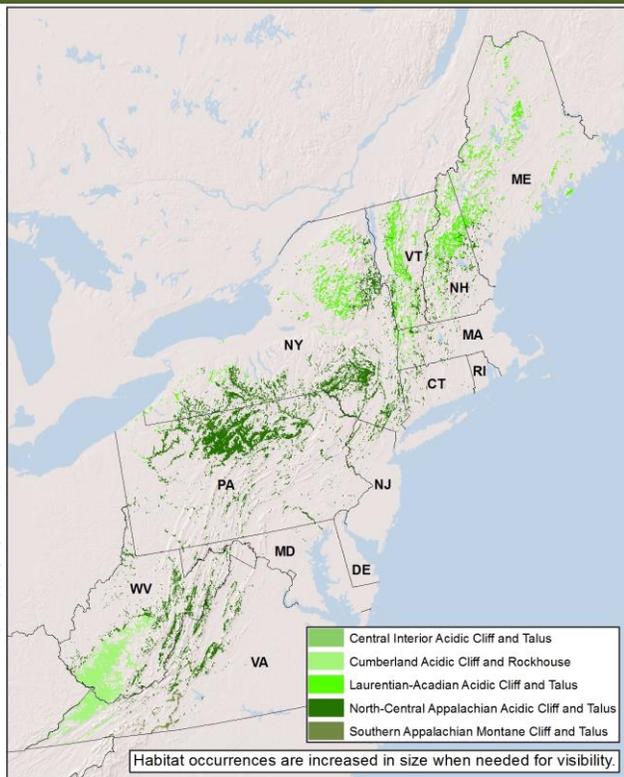




## Macrogroup: Cliff and Talus

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 cliff or talus slope formed on granitic, sandstone, or other acidic bedrock. The lack of soil, highly acidic bedrock, and constant erosion, limits the vegetation to mosses, lichens, and herbs growing on bare rock or crevices, and to sparse trees and shrubs rooted in deeper soil pockets. Lichen cover may be extensive. In the Central Appalachians, red-cedar trees, poison ivy vines and rock polypody ferns are characteristic. Birch or spruce replaces red cedar in the north, where a shrubland of heaths and reindeer lichen may develop where cold air accumulates at the sheltered bottom of slopes. Areas of concentrated seepage are sometimes present. In the Cumberland region, a mosaic of cavelike "rockhouses" and associated sandstone box canyons are typical.

### Ecological Setting and Natural Processes:

Landforms in this system are associated with steeper mountains and hills, river bluffs, and gorges. In some cases this system may take the form of upper-slope boulderfields without adjacent cliffs, where talus forms from freeze/thaw action on the bedrock. This system is prone to harsh climatic conditions; frequent disturbances include drought stress and wind and storm damage. Mass movement of rocks can also reset the ecological clock.

### Similar Habitat Types:

Cliff and talus systems have also been modeled for those steep landforms on other (calcareous and circumneutral) lithologies.

### Crosswalk to State Wildlife Action Plans:

Unique and Man-Made - Traprock Ridges (CT), Rocky Cliffs, Ridgetops, Talus Slopes, and Other Similar Habitats (MA), Rock Outcrops and Cliffs (MD), Cliff Face and Rocky Outcrops (ME), Cliffs (NH), Cliff and Talus (NY), Cliff and Talus (NY), Rock Habitats (PA), Barren Habitat - Balds (VA), Cliffs and Talus Slopes - Boreal Acidic Cliff (VT), Cliffs and Talus Slopes - Open Talus (VT), Cliffs and Talus Slopes - Temperate Acidic Cliff (VT), Rock Outcrops/Cliffs/Talus (WV)

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

**Total Habitat Acreage:** 561,802

**Percent Conserved:** 48.2%

State	State Habitat %	State Acreage	GAP 1&2 (acres)	GAP 3 (acres)	Unsecured (acres)
PA	36%	204,775	28,707	101,430	74,638
NY	19%	107,441	35,533	15,398	56,510
WV	16%	90,419	3,952	8,344	78,122
VA	8%	43,020	6,885	7,542	28,592
NH	6%	35,115	17,793	7,648	9,674
ME	6%	35,028	14,019	4,641	16,368
VT	6%	34,675	6,169	7,047	21,459
MA	1%	6,149	1,715	1,313	3,121
NJ	0%	2,675	1,324	531	820
CT	0%	2,061	300	457	1,303
MD	0%	437	72	180	185
DE	0%	4	0	0	4
RI	0%	3	0	0	3
DC	0%	1	0	0	1

### Crosswalk to State Name Examples:

Acidic Cliffs/Talus (CT), Acidic Rock Cliff Community (MA), Acidic Cliff And Bluff (MD), Acidic Cliff - Gorge/Spruce Talus Woodland (ME), Boreal/Temperate Acidic Cliff (NH), Siliceous Rock Outcrop Community (NJ), Cliff Community/Acidic Talus Woodland (NY), Birch (Black-Gum) Rocky Slope Woodland (PA), Central Appalachian / Piedmont Acidic Cliff (VA), Boreal/Temperate Acidic Cliff (VT), Rock Outcrops/Cliffs/Talus (WV)

## Places to Visit this Habitat:

Baxter State Park | ME  
 White Mountain National Forest | NH  
 Slide Mountain | NY  
 Elk State Forest | PA  
 Monongahela National Forest | WV

## Associated Species: *Appendix lists scientific names*

BIRDS: golden eagle, common raven, turkey vulture

MAMMALS: bobcat, eastern pipistrelle, porcupine

HERPTILES: broad-headed skink, eastern wormsneak, fence lizard, five-lined skink

PLANTS: boreal stitchwort (*minuartia rubella*), Carolina leaf-flower (*phyllanthus caroliniensis*), common butterwort (*pinguicula vulgaris*), fragrant cliff woodfern (*dryopteris fragrans*), Goldie's woodfern (*dryopteris goldiana*) hoary draba (*draba cana*), robbins' milkvetch (*astragalus robbinsii* var. *minor*), rock sandwort (*minuartia stricta*), small-flower bittercress (*cardamine parviflora*), smooth yellow false foxglove (*aureolaria flava*), summer grape (*vitis aestivalis* var. *bicolor*), white mountain saxifrage (*saxifraga paniculata*)

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

BIRDS: peregrine falcon

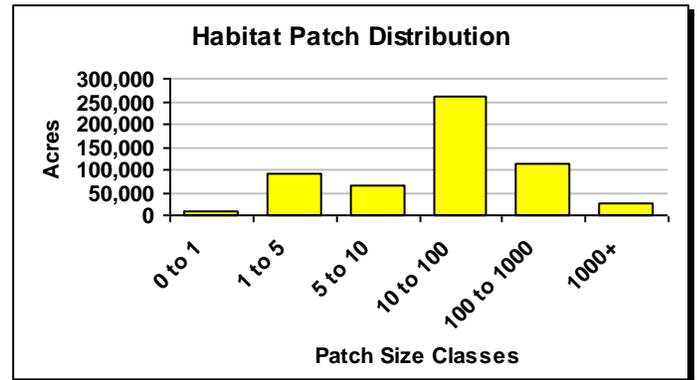
MAMMALS: allegheny woodrat, rock vole

HERPTILES: northern copperhead, timber rattlesnake

PLANTS: green spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes-ramosum*), Alabama lipfern (*Cheilanthes alabamensis*), silverling (*Paronychia argyrocoma*)



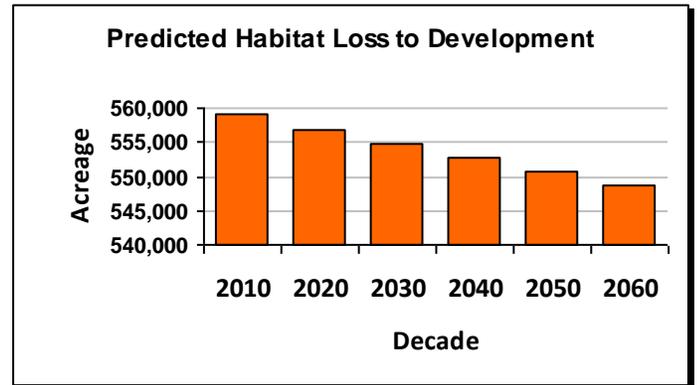
© Maine Natural Areas Program



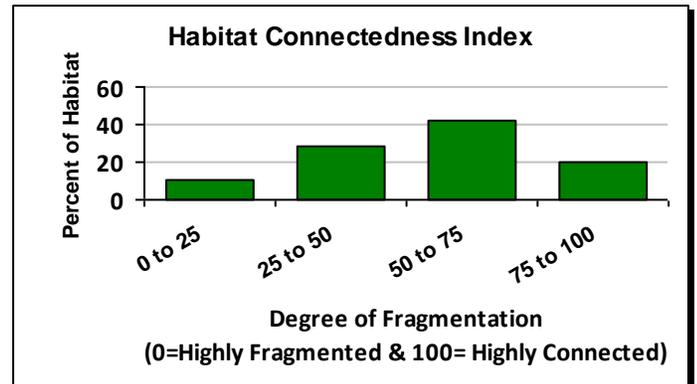
The average patch size for this habitat is 7 acres and the largest single patch is 2,038 acres. This chart shows the proportion of the habitat that is in each patch-size class.



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 (10,430 acres) if loss continues at the same rate as 1990-2000. The average rate of loss is 209 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.