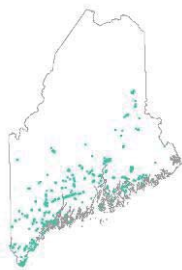




MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

HABITAT DATASET FACT SHEET

Significant Vernal Pools



Dataset Use: Natural Resource Protection Act (NRPA)

Keywords: significant, vernal pool, SVP, PSVP, significant habitat, SWH, NRPA, PBR

DESCRIPTION

This dataset depicts significant vernal pool (SVP) or potentially significant vernal pool (PSVP) habitat. The habitat includes the pool depression used for breeding by amphibians and other indicator species and that portion of the critical terrestrial habitat within 250 feet of the spring or fall high water mark of the depression. SVPs and PSVPs were mapped and surveyed in the field by Maine Department of Environmental Protection staff, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife biologists, and appropriately trained consultants.

To qualify for protection under the significant wildlife habitat provisions of NRPA, a wetland must meet a two-part definition based on field observations of both its physical (vernal pool) and biological (significant vernal pool) properties. A vernal pool must have the following characteristics: natural origin, temporary to semi-permanent hydroperiod, lack permanently flowing inlet or outlet, and lack predatory fish. A vernal pool qualifies as significant if it meets either the abundance or rarity criteria established in rule. Abundance refers to any one or combination of the following species abundance levels, documented in any given year: Fairy Shrimp (presence), Blue-spotted salamander (10 or more egg masses), Spotted salamander (20 or more egg masses), Wood frog (40 or more egg masses). Rarity relates to a pool with documented use in any given year by state-listed ETSC species that commonly require a vernal pool to complete a critical portion of their life-history. If a vernal pool is deemed non-significant, it is mapped as a point and is available in the vernal pool center point dataset.

PURPOSE

This dataset was developed in accordance with Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. Under this Act, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is designated as the authority for determining Significant Wildlife Habitats. Starting September 1, 2007, significant vernal pool habitat is protected by law under the Natural Resources Protection Act. An activity in, on, or over these areas must avoid unreasonable impacts on the significant vernal pool habitat and obtain approval from the MDEP, through a Permit by Rule (PBR) or individual NRPA approval.

SOURCE HISTORY

These data are collected via field surveys using GPS and the boundary is post processed from a field delineated pool outline or centerpoint. The methods for collecting and mapping these data have not changed.



EXAMPLE OF SIGNIFICANT VERNAL POOLS 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 Significant Vernal Pools under Maine's Natural Resource Protection Act is the only use that is endorsed by MDIFW; other uses may or may not be valid.



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GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT

Surveys for vernal pools are mostly triggered by the NRPA permitting process; however there are a handful of comprehensive municipal vernal pool surveys. The vernal pool layer is a statewide dataset based on field surveys in targeted project areas, although, all areas of the state have not been surveyed for vernal pools.

ACCURACY

These data are produced from highly accurate field derived GPS data. Pool outlines were either delineated in the field with a GPS or created from a GPS point buffered by 1/2 of the largest dimension provided on a data collection form. The pool outlines were buffered by 250 feet to create the SVP upland habitat area boundary. If no pool outline was delineated because dimensions were not provided on the data form, the center point was buffered by 250 feet to create the SVP upland habitat area boundary (rare).

UPDATE STATUS

This dataset is updated monthly and sometimes more often if necessary with newly surveyed pools. The last significant change to the dataset structure was the addition of PSVPs in August 2011. PSVPs were not included in previous versions of this dataset; however they were added because they are considered the same as SVPs in the permitting process. If further surveys or additional information determines a PSVP is not significant, it is removed from the GIS.

FUTURE PLANS

This dataset is updated monthly, and sometimes more often if necessary, with newly surveyed pools. No comprehensive revisions to the existing data or structure are expected.

NEXT SCHEDULED UPDATE

Monthly

CITATION

Habitat data layer fact sheet for Significant Vernal Pools,
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 650 State
Street, Bangor, ME 04401

DATA ACCESS LOCATION(S)

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