

Corea Heath and Grand Marsh

Gouldsboro

Description:

The Grand Marsh-Corea Heath Focus Area encompasses the peninsula east of Prospect Harbor in the vicinity of the village of Corea. The two most ecologically significant features on this peninsula are Grand Marsh and Corea Heath. They are currently linked as one focus area because of the unfragmented habitat connecting them.

Grand Marsh

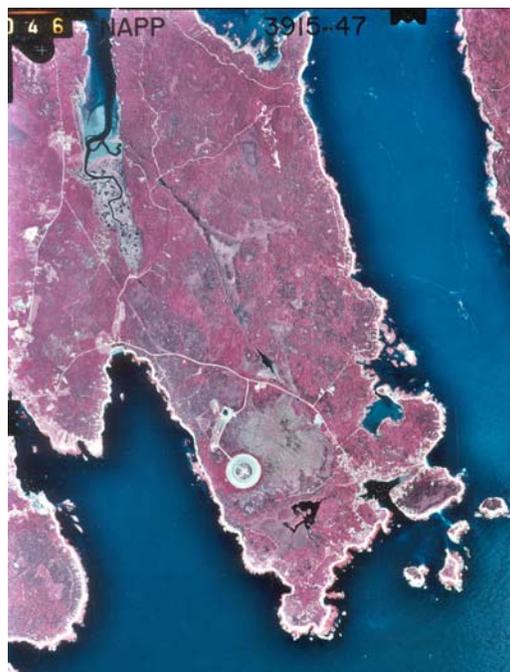
Grand Marsh is a 135-acre Salt Hay Saltmarsh bisected by a tidal creek that empties into the narrow Grand Bay. Tidal marsh vegetation occurs in north to south bands, with low marsh types dominated by salt marsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) nearest the creek and high marsh types nearest the uplands. Black-grass (*Juncus gerardii*), seaside plantain (*Plantago maritima*) and saltmeadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*) dominate here in broad areas of high marsh. Bands of vegetation are not continuous and are punctuated by open water pannes (small saltwater pools) and creek branches.

Although this tidal marsh is not as large as some others in the East Coastal region, it is in very good condition, with very little to no evidence of past ditching that characterizes many salt marshes in Maine. Moreover, the adjacent uplands are intact. The marsh is mapped as both Tidal Waterfowl and Wadingbird Habitat and Shorebird Feeding and Roosting Habitat.

Corea Heath

Corea Heath is an approximately 250-acre Coastal Plateau Bog that abuts Route 195 near the village of Corea. It stands out as an excellent example of a coastal plateau bog ecosystem because of its large size, circular shape, well-developed concentric patterning, and raised central treeless plateau with evident marginal slopes. Corea Heath supports several species of rare plants including the globally rare Wiegand's sedge. Stunted jack pine trees also occur at Corea Heath. Though not rare, this species is very uncommon in a peatland setting in Maine.

A large portion of Corea Heath, especially in the southern half, is characterized by well-defined ridge and depression relief. The hollows, some of which retain surface water for long periods, contain



dwarf shrubs, deer-hair sedge (*Trichophorum cespitosum*), lichen, and mud-bottom areas. The ridges support a similar variety of species including stunted black spruce (*Picea mariana*), black crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), and peat mosses.

A large antenna facility formerly owned and operated by the U.S. Navy sits on a concrete pad in the western portion of Corea Heath. Only a small portion of the peatland was destroyed by the construction, and its subsequent impact on the surrounding peatland seems negligible. An abandoned access road that was built upon fill about ¼ of the way across the heath from the eastern side leads to a small abandoned building frame. Despite past disturbances to the peatland surface, the hydrological integrity of Corea Heath appears to be intact as evidenced by two prominent fen drainage ways to the north and to the southwest.

In addition to the ecological features described above there is a small jack pine woodland community at the southeastern tip of this peninsula near Sand Cove.

Rare Species and Exemplary Natural Community Table for Corea Heath

Common Name	Latin Name	S-RANK	G-RANK	State Status
<i>Exemplary Natural Communities</i>				
Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem		S3	N/A	N/A
Salt-Hay Saltmarsh		S3	N/A	N/A
Jack Pine Woodland (historic)		S3	N/A	N/A
<i>Rare Plants</i>				
Screwstem	<i>Bartonia paniculata</i>	S1	G5	T
Pickering's reed bent-grass	<i>Calamagrostis pickeringii</i>	S1	G4	T
Swarthy sedge	<i>Carex adusta</i>	S1	G5	E
Wiegand sedge	<i>Carex wiegandii</i>	S3	G3	SC

Other Habitats Mapped by MDIFW:

- Tidal Waterfowl / Wading Bird Habitat
- Freshwater Waterfowl / Wading Bird Habitat
- Shorebird Feeding and Roosting Areas
- Bald Eagle Essential Habitat

Conservation Considerations:

- In general, threats to peatlands include peat mining, cranberry harvesting, timber harvest around the forested perimeters, and development.
- The ecological integrity of peatlands, including all the processes and life forms they support, is dependent on the maintenance of the current hydrology and water quality of these systems. Intensive timber harvesting, vegetation clearing, soil disturbance, new roads, and development on buffering uplands can result in greater runoff, sedimentation, and other non-point sources of pollution.
- Peatland systems benefit from establishing and/or maintaining vegetative buffers around their perimeter wherever possible. A buffer of 250 feet or more will serve to limit

- impacts from adjacent development, help prevent erosion, limit colonization of invasive species, and prevent unnecessary impacts from off road vehicle use.
- Some of the rare plant populations at Grand Marsh are found within close proximity to Route 195. As a result, roadside spraying of herbicides and/or the use of road salt may have an adverse impact on these rare plant populations and therefore should be avoided.
 - Increased shoreline development adjacent to Grand Marsh may result in habitat fragmentation, water quality degradation, and increased recreational use.
 - Although a few invasive species occur on the periphery of the Grand Marsh, it is largely devoid of aggressive plants such as common reed (*Phragmites australis*) that have colonized other disturbed salt marshes in the northeast.

Protection Status:

The majority of Corea Heath has been transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The disposition of the remaining former Navy lands at Corea Heath is not yet determined. The remainder of the Focus Area is apparently in private ownership.