

Atlantic White Cedar Bog

State Rank S1

Community Description

These peatlands are dominated by dwarf heath shrubs with a sparse tree layer of Atlantic white cedar. Sheep laurel, Labrador tea, dwarf huckleberry, and other heath shrubs can form an almost continuous carpet beneath the stunted cedars. Leatherleaf is a common shrub. Herbs are sparse. The bryoid layer is well developed with peat moss covering the ground and forming the substrate.

Soil and Site Characteristics

Sites occur in basin wetlands of the southwestern coast, usually in areas transitional between fen and bog. They generally maintain contact with the groundwater but lack indicators of minerotrophic conditions. Peat and water are highly acidic.

Diagnostics

These peatlands possess abundant low heath shrubs and peat moss and are only sparsely forested by Atlantic white cedar.



Atlantic White Cedar Branch

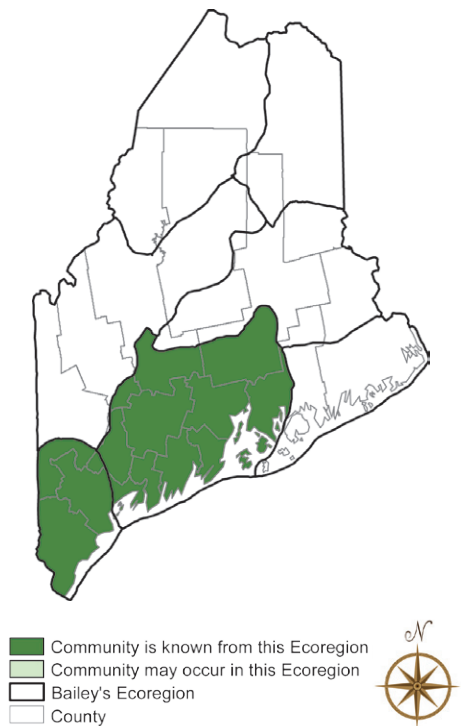
Similar Types

Atlantic White Cedar Swamps occur on mineral soil or on thin peat (<30 cm) over mineral soil and typically have higher canopy closure (>50%). Other sparsely forested bog or fen communities, such as Sheep Laurel Dwarf Shrub Bog and Leatherleaf Boggy Fen, can have similar composition in the dwarf shrub, herb, and bryophyte layers, but lack Atlantic white cedar.

Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

These bogs occur as part of larger peatlands, and maintaining the hydrologic integrity of the entire

Location Map



Atlantic White Cedar Bog

wetland with upland buffers is key. The cedars generally remain small, and therefore are of limited economic value. Most known sites in Maine are in conservation ownership. Frequent birds associated with this community include common yellowthroat and northern waterthrush. These wetlands provide habitat for the rare Hessel's hairstreak butterfly, which feeds on Atlantic white cedar in its larval stage.

Distribution

Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province, extending southward from Maine.

Landscape Pattern: Small Patch



Atlantic White Cedar Bark

Characteristic Plants

These plants are frequently found in this community type. Those with an asterisk are often diagnostic of this community.

Canopy

- Atlantic white cedar*
- Black spruce*
- White pine

Sapling/shrub

- Atlantic white cedar*
- Black huckleberry
- Mountain holly

Dwarf Shrub

- Dwarf huckleberry*
- Labrador tea*
- Large cranberry
- Leatherleaf*
- Sheep laurel*

Herb

- Pitcher plant
- Tufted cotton-grass

Bryoid

- Dicranum moss
- Reindeer lichen
- Sphagnum mosses*

Associated Rare Plants

- Atlantic white cedar

Associated Rare Animals

- Hessel's hairstreak

Examples on Conservation Lands You Can Visit

- Knight Pond, St. Clair Preserve - Waldo Co.
- Saco Heath Preserve - York Co.