

Jonesport Heaths



WHY IS THIS AREA SIGNIFICANT?

The Jonesport peninsula supports some of the largest and most interesting coastal plateau bogs in Maine. The three most significant plateau bog systems include Jonesport Heath, Kelley Point Heath and West Jonesport Heath. The Jonesport Heaths provide valuable wading bird and waterfowl habitat, as well as habitat for the rare crowberry blue butterfly.

Rare Animals

Crowberry blue

Rare and Exemplary Natural Communities

Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem

Significant Wildlife Habitats

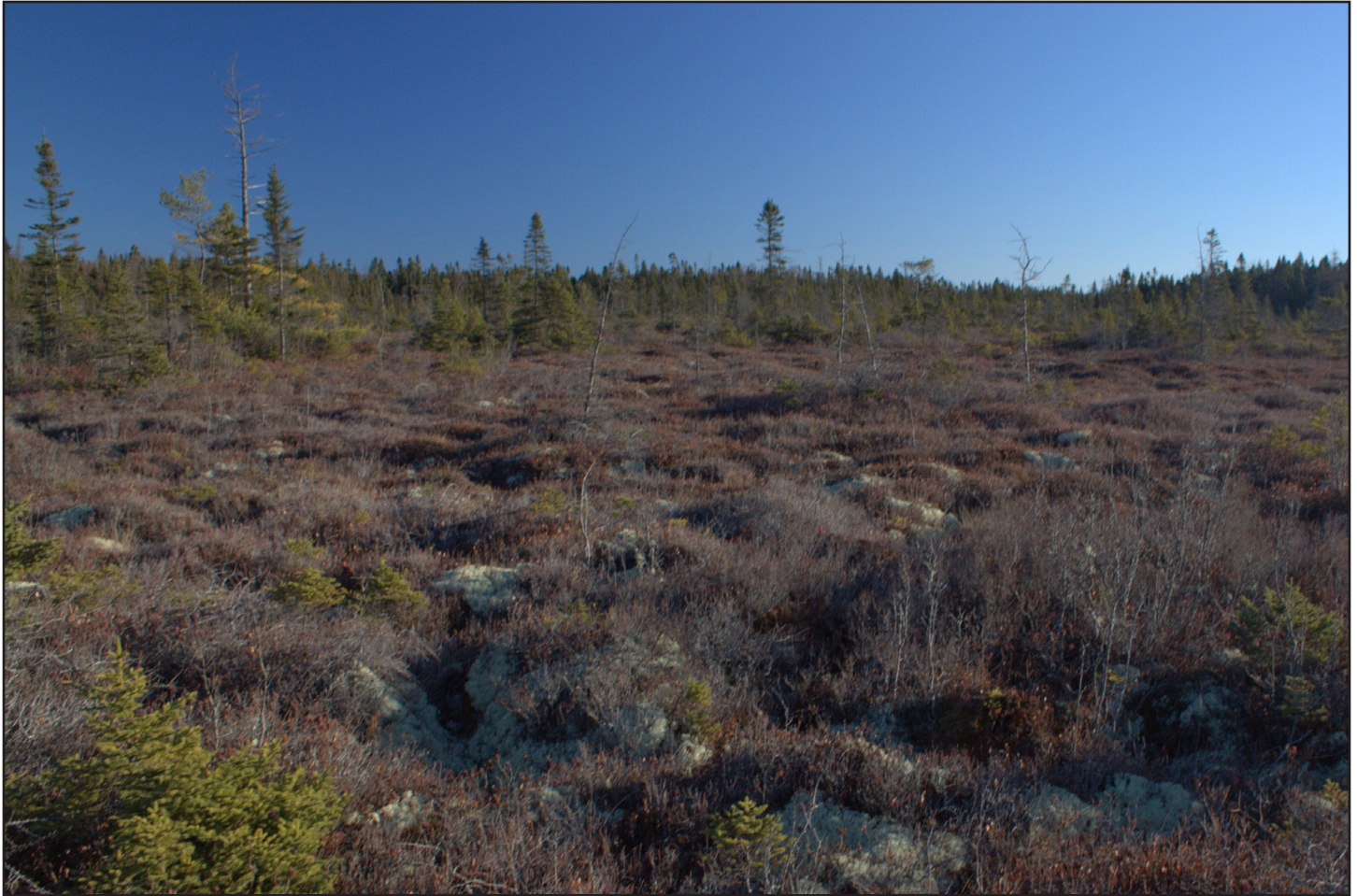
Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION

- » Educate recreational users about the ecological and economic benefits provided by the Focus Area.
- » Encourage best management practices for forestry, vegetation clearing, and soil disturbance activities near significant features to maintain ecological functions and values, hydrologic processes, and watershed protection.
- » If recreational use is impacting resources, work to enforce legal restrictions on motorized use in fragile areas.
- » Monitor and remove invasive plant populations.
- » Maintain intact forested buffers along peatlands to protect natural communities, water quality and provide valuable riparian habitat for wildlife.

For more conservation opportunities, visit the Beginning with Habitat Online Toolbox: www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/about_toolbox.html.

Photo credits, top to bottom: Maine Natural Areas Program (all photos)



Jonesport Heath, Rich Bard

FOCUS AREA OVERVIEW

The Jonesport peninsula supports some of the largest and most interesting coastal plateau bogs in Maine. The three most significant plateau bog systems include Jonesport Heath, Kelley Point Heath and West Jonesport Heath.

By far the largest of the three, Jonesport Heath consists of southern and northern lobes that occupy a major portion of the central part of Jonesport peninsula. The northern lobe of Jonesport Heath is largely intact (as is an adjunct section further to the northeast). The northern lobe is characterized by a series of distinct, low sloping plateaus bordered by well-defined lags (wetter areas). Plant species with particular maritime affinities here include black crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), baked apple-berry (*Rubus chamaemorus*), deer-hair sedge (*Trichophorum cespitosum*), and dragon's mouth orchid (*Arethusa bulbosa*). Unpatterned fens occupy the stream valleys between the northern and southern lobes. Virtually the entire southern lobe of Jonesport Heath has been mined in the past, and traffic from all-terrain vehicles has subsequently disturbed the central part of the heath.

The Kelley Point Heath, located on the east side of route 187, is similar to the Jonesport Heath, but smaller in size. It features a

low, slightly sloping peat plateau dominated by black crowberry, baked apple-berry, and deer-hair sedge that is surrounded by a wetter lagg. Kelley Point Heath is in excellent condition with no indications of human disturbance.

The West Jonesport Heath, located just north of the village of West Jonesport, is the smallest of three peatlands. It is one of only a few coastal plateau bogs in the United States with open peatland contiguous to a tidal marsh and subject to tidewater erosion. Although it is not a particularly large peatland, a slightly sloping "offset dome" is displayed, with northern and western upland boundaries higher than southern and eastern boundaries. Vegetation is characteristic of coastal bogs, with well-developed *Sphagnum fuscum* (peat moss) plains and hummocks. Black crowberry and baked apple-berry are locally abundant; deer-hair sedge appears absent. Dwarf shrub communities occur at lower elevations and cover the bulk of the peatland, with sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*) and leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*) prominent. The southern and eastern margins have vigorous dwarf shrub bog cover of sweetgale (*Myrica gale*) and rhodora (*Rhododendron canadense*).

RARE AND EXEMPLARY NATURAL COMMUNITIES

Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem consist of peatlands in east coastal Maine in which the surface is raised above the surrounding terrain, with the bog perimeter sloping sharply to mineral soil. The raised surface is flat or undulating, generally with few to no trees, and usually features extensive lawns of deer-hair sedge. Black crowberry and baked apple-berry are also characteristic. Some coastal plateau bogs support the rare crowberry blue butterfly.

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Most of the open peatland and emergent wetland types associated with the Jonesport Heaths have been mapped as high to moderate value **Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitats**. These areas provide undisturbed nesting habitat and undisturbed, uncontaminated feeding areas and are essential for maintaining viable waterfowl and wading bird populations.

The **crowberry blue butterfly** (*Lycaeides idas empetri*), a rare species in Maine, has been documented in the peatlands on the southeastern boundary of the focus area. Crowberry blue feeds on black crowberry during its larval stage.

CONSERVATION CONSIDERATIONS

- » In general, threats to these peatlands include additional mining, invasive species, timber harvest around the forested perimeters, and adjacent development that increases runoff or alters hydrology.
- » Peatland systems benefit from establishing and/or maintaining vegetative buffers around their perimeter wherever possible. A buffer of 250 feet or more will serve to limit impacts from adjacent development, help prevent erosion, limit colonization of invasive species, and prevent unnecessary impacts from off road vehicle use.
- » Invasive plants and aquatic organisms have become an increasing problem in Maine and a threat to the state's natural communities. Disturbances to soils and natural vegetation and introductions of non-native species to terrestrial and aquatic habitats can create opportunities for colonization. Landowners and local conservation groups should be made aware of the potential threat of invasive species, of methods to limit establishment, and/or of appropriate techniques for removal. For more information on invasive plants visit: <http://www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mnap/features/invasives.htm>.
- » A significant part of the Jonesport Heath has been mined. Native vegetation will reclaim mined surfaces, but this process will take decades, depending on the hydrology of the site and extent of disturbance. Moreover, much of the

Ecological Services of the Focus Area

- Provides habitat for the rare crowberry blue butterfly
- Provides undisturbed habitat and uncontaminated feeding areas for wadingbirds and waterfowl.

Economic Contributions of the Focus Area

- Offers a scenic viewshed
- Provides wildlife habitat for a number of game species that are seasonally important to Maine's rural economy.
- Provides valuable open space and recreational resource for local residents.

hummock and hollow micro-topography present in natural peatlands is irretrievably lost when peat mining occurs.

- » Use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) on the heath has had a significant, if somewhat localized, impact. A well-worn ATV corridor extends from the high school area, resulting in compaction of the peat and elimination of vegetation. State officials have attempted to limit such traffic, but enforcement is difficult, and recovery will likely be slow.
- » Fire scars are evident in the southwestern quarter of the West Jonesport Heath, but there are almost no signs of human disturbance. A landfill is adjacent to the northwest edge of the peatland.
- » This area includes Significant Wildlife Habitat. Land managers should follow best management practices with respect to forestry activities in and around wetlands, shoreland areas, and Significant Wildlife Habitat. Vegetation removal, soil disturbance and construction activities may require a permit under the Natural Resources Protection Act. Contact MDIFW for more information.

RARE SPECIES AND EXEMPLARY NATURAL COMMUNITIES OF THE FOCUS AREA

	Common Name	Scientific Name	State Status*	State Rarity Rank	Global Rarity Rank
Animals	Crowberry Blue	<i>Plebejus idas empetri</i>	SC		
Natural Communities	Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem	Coastal Plateau Bog Ecosystem		S3	GNR

State Status*

E	Endangered: Rare and in danger of being lost from the state in the foreseeable future, or federally listed as Endangered.
T	Threatened: Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened.
SC	Special Concern: Rare in Maine, based on available information, but not sufficiently rare to be Threatened or Endangered.

**State status rankings are not assigned to natural communities.*

State Rarity Rank

S1	Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres).
S2	Imperiled in Maine because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
S3	Rare in Maine (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
S4	Apparently secure in Maine.
S5	Demonstrably secure in Maine.

Global Rarity Rank

G1	Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation.
G2	Globally imperiled because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
G3	Globally rare (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
G4	Apparently secure globally.
G5	Demonstrably secure globally.