



### Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat



**Dataset Use:** Natural Resource Protection Act (NRPA)

**Keywords:** IWWH, wetlands, NRPA, inland, waterfowl, wading bird, significant habitat

#### DESCRIPTION

IWWH that have been rated as high or moderate qualify as NRPA habitats. The IWWH rating is based on the composition of wetland subtypes, acreage and diversity of wetland habitats, interspersions of vegetation and water, and the percent of open water. Polygons represent the wetland footprint plus a 250-foot upland habitat zone used by wildlife associated with the wetland that also provides protection from disturbance. This dataset was developed in accordance with NRPA and the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act (Growth Management). Depending on the version, "low" value IWWHs may or may not be included. This dataset primarily is used to depict IWWHs regulated under NRPA. A separate dataset based on this one captures IWWHs as potential Resource Protection under Municipal Shoreland Zoning.

#### PURPOSE

Wetland mapping was originally intended to capture wetland areas that were potential habitat for wildlife. The original "high, moderate, low" rating system reflected deficiencies in key characteristics of wetland habitats for wildlife. Today the mapping is intended to identify wetlands that should be protected under NRPA. The rating system is score-based with no easily identified ecological difference among ratings.

#### SOURCE HISTORY

Wetland boundaries and characteristics are mapped from aerial photos and rated using 5 criteria. The mapping rules and rating criteria were modified slightly in 2008. For mapping,

the rule changes were more exclusive in several ways. For ratings, the primary change was to use all of the wetland type components vs. just the dominant type, to weight extremely large wetlands higher, and to use all 5 criteria for every IWWH instead of a 2-tiered rating system.



EXAMPLE OF INLAND WADING BIRD AND WATERFOWL HABITAT LAYER AND IMAGERY (NAIP 2009)

#### ACCESS AND USE LIMITATIONS

Distribution of these data to other users by anyone other than Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW), Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP), or Maine Office of Geographic Information Systems (MEGIS) is NOT authorized. Use of these data for identifying Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat under Maine's Natural Resource Protection Act is the only use that is endorsed by MDIFW; other uses may or may not be valid.

#### GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT

Statewide, but the 2008 update that improved mapping resolution and incorporated some mapping/rating rule changes, was done only for the organized towns. Unorganized town mapping is still primarily based on NWI.

#### ACCURACY

Unknown. For organized towns, the imagery used for mapping ranged from 6 inch to 2 foot resolution. For unorganized towns, average imagery resolution was 3.3 feet. Accuracy of delineating boundaries, which involves a subjective interpretation of the imagery, is unknown. Accuracy of classifying the different wetland types also is unknown.



# MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

## HABITAT DATASET FACT SHEET

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### UPDATE STATUS

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A major upgrade was made to all IWWHs in organized towns in 2008. Prior to that, the last major upgrade was in 2002. Unorganized town IWWHs are still 2002-vintage. Individual IWWHs are modified occasionally based on regional biologist input; typically these are just rating changes or clipping small sections from the 250 foot upland habitat.

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### FUTURE PLANS

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The NRPA Iwwh layer will be updated as needed based on Management Section input from site visits. Habitat Group will maintain a list of changes made to individual Iwwhs in the NRPA to explain discrepancies between the SZ and NRPA layers. An effort to update at least the boundaries for IWWHs in the unorganized towns was begun in 2012 and will be ongoing. An effort to quantify the improvement in confidence of IWWH value ratings for the 2008 update versus the previous mapping is needed. We also need to explore the potential of light detection and Ranging (LIDaR) data and color infrared (CIR) imagery for mapping and rating IWWHs.

#### NEXT SCHEDULED UPDATE

Unknown.

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### CITATION

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*Habitat data layer fact sheet for Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat*, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 650 State Street, Bangor, ME 04401

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### DATA ACCESS LOCATION(S)

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MEGIS Data Catalog, State SQL Server, HMAP, MDEP Website.

For more information about this and other habitat data layers, please contact the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Research and Assessment Section's Habitat Group at (207) 941-4466 or visit our website [www.maine.gov/ifw/wildlife/habitat\\_data/requesting\\_data.htm](http://www.maine.gov/ifw/wildlife/habitat_data/requesting_data.htm)