and a small bog. Numbered markers guide you through the woods.

1. The struggle for existence is epitomized by the spruce tree growing in a cleft in the ledge. You shall see along the trail that the forest is dynamic.
2. **LOOP TRAIL:** On the right, a short loop trail marked by one red blaze rejoins the nature trail (marked by two red blazes). It begins later on, so continue straight ahead.
3. The top of the ledge is a squirrel's lunch table. Here a **red squirrel** has opened spruce cones to get the small winged seeds. The black stripe on its side sometimes leads to confusion with the **chipmunk**, which is not found on Deer Isle. (Because it is an island, Deer Isle lacks many species commonly found on the mainland.)

Other forest mammals are more secretive; these mammals include **snowshoe hare, white-tailed deer, weasel, red fox, deer mouse, and the tiny masked shrew. Raccoons and striped skunks**, which are abundant, colonized the island after the Deer Isle-Sedgewick Bridge was built in 1939.

4. **Red spruce** (*Picea rubens*), with bright green foliage, is the dominant tree species here. It is well adapted to the cool temperatures and high rainfall found along the coast. A related species, **white spruce**, (*P. glauca*) is distinguished by its bluish needles. Its pungent odor has earned it the name skunk spruce or cat spruce.

5. Here, past logging has permitted natural light, promoting growth of **bracken fern** (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and **blueberry** (*Vaccinium angustifolium*). The local flora is influenced by acid soils derived from the region's granite bedrock. For example, the bracken, identified by its three-branched fronds, is an indicator of acidic soil.

6. The cool, moist fog forest supports a great diversity of mosses and lichens. Take time to marvel at the variety of colors and textures carpeting the ground and covering rocks and trees. Mosses vary from light to dark green while lichens often have a grayish cast. A moss is a simple green plant that reproduces by spores. A lichen is a symbiotic partnership between a fungus that provides support and absorbs nutrients and water, and an alga that performs photosynthesis and thus provides food for the fungus. The dominant moss of the forest floor is **Schreber's moss** (*Pleurozium schreberi*), identified by the reddish "stem." The highly branching lichen is **reindeer lichen** (*Cladina rangiferina*). It is

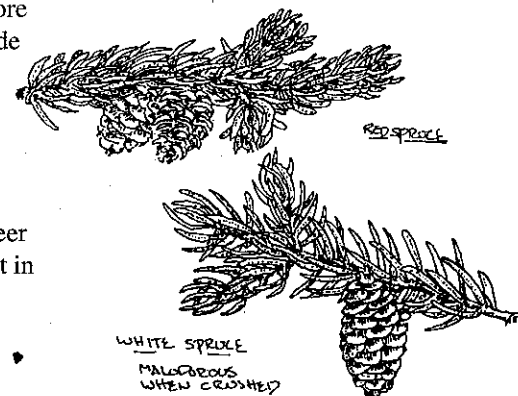
abundant in arctic tundra and is a major food for caribou. Finally, the dense, dark green mat is **toothed bazania**, a liverwort, an ancient ally of the mosses.

7. This tree fell during Hurricane Gloria in 1985. Note the shallow spreading roots adapted to thin post-glacial soils.

8. **Red maple** (*Acer rubrum*) tolerates poorly drained soils,

but dies out in dense shade, so it occurs primarily in the early stages of forest succession. It has toothed three-lobed leaves with red stems and light undersides.

9. **Striped maple** (*Acer pensylvanicum*), also called moosewood, is a shrub or tree of the forest under-story. Look for red maple nearby. In the clearing ahead, probably created by past logging, the young spruces have a "population problem." Competition for light and space will result in heavy mortality as they mature, naturally thinning the stand.



10. The **bunchberry** (*Cornus canadensis*) growing at your feet is a dwarf dogwood. White flowers followed by red berries are borne on its four to six-leaved stems.

11. This immense boulder is a **glacial erratic**. Originating elsewhere, it was deposited here by the glaciers about 12,000 years ago. Its face supports **rock tripe** (*Umbilicaria vellea*), a large foliose lichen attached to the rock by a central "umbilicus." Do not climb on the boulders as lichens are fragile and grow very slowly.

12. **LOOP TRAIL:** Here a short trail, marked by single red discs, wanders up behind the ledges and leads to hiking trails. When you complete the self-guided nature trail, return here to stretch your legs and look for new things on this alternate route back to the parking lot.

13. The dead white birch on the left is festooned with **old man's beard** lichen (*Usnea sp.*). In front of the birch is a clump of **cinnamon fern** (*Osmunda*

*cinnamomea*). Distinguished by its separate plumelike fruiting body or sporangium, it is common in wet woodlands. To the right of the birch are two **balsam firs** (*Abies balsamea*), a favorite for Christmas trees and balsam pillows.

14. The trail now follows an old logging road through a miniature bog forest. In the distant past, there was probably open water in this depression. Debris accumulated, the forest slowly gained a foothold and the landscape changed. Like the lichen-covered ledges, the bog is a fragile environment. A thick mat of **peat moss** (*Sphagnum spp.*) keeps the water cool and highly acidic. Lack of oxygen below the surface slows decay.

Insectivorous plants, like these **pitcher plants** (*Sarracenia purpurea*) have evolved a means of supplementing their nitrogen intake in such nutrient-poor environments. The hair-lined pitcher traps insects, which are then digested by the plant's enzymes.

15. Several woody plants characteristic of bogs and wet woodlands are found here. The familiar **speckled alder** (*Alnus rugosa*), identified by its broad wavy-margined leaves, fixes nitrogen in the soil as do legumes such as peas and beans. Near the beginning of the walk-way are **witherod** or wild raisins (*Viburnum cassinoides*), a shrub with shiny dark leaves. Its berries are good wildlife food, and its long branches, used for weaving baskets, were also used for the proverbial school switch. On both sides are two members of the holly family. Neither has spiny leaves, but both have small red berries. The grey barked **winterberry** (*Ilex verticillata*) has toothed leaves, while the **mountain holly** (*Nemopanthus mucronata*) has broader smooth-margined leaves.

16. Beware of **poison ivy** (*Rhus toxicodendron*) with **three shiny untoothed leaves**. It is uncommon on Deer Isle. Behind it are the spreading leaves of **skunk cabbage** (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), a relative of jack-in-the-pulpit. Look carefully in the sphagnum along the boardwalk for the tiny reddish leaves of the **round-leaved sundew** (*Drosera rotundifolia*). It has sticky hairs on the leaves that entrap insects, and is thus analogous to the pitcher plant. Also search for the vine-like stems of **small cranberry** (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*). You will see its more familiar cousin at #17.



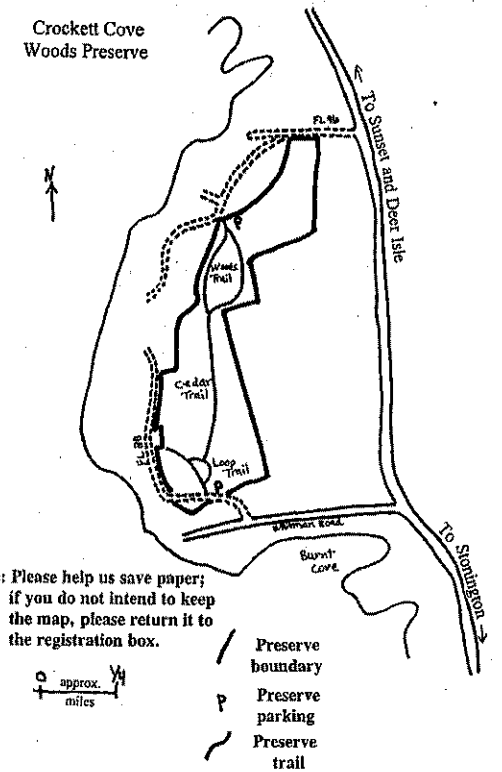
17. You may hear several birds of the spruce forest: the nasal "yank-yank" of the red-breasted nuthatch, the highly pitched calls of tiny kinglets, the varied songs of many warblers, the scolding of black-capped and rarer boreal chickadees, or the hoarse croak of the raven.

On the rock is **large cranberry** (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) intertwined with reindeer lichen. This sight is too shady for the cranberry to flower and bear fruit. To the right of the low stump is a clump of the striking **staghorn** or **bayonette lichen** (*Cladonia gracilis*).

18. The prominent dark green tufts (that look like tiny pine seedlings) in the paler sphagnum moss in the trail are **hair-capped moss** (*Polytrichum sp.*) named for its upright spore capsules.

*Here the trail leaves the preserve. Please retrace your steps, remembering the loop trail. The hiking trails can be reached from the loop trail.*

**Hiking trails:** *The yellow trail will take you to the northern end of the preserve. Follow the yellow markers and proceed to the double orange mark. From here, follow the orange in either direction, as this trail is also a loop. This one-mile plus walk traverses a varied terrain: mixed conifer and deciduous woods, concentrated cedar forest, and mature spruce stands. Part of the trail is wet at times as it crosses and recrosses a stream, while another section intersects an old logging road.*



## Preserve Guidelines

*Please help us protect this natural area by leaving the preserve in an undisturbed condition and observing these few preserve guidelines. Thank you.*

- Please stay on the trails, and respect the private property across the road and beyond the trails.
- Do not light fires, and do not smoke in the woods.
- Please do not remove rocks, plants, or animals; take nothing but photographs.
- The preserve is open for day use only. Camping is not permitted.
- Only foot traffic is permissible in the preserve. Motor vehicles, bikes or horses are not allowed.
- To protect the resident wildlife, please leave your pets at home.

For more information, contact The Nature Conservancy at (207) 729-5181.

