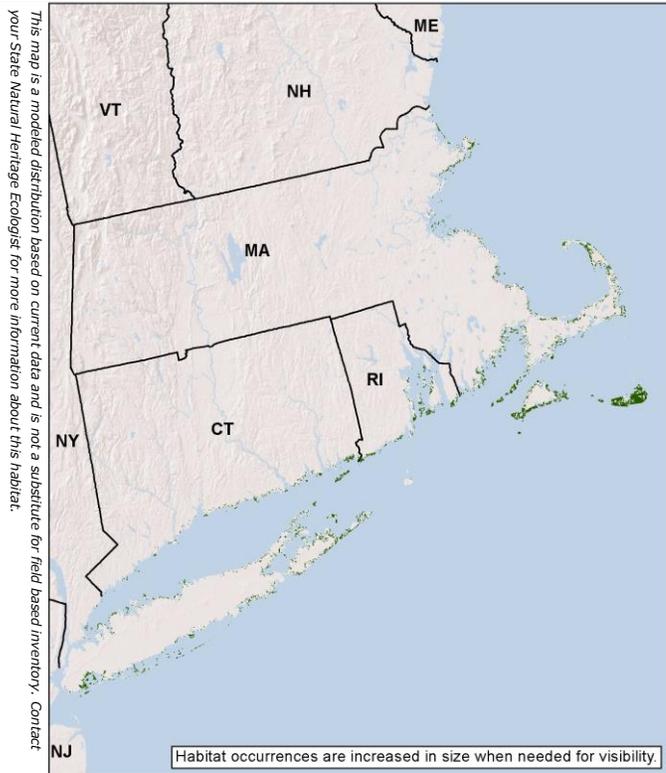




Macrogroup: Coastal Grassland & Shrubland



© Stephen M. Young (New York Natural Heritage Program)

Description:

A heathland/grassland complex of acidic, nutrient-poor and very well drained soils in coastal areas of southern New England and New York. The vegetation is maintained by extreme conditions and periodic fire or other disturbance. The system has a variable structure and may occur as heathlands, grasslands, or support a patchwork of grass and shrub vegetation. Characteristic species include huckleberry, bearberry, broom crowberry, Nantucket shadbush, golden heather, blueberry, little bluestem, and Pennsylvania sedge. They are important habitat for several bird and other animal species including the short-eared owl and regal fritillary, and (along with brushy plains and woodlands) provided habitat for the extinct heath hen.

State Distribution: CT, MA, NH, NY, RI

Total Habitat Acreage: 32,837

Percent Conserved: 28.8%

State	State Habitat %	State Acreage	GAP 1&2 (acres)	GAP 3 (acres)	Unsecured (acres)
MA	63%	20,683	4,666	2,656	13,361
NY	23%	7,579	228	785	6,567
RI	10%	3,166	371	368	2,427
CT	4%	1,371	286	89	997
NH	0%	38	0	17	21

Ecological Setting and Natural Processes:

This open grassland system of sandy, nutrient-poor, outwash soils has a complex history. The habitat occurs on drought-prone coastal soils with a history of fire, and sustained human management. Persistence is dependent on disturbance. In areas of relatively infrequent disturbance, shrubland or oak woodland may develop, but where fire and other severe disturbances are frequent grasses and herbaceous plants dominate.

Similar Habitat Types:

Often occurs as small to medium-sized patches just inland from the Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Dune and Swale or Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Maritime Forest system, and adjacent to Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Hardwood Forest.

Crosswalk to State Name Examples:

Upland Herbaceous - Sandplain And Other Warm Season Grasslands (CT), Sandplain Grassland (MA), Sandplain Heathland (MA), Maritime Grassland (NY), Maritime Heathland (NY), Maritime Grassland (RI)

Crosswalk to State Wildlife Action Plans:

Upland Herbaceous - Sandplain and Other Warm Season Grasslands (CT), Grasslands - Native upland grasslands (MA), Maritime Dunes (NY), Early Successional Habitats - Coastal Shrubland (RI)

Places to Visit this Habitat:

Harkness Memorial State Park | CT
 Cape Cod National Seashore | MA
 Middle Moors | MA
 Heckscher State Park | NY
 Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge | RI

Associated Species: *Appendix lists scientific names*

BIRDS: american oyster catcher, barn owl, bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, horned lark, northern harrier, piping plover, short-eared owl, vesper sparrow

MAMMALS: hoary bat, meadow vole, short-tailed shrew

HERPTILES: eastern spadefoot toad, northern red-bellied cooter

INSECTS: imperial moth (*Eacles imperialis*), spiny oakworm moth (*Anisota stigma*)

PLANTS: butterfly milkweed (*asclepias tuberosa*), eastern silvery aster (*symphyotrichum concolor*), hairy lettuce (*lactuca hirsuta*), lion's-foot (*prenanthes serpentaria*), New England blazingstar (*liatris scariosa*), nuttall's milkwort (*polygala nuttallii*), purple cudweed (*gamochaeta purpurea*), purple needlegrass (*aristida purpurascens*), st. andrew's-cross (*hypericum hypericoides*), thymeleaf pinweed (*lechea minor*)

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

BIRDS: Henslow's sparrow, seaside sparrow

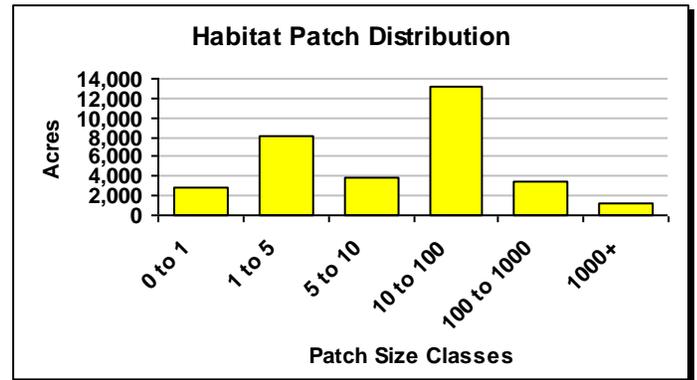
MAMMALS: beach vole

INSECTS: chain dotted geometer (*Cingilia catenaria*), chain fern borer moth (*Papaipema stenocelis*), noctuid moths (*Abagrotis nefascia*, *Chaetagnaea cerata*), pink sallow (*Psectraglaea carnosae*), regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*), straight lined mallow moth (*Bagisara rectifascia*)

PLANTS: broom crowberry (*Corema conradii*), bushy rockrose (*Helianthemum dumosum*), hyssopleaf hedge-nettle (*Stachys hyssopifolia*), nantucket shadbush (*Amelanchier nantucketensis*), sandplain flax (*Linum intercursum*)



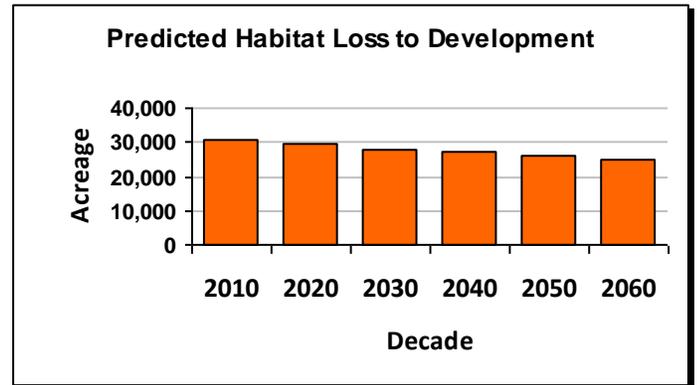
© Ben Kimball (New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau)



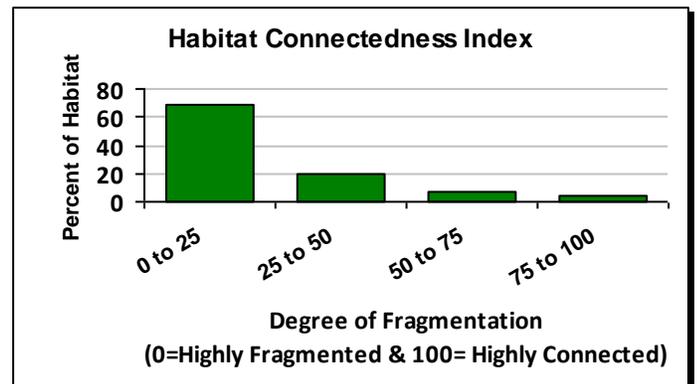
The average patch size for this habitat is 2 acres and the largest single patch is 993 acres. This chart shows the proportion of the habitat that is in each patch-size class.



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 (5,731 acres) if loss continues at the same rate as 1990-2000. The average rate of loss is 115 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.