

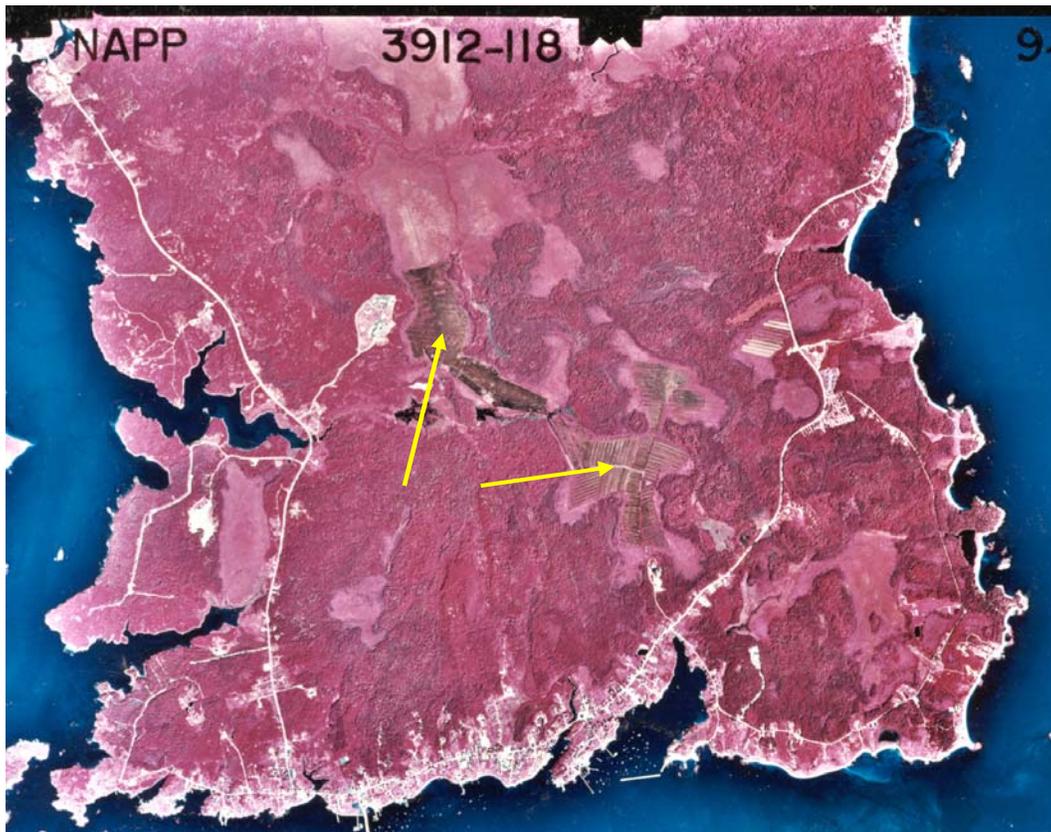
Jonesport Heaths

Jonesport

Description:

The Jonesport peninsula supports some of the largest and most interesting coastal plateau bogs in Maine. The three most significant plateau bog systems include Jonesport Heath, Kelley Point Heath and West Jonesport Heath.

By far the largest of the three, “Jonesport Heath” consists of southern and northern lobes that occupy a major portion of the central part of Jonesport peninsula. The northern lobe of Jonesport Heath is largely intact (as is an adjunct section further to the northeast). The northern lobe is characterized by a series of distinct, low sloping plateaus bordered by well-defined lags (wetter areas). Plant species with particular maritime affinities here include black crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), baked apple-berry (*Rubus chamaemorus*), deer-hair sedge (*Trichophorum cespitosum*), and dragon’s mouth orchid (*Arethusa bulbosa*). Unpatterned fens occupy the stream valleys between the northern and southern lobes. Virtually the entire southern lobe of Jonesport Heath has been mined in the past, and traffic from all-terrain vehicles has subsequently disturbed the central part of the heath.



Color infra-red air photo of Jonesport Heaths (1991). Arrows indicate mined areas.

The Kelley Point Heath, located on the east side of route 187, is similar to the Jonesport Heath, but smaller in size. It features a low, slightly sloping peat plateau dominated by black crowberry, baked apple-berry, and deer-hair sedge that is surrounded by a wetter lagg. Kelley Point Heath is in excellent condition with no indications of human disturbance.

The West Jonesport Heath, located just north of the village of West Jonesport, is the smallest of three peatlands. It is one of only a few coastal plateau bogs in the United States with open peatland contiguous to a tidal marsh and subject to tidewater erosion. Although it is not a particularly large peatland, a slightly sloping "offset dome" is displayed, with northern and western upland boundaries higher than southern and eastern boundaries. Vegetation is characteristic of coastal bogs, with well-developed *Sphagnum fuscum* (peat moss) plains and hummocks. Black crowberry and baked apple-berry are locally abundant; deer-hair sedge appears absent. Dwarf shrub communities occur at lower elevations and cover the bulk of the peatland, with sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*) and leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*) prominent. The southern and eastern margins have vigorous dwarf shrub bog cover of sweetgale (*Myrica gale*) and rhodora (*Rhododendron canadense*).

Rare Species and Exemplary Natural Community Table for Jonesport Heaths:

Common Name	Latin Name	S-RANK	G-RANK	State Status
Exemplary Natural Communities				
Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem		S2	N/A	N/A
Rare Animals				
Crowberry Blue	<i>Lycaeides empetri idas</i>	S2	G5	SC

Other Habitats Mapped by MDIFW:

Waterfowl / Wading Bird Habitat

Tidal Waterfowl / Wading Bird Habitat

Conservation Considerations:

- A significant part of the Jonesport Heath has been mined. Native vegetation will reclaim mined surfaces, but this process will take decades, depending on the hydrology of the site and extent of disturbance. Moreover, much of the hummock and hollow micro-topography present in natural peatlands is irretrievably lost when peat mining occurs.
- In general, threats to these peatlands include additional peat mining, cranberry harvesting, timber harvest around the forested perimeters, and development.
- Use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) on the heath has had a significant, if somewhat localized, impact. A well-worn ATV corridor extends from the high school area, resulting in compaction of the peat and elimination of vegetation. State officials have attempted to limit such traffic, but enforcement is difficult, and recovery will likely be slow.
- Fire scars are evident in the southwestern quarter of the West Jonesport Heath, but there are almost no signs of human disturbance. A landfill is adjacent to the northwest edge of the peatland.

Protection Status:

Each of the three heaths is in private ownership.

