

use of coastal marshes in northern areas (Russo 1991; Marquardt 1996).

Aesthetics, the Arts, and Recreation

A drive to most beaches will reveal coastal waterways and marshlands in route. Driving from the mainland to the barrier island beaches, most people are awestruck by the openness of the verdant plains lying behind the sand dunes with the ocean in plain view. The natural beauty of the marshes varies with seasons, green in the peak of summer and yielding a golden glow in the fall, sometimes with hints of red coming from salt marsh pannes dominated by glassworts. Salt marshes provide unique natural vistas where the rivers meet the sea or freshwater mixes with saltwater, and they have inspired many artists past and present (Figure 7.9).

Testimony of this can be found at any coastal art show where paintings and photographs of the variety of coastal wetlands including rocky shore, tidal marshes, and beaches will often dominate the selections. Since many people can't afford to have a marsh view from their backyard, they will bring home artwork showing these vistas to decorate their living room, family room, or study. One of the more

famous painters of salt marshes is 19th-century American luminist and landscape painter Martin Johnson Heade. He is noted for panoramic paintings showing salt hay stacks in Northeast marshes, mainly along Massachusetts' North Shore (Figure 7.10, cover). A collection of his work can be viewed online at Hay in Art (www.hayinart.com/000163.html).

Before the mass production of plastic and cork-bodied decoys, decoy carving was a tradition among waterfowl hunters throughout North America. Wooden decoys were carved by hand from pine or cedar. Decoys, of course, were used to lure ducks and shorebirds to areas where hunters were waiting. In many cases, huge numbers of decoys were set in water. Today wooden decoys are widely appreciated as art with numerous decoy festivals and local, national, and international competitions held annually. Some museums are dedicated to collecting, displaying, and telling the history of decoy carving. The Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art (Salisbury, MD) maintains perhaps the largest collection of antique decoys with examples from across the country. The museum has sponsored the Ward World Championship Wildfowl Carving Competition for more



Figure 7.9. An art class painting a salt marsh landscape on Cape Cod.