



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

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Habitats in New York State

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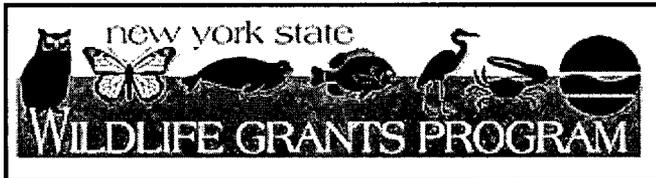
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Ecoregions of New York

The distribution of plant and animal species in New York closely corresponds with

ecoregional boundaries. These areas of ecological homogeneity, which are defined by similarities in soil, physiography, climate, hydrology, geology and vegetation, are used in the New York Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) to reference some species distribution information. The ecoregional descriptions which follow are based on The Nature Conservancy classifications for New York. You can also view a 76 kb pdf [map](#) of New York's ecoregions.

1. Great Lakes Ecoregion was recently formed during the last glacial advance 14,000 years ago and is characterized by gently rolling, low level landscapes and flat lake plains. The region's climate is influenced by the Great Lakes and has an astonishingly high level of biodiversity and unique habitats.
2. High Allegheny Plateau Ecoregion is defined by a broad series of high elevation hills that form a plateau rising to 1,700-2,100 feet, extending in the north from the Great Lakes Plains of Lake Ontario to the ridge and valley region of the Central Appalachians to the south, and from the Lake Erie Plain in the west to the Hudson River Valley.
3. Lower New England - Northern Piedmont Ecoregion lies along the mid-

to southeastern portion of New York. The limestone valley is defined by low mountains and lakes throughout.

4. The North Atlantic Coast Ecoregion includes marine, estuarine and coastal components. The region which covers Long Island and Staten Island is characterized by grasslands, shrublands, vast pine barrens, coastal plain ponds and dunes and extensive salt marshes.
5. Northern Appalachian - Boreal Forest Ecoregion which covers a large portion of northern New York covers most of the Adirondacks and Tug Hill Plateau. The region is defined by matrix forest communities and several large-scale wetland and remote pond complexes.
6. St. Lawrence - Champlain Valley Ecoregion is characterized by mountain streams, deltas and marshes that line the shores of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Champlain.
7. Western Allegheny Plateau Ecoregion has a glaciated and unglaciated portion. Located in the southwestern-most end of the state, the unglaciated portion is hilly and home to the Allegheny Mountains. The glaciated portion is characterized by low, rounded hills, and wetlands.

Watershed Basins of New York

Since the aim of the CWCS is to effectively provide guidelines for the management of New York's wildlife, a landscape classification system that would function within an existing administrative scheme was sought. The Hydrologic Unit Coverage (HUC) for New York State, developed by the United States Geological Survey, is used as the management boundary delineations for the CWCS. Eleven watersheds are defined by the HUC-4 boundaries and can be viewed on a [239 kb pdf map](#).

Ecological Communities of New York

While watersheds provide a simple approach for administrative management, a complementary habitat classification system was required for most conservation applications. The classification and descriptions of habitats outlined in Ecological Communities of New York State, second edition (Edinger et al. 2002) were adapted for use in the CWCS.

Land Use in New York State

Land use in New York has changed tremendously over the past 50 years. A reduction in the land used for agriculture has resulted in an increase in forest cover. In the CWCS, land use data comes from the USEPA Region II Multi-Resolution Landscape Characteristics (USEPA-MRLC) data. For land use in New York State, refer to the [map](#) and the following summary table.

Land Use in New York State

Land Use	Acreage	% Cover

Agriculture	7,727,003	24.8
Barren land	57,857	0.2
Commercial and Industrial	303,979	1.0
Forest	19,533,793	62.8
Parks, golf, lawns	239,728	0.8
Residential	1,352,117	4.4
Water	994,431	3.2
Wetland	901,990	2.9

Note: Land use calculated from EPA-MRLC coverage data Jan. 1997