

# Spectacle – Tolman Ponds

Augusta, Vassalboro

## Description

The area around encompassed by Spectacle, Dam and Tolman Ponds and their intervening uplands contains extensive wetland complexes, habitat for two state-rare animals, and good examples of forest types representative of the region. The three ponds can be thought of as one wetland complex with occasional gentle rises on the lands around them. There are vast stretches of cat-tail marsh and mixed graminoid-shrub marsh along the streams west of Tolman Pond and north of Dam Pond. Acidic fen communities occur along flat pondshores, especially those near outlets and inlets, and some streamsides. The forest types present demonstrate this area's transitional position between the Appalachian oak forests to our south and the more boreal forests of northern Maine. The red oak – northern hardwood forests here are good examples of this characteristically central Maine type, as are the hemlock forests on the more steeply sloped lakeshores. The white oak – red oak forest north of Dam Pond is more typically southern, and forests with noticeable amounts of white oak are rare this far north. The oak – northern hardwood stand north of Spectacle Pond shows a gradation from enriched conditions on the lower slope (large sugar maple and some basswood) to stonier and drier conditions upslope. Much of the forest here has not been cut in more than 50 years, and some of the red oak are more than 20" in diameter and over 60' tall.

## Rare Species and Natural Communities Summary Table

Common Name	Latin Name	EO Rank	Global Rank	State Rank
Beech - Birch - Maple Forest		BC	--	S5
White Oak - Red Oak Forest		B	--	S3
Red Oak - Northern Hardwoods Mixed Forest		B	--	S3S4
Stinkpot	<i>Sternotherus odoratus</i>	--	G5	S3
Ribbon Snake	<i>Thamnophis sauritus</i>	--	G5	S3

## Other Resources Mapped by MDIFW

Dam Pond and streams to the west are mapped as Wading Bird – Waterfowl Habitat. Deer yards are mapped west of Dam and Tolman Ponds and around the eastern and southern edge of Spectacle Pond.

## Protection Status

The Alonzo-Garcelon Wildlife Management Area covers 1,276 acres of the area in two separate parcels. It was considered a potential ecological reserve in the Ecological

Reserves Inventory conducted for the Maine Forest Biodiversity Project; however, MDIF&W has not yet designated any of the lands they manage as ecological reserves.

### **Conservation Considerations**

The combination of important wetland and upland ecological features indicates that conservation should focus on upland as well as wetland habitats. While the forest tracts here are not huge, they are representative of this region and in good condition relative to nearby areas.

The public ownership here is a good start; however, additional protection efforts could be directed to the private lands that separate and surround the public land. Appropriate conservation strategies for privately owned lands include conservation easements and fee ownership.

Monitoring for invasive exotic plants, such as barberry in the forests and purple loosestrife in the open wetlands, would help identify problems as soon as they arise, when control might be possible.

For lands where timber harvest or development continues, buffers should be maintained around all wetlands and ponds. While different species can have different buffering requirements, wider buffers provide better protection for riparian and wetland-dependent species. The state minimum shoreland zoning standards specify a minimum 75' buffer in which very little harvest or clearing is allowed, with less stringent restrictions within 250' of the wetland border. Better protection will be afforded to the wetlands and ponds if as little alteration as possible occurs within 250' of the wetland/upland border. Any timber harvesting within and adjacent to wetlands or adjacent to ponds should be implemented with strict adherence to Shoreland Zoning guidelines and Maine Forest Service Best Management Practices.