

Critical Habitat Area Wisconsin 9 – Northwest River Stretch

This Critical Habitat Area encompasses approximately a small stretch of shoreline and its deep water wetlands along the riverine portion north of the main lake body, extending out to the 5-foot depth contour (Figure 2).

The site includes important near-shore terrestrial and shoreline habitats (Figure 4). The shoreline is largely herbaceous growth. Large woody cover is common at this site and is an important structural component of fish and wildlife habitat.

This site was selected for its natural beauty, its terrestrial and shoreline vegetation and its value for fish and wildlife habitat.

The Plant Community:

The aquatic plant community at this site supports 6 species of plants.

Emergent vegetation, cattails, that provide wildlife cover and food sources, protect the shoreline and provide spawning habitat.

Floating leaf-species are white water lily, provide cover and food sources.

The submergent plant community provides habitat (Table 2). Elodea, coontail and wild celery are present. The pondweed family, likely the most important producer of habitat is represented here by flat-stem pondweed.



Figure 4. Lake Wissota Critical Habitat Area #9

Table 2. Wildlife and Fish Uses of Aquatic Plants in Critical Habitat Area 9

Aquatic Plants	Fish	Water Fowl	Song and Shore Birds	Upland Game Birds	Muskrat	Beaver	Deer
<u>Submergent Plants</u>							
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>	F,I*, C, S	F(Seeds*), I, C			F		
<i>Potamogeton zosteriformis</i>	F, I, S*,C	F*(Seeds)			F*	F	F
<i>Vallisneria americana</i>	F*, C, I, S	F*, I	F		F		
<u>Floating-leaf Plants</u>							
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	F,I, S, C	F(Seeds)	F		F	F	F
<u>Emergent Plants</u>							
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	I, C, S	F(Entire), C	F(Seeds), C, Nest	Nest	F* (Entire), C*, Lodge	F	

F=Food, I= Shelters Invertebrates, a valuable food source C=Cover, S=Spawning

***=Valuable Resource in this category**

*Current knowledge as to plant use. Other plants may have uses that have not been determined.

After Fassett, N. C. 1957. A Manual of Aquatic Plants. University of Wisconsin Press. Madison, WI

Nichols, S. A. 1991. Attributes of Wisconsin Lake Plants. Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey. Info. Circ. #73

Wildlife Habitat

Emergent vegetation, shoreline shrubs and brush, snag and perch trees provide critical habitat at this site. The cattails at this site provide good wildlife cover.

This site provides:

- 1) shelter, cover and feeding areas for ducks, geese and eagles
- 2) shelter, cover, nesting and feeding areas for mink, songbirds, frogs, toads, salamanders, turtles and snakes
- 3) feeding areas for beaver and otter

Fish Habitat

Emergent cattail vegetation and floating-leaf vegetation at this site provide critical fish habitat. This site provides:

- 1) feeding areas for walleye and musky
- 2) spring spawning, spring nursery areas and feeding areas for northern pike

Water Quality

The aquatic plant community at this site:

- 1) provides a nutrient buffer, the plants at the shore and in the water acting as a nutrient sink, absorbing nutrients and reducing algae blooms
- 2) provides a biological buffer, reducing the possibility of invasions by exotic species
- 3) stabilizes the sediments, holding the sediments to reduce the resuspension by waves and other disturbances
- 5) provides a physical buffer that protects the shoreline against erosion

Recommendations for Area 9

Recommendations for the terrestrial shoreline buffer:

- 1) Maintain wildlife habitat at this site
- 2) Minimize removal of any shoreline. Allow removal of a maximum corridor width of 30 feet.
- 3) No lawn fertilizers to be used.
- 4) No permitting for shoreline erosion control such as rip-rap or retaining walls issued. Site has sufficient natural vegetation buffer.
- 5) No bank grading.

Recommendations for the aquatic habitat below the Ordinary High Water Mark

- 6) Maintain current protection of area for fish habitat
- 7) Do not remove fallen trees along the shoreline
- 8) Do not alter the littoral zone except for improvement of spawning habitat
- 9) Maintain the aquatic vegetation (emergent, floating-leaf and submergent) in an undisturbed condition for wildlife habitat, fish cover and as a buffer for water quality protection. Permits required for any vegetation removal.
- 10) Protect emergent vegetation which, overall, is sparse in Lake Wissota.
- 11) Maintain emergent and shoreline vegetation in its current state for erosion control and as a nutrient buffer to reduce algae growth.
- 12) No permit approval for pea gravel beds or sand blankets, except for DNR fishery or wildlife approved projects.
- 13) No dredging or lake bed removal or modifications.
- 14) Pier placement by permit only to minimize number of piers and their size and disturbance; require light-penetrating pier material such as metal grating.
- 15) No boat ramp placement.
- 16) Permit required for recreational floating devices.