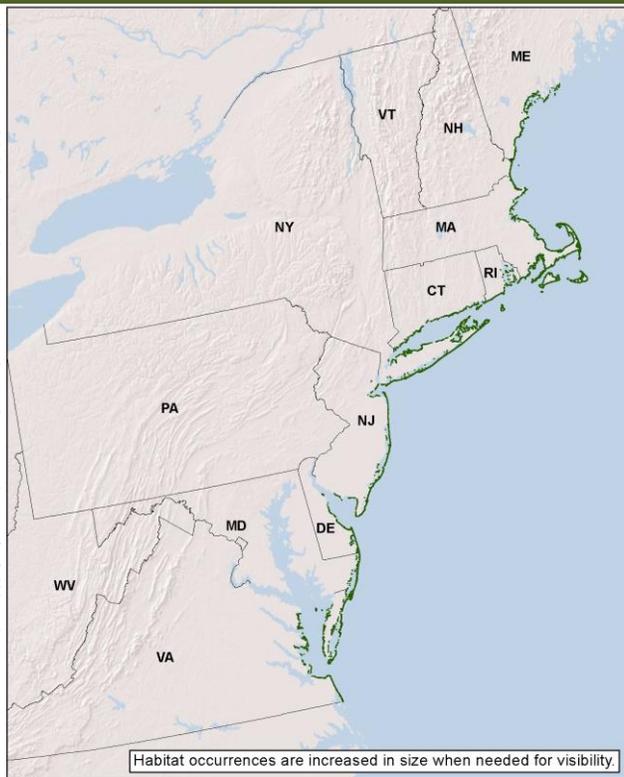




Macrogroup: Coastal Grassland & Shrubland

This map is a modeled distribution based on current data and is not a substitute for field based inventory. Contact your State Natural Heritage Ecologist for more information about this habitat.



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Description:

A sparsely vegetated beach, dune, or barrier island on unconsolidated sand and shell sediments on the Atlantic coast. A range of plant communities may be present, but trees and shrubs are restricted to sheltered areas. Constantly shifted by winds and floods, the dynamic disturbance regimes largely limit vegetation to pioneering, salt-tolerant, succulent annuals. Sea-rocket and Russian thistle are usually most numerous and characteristic. Areas that are permanently or semipermanently flooded with freshwater support pond or marsh-like vegetation, and are affected by salt spray or overwash during periodic storm events. Both upland and non-flooded wetland vegetation are included in this system and it is broadly defined in terms of floristic composition.

Ecological Setting and Natural Processes:

Extensive, exposed, sandy coastlines range from North Carolina to southern Maine (rocky coasts replace these). Dominant ecological processes include frequent salt spray, saltwater overwash, and sand movement. Although sand beaches extend landward above mean high tide, they are constantly impacted by waves and may be flooded by high spring tides and storm surges. Constant salt spray and rainwater maintain moist conditions.

Similar Habitat Types:

Difficulties modeling 2 maritime systems separately (Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Dune and Swale, and Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Sandy Beach) resulted in combining them into this one for mapping purposes.

State Distribution: CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, RI, VA

Total Habitat Acreage: 96,690

Percent Conserved: 37.5%

State	State Habitat %	State Acreage	GAP 1&2 (acres)	GAP 3 (acres)	Unsecured (acres)
MA	37%	35,602	9,686	4,776	21,140
NY	22%	20,888	2,172	3,313	15,403
VA	11%	10,964	4,785	1,702	4,477
NJ	10%	9,985	3,128	57	6,800
ME	5%	4,443	355	109	3,979
DE	4%	4,074	170	1,848	2,056
RI	4%	3,762	357	179	3,226
MD	3%	3,183	2,334	282	567
CT	3%	2,905	349	376	2,180
NH	1%	882	8	243	631

Crosswalk to State Name Examples:

Coastal Sand Dunes/Intertidal Beaches And Shores (CT), Beach And Dune Habitats (DE), Maritime Dune Community (MA), Maritime Dune Grassland/Woodland (MD), Dune Grassland (ME), Coastal Interdunal Marsh/Swale (NH), Coastal Dune Shrubland/Grass Community (NJ), Maritime Dunes (NY), Maritime Herbaceous Dune (RI), North Atlantic Mixed Dune Grassland (VA)

Crosswalk to State Wildlife Action Plans:

Upland Herbaceous - Coastal Dune (CT), Tidal Wetland - Intertidal Beaches and Shores (CT), Beach and Dune Habitats (DE), Interdunal Wetlands (DE), Coastal Dunes, Beaches, and Small Islands - Maritime Beach Strand/ Dune Communities (MA), Coastal Beaches, Dunes, and Mudflats (MD), Unconsolidated Shore (Beaches and Mudflats) (ME), Coastal Sand Dunes (NH), Beaches (NJ), Dunes (NJ), Maritime Dunes (NY), Maritime Dunes (NY), Sparsely Vegetated Habitats - Beach Grass Dune (RI), Intertidal - Estuarine Beaches Unspecified (RI), Barren Habitat - Beach (VA)

Places to Visit this Habitat:

Cape Henlopen State Park | DE
 Cape Cod National Seashore | MA
 Assateague Island National Seashore | MD
 Fire Island National Seashore | NY
 Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge | VA

Associated Species: *Appendix lists scientific names*

BIRDS: american oystercatcher, arctic tern, barn owl, black skimmer, caspian tern, chuck-will's-widow, common tern, gadwall, horned lark, ipswich sparrow, laughing gull, least tern, northern harrier, red knot, roseate tern, roseate tern, royal tern, vesper sparrow, willet

MAMMALS: eastern mole, long-tailed weasels, red fox

HERPTILES: american toad, eastern hognose snake, fowler's toad

PLANTS: American beachgrass (*Ammophila breviligulata*), coast-blite goosefoot (*Chenopodium rubrum*), oysterleaf (*Mertensia maritima*), saltmarsh aster (*Symphotrichum subulatum*), sea lyme-grass (*Leymus mollis* ssp *mollis*), seabeach amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*), seabeach knotweed (*Polygonum glaucum*), seabeach needlegrass (*Aristida tuberculosa*), slender sea purslane (*Sesuvium maritimum*)

Species of Concern (G1-G4): *Appendix lists scientific names*

BIRDS: least tern, piping plover, red knot, roseate tern

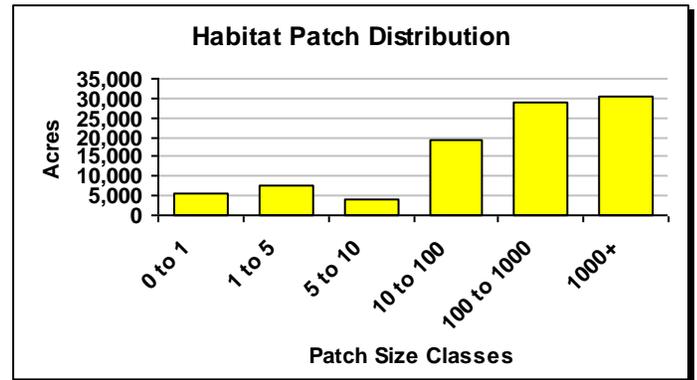
HERPTILES: diamondback terrapin, eastern spadefoot

INSECTS: beach tiger beetle (*Cicindela hirticollis*), bethany beach firefly (*Photuris bethaniensis*)

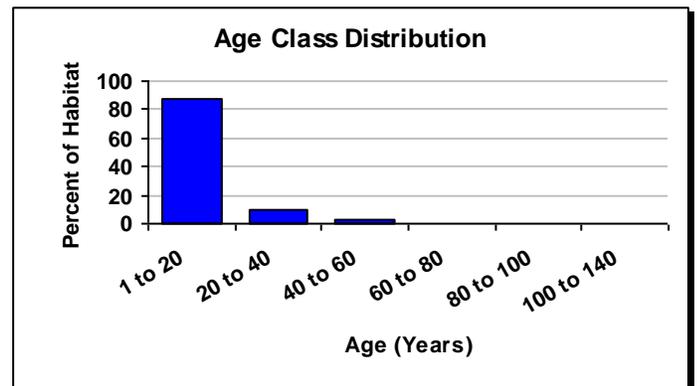
PLANTS: beach plum (*Prunus maritima*), sand-heather (*Hudsonia tomentosa*)



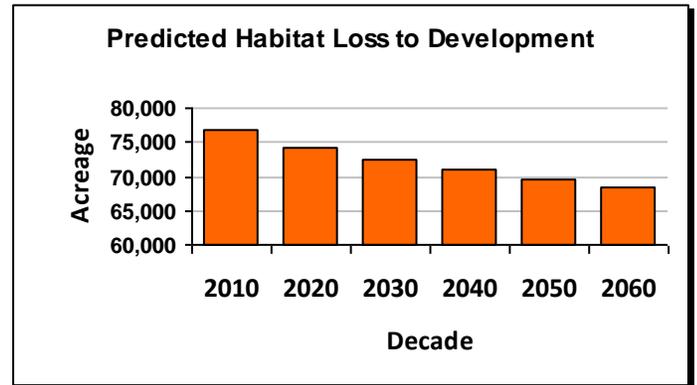
© Robert Coxie (Delaware Species Conservation & Research Program)



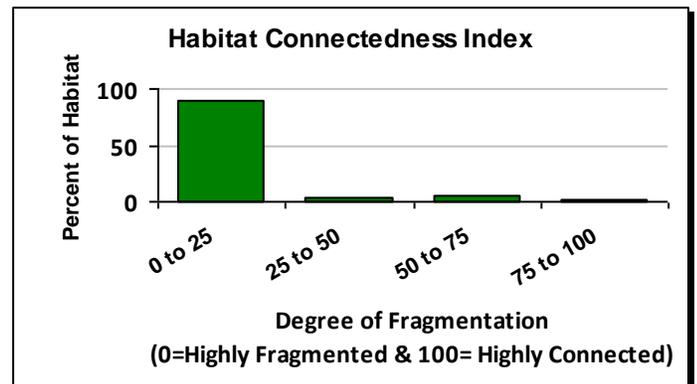
The average patch size for this habitat is 3 acres and the largest single patch is 5,945 acres. This chart shows the proportion of the habitat that is in each patch-size class.



This chart shows the average age of trees associated with this habitat based on forest inventory data. For non-forested systems or small habitats the average age is influenced by the surroundings.



This chart shows the predicted loss of habitat over the next five decades (8,263 acres) if loss continues at the same rate as 1990-2000. The average rate of loss is 165 acres per year.



This metric measures how connected or fragmented the land directly surrounding (18 square miles) the habitat is, this the chart shows the proportion of the habitat in each connectedness class.