

Deep Emergent Marsh

MNHESP State Rank: S4

PHYSICAL

Hydrology Permanently saturated and often inundated with 10 – 60 cm (.32 – 24 in) of standing water.

Soil Mineral soils with a surface layer of well-decomposed organic matter.

Topography Shallow basins, lake and stream margins.

Elevation Occurring from 294 – 298 m (965 – 977 ft) in the primary study area.

Form Wetlands dominated by robust, emergent, often grass-like, vegetation.

DOMINANT PLANT SPECIES¹

Canopy Red maple.

Characteristics Limited to one or few trees scattered throughout community.

Subcanopy Absent.

Shrubs Silky dogwood, buttonbush, and speckled alder

Characteristics Shrub layer sparse or confined to small colonies within deep emergent marsh.

Herbs Broad-leaved cattail, common reed, giant bur-reed, pickerel weed, tuckahoe, common arrowhead, purple loosestrife, sweet-flag, yellow water-lily, and bulblet-bearing water-hemlock.

Characteristics Variable, though usually dense and always the dominant layer.

Climbing Plants Absent.

Bryophytes Largely absent.



Notes Variations occurred based on elevation and hydrology (lake or stream). Purple loosestrife is a non-native and invasive species of this community.

COMMON ANIMAL SPECIES²

Mammals Muskrat and raccoon.

Birds Great blue heron, Virginia rail, red-winged blackbird, mallard, green heron, song sparrow, and yellow warbler.

Herpetiles Eastern newt, northern leopard frog, bull frog, green frog, snapping turtle, and painted turtle.

Fish Chain pickerel, largemouth bass, bluegill sunfish, yellow perch, and cyprinids.

Notes Fish present in flooded deep emergent marshes that are adjacent to lakes and streams.

CONSERVATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND NOTES

MNHESP State Rank³ S4.

Rare Species⁴ Hard-stem bulrush (S?), oblong bulrush (unranked), and common moorhen (special concern).

¹ Scientific names provided in Attachment F.

² Scientific names provided in Attachment C.

³ State rank follows Swain and Kearsley 2000.

⁴ State rank and status follow MNHESP 1999.

Distribution in MA Found throughout most of the state with the greatest concentrations in central and eastern Massachusetts.

Distribution in the Study Area Frequent along Housatonic River in downstream portion of primary study area and in backwater areas.

Variation Three additional associations observed in characteristic settings: (1) Marshes on the shores of moderately alkaline lake/ponds dominated by hard-stem bulrush or oblong bulrush; (2) marshes in backwater areas with a high proportion of shorter, broad-leaved and floating-leaved plants; and (3) marshes in former lake basins dominated by wool-grass and three-way sedge

Synonyms Palustrine Emergent (Cowardin *et al.* 1979); Robust Emergent Marsh (Weatherbee and Crow 1992).

REFERENCES

- Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of Wetlands and Deep Water Habitats of the United States. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. 1999. Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas: 2000-2001 Edition. Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Westborough, MA, USA.
- Swain, P.C., and J.B. Kearsley. 2000. Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts. Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Westborough, MA, USA.
- Weatherbee, P.B., and G.E. Crow. 1992. Natural plant communities of Berkshire County, Massachusetts. *Rhodora* 94:171-209.

