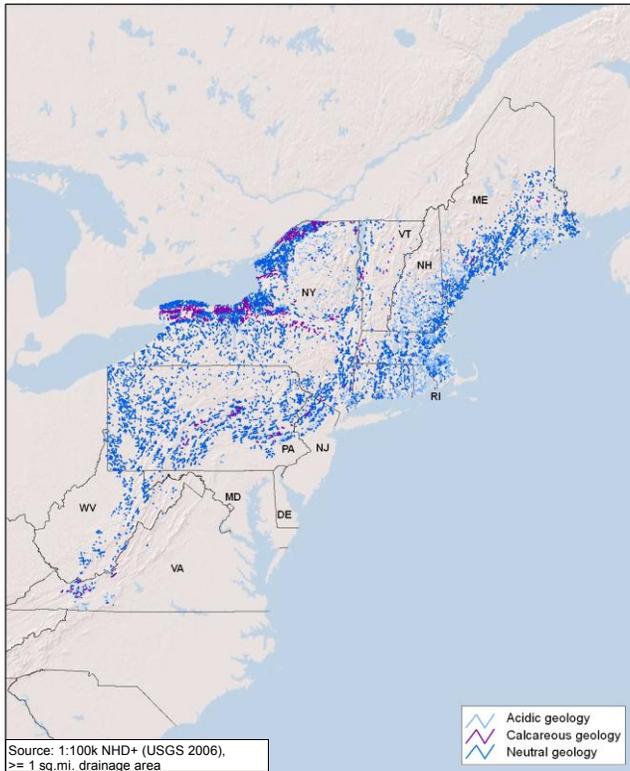


# Low Gradient, Cool, Headwaters and Creeks

## Macrogroup: Headwaters and Creeks

This map is based on a model and has had little field-checking. Contact your State Natural Heritage Ecologist or State Fish Game Agency for more information about this habitat.



Shawshheen River, © John Pheilan

### Description:

Cool, slow-moving, headwaters and creeks of low-moderate elevation flat, marshy settings. These small streams of moderate to low elevations occur on flats or very gentle slopes in watersheds less than 39 sq.mi in size. The cool slow-moving waters may have high turbidity and be somewhat poorly oxygenated. Instream habitats are dominated by glide-pool and ripple-dune systems with runs interspersed by pools and a few short or no distinct riffles. Bed materials are predominantly sands, silt, and only isolated amounts of gravel. These low-gradient streams may have high sinuosity but are usually only slightly entrenched with adjacent floodplain and riparian wetland ecosystems. Cool water temperatures in these streams means the fish community contains a higher proportion of cool and warm water species relative to coldwater species. Additional variation in the stream biological community is associated with acidic, calcareous, and neutral geologic settings where the pH of the water will limit the distribution of certain macroinvertebrates, plants, and other aquatic biota. The habitat can be further subdivided into 1) headwaters that drain watersheds less than 4 sq.mi, and have an average bankfull width of 16 feet or 2) Creeks that include larger streams with watersheds up to 39 sq.mi. and have an average bankfull width of 32 feet.

### Similar Habitat Types:

Headwaters and creeks also occur at higher elevations and on higher slopes, but these tend to have coarser substrates and faster water. Cool low gradient streams typically flow into low gradient cool rivers.

### Places to Visit this Habitat:

Blacklog Creek, Tuscarora State Forest | PA Black Creek, Genesee Valley Greenway Trail | NY Beaver Brook, Beaver Brook Reservation | MA Canoe River headwaters, Maple Park Conservation Area | MA Blackledge River headwaters, Salmon River State Forest | CT

**State Distribution:** CT, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV

**Total Habitat (mi):** 16,579

**% Conserved:** 11.5 Unit = Acres of 100m Riparian Buffer

State	State Habitat %	Miles of Habitat	Acres GAP 1 - 2	Acres GAP 3	Total Acres Unsecured
NY	41	6830	94	325	4726
PA	19	3163	53	167	2142
ME	15	2419	65	119	1631
MA	9	1430	26	216	856
NH	5	792	22	113	470
CT	4	643	27	50	403
WV	2	338	14	27	209
VT	2	294	5	26	190
NJ	2	272	35	6	167
VA	1	195	1	5	136
RI	1	145	6	25	80
MD	0	57	1	1	40

## Associated Fish:

**Most Abundant:** white sucker, fallfish, common shiner, tessellated darter, creek chub, common shiner, centralstoneroller, longnose dace, bluntnose minnow, fathead minnow, mottled sculpin, eastern blacknose dace, smallmouth bass. **Less Abundant:** cutlip minnow, pumpkinseed, margined madtom, rock bass, brook trout, fantaildarter, northern hog sucker, largemouth bass, redbreast sunfish, bluegill, banded killifish, spottail shiner, johnny darter, green sunfish, silverjaw minnow, brown bullhead, river chub, reidside dace, swallowtail shiner, greenside darter, pearl dace, chain pickerel, yellow perch, redfin pickerel, pearl dace, yellow bullhead, golden shiner, american brook lamprey, swamp darter, creek chubsucker, banded sunfish, eastern mudminnow

## Species of Concern (G1 - G4):

**Fishes:** reidside dace, mountain brook lamprey, pugnose shiner, bridle shiner, kanawha minnow, tennessee dace, black sculpin, northern brook lamprey, american brook lamprey, ironcolor shiner, blacknose shiner, new river shiner, appalachia darter, stripeback darter

**Crayfish, Mussels, and Snails:** brook floater, dwarf wedgemussel, tennessee heelsplitter, triangle floater, slippershell mussel, eastern pondmussel, eastern pearlshell, vernal physa

See Appendix 2 for scientific names

## Crosswalk to State Names:

**Vermont:** Blacknose dace-Bluntnose minnow, Blacknose dace-Creek chub. **New Hampshire:** Low gradient wetland streams; Sandy glide streams, Warm water riffle streams. **New York:** Marsh headwater stream. **Maryland:** Piedmont Streams: low gradient variant; Cold Water Streams. **Pennsylvania:** Atlantic Basin Fish Coolwater Community 1, Ohio-Great Lakes Basins Fish Coolwater Stream Community



Creek chub, © Brian Gratwicke

