

NHESP Priority Types of Natural Communities

Terrestrial	Rank	Palustrine	Rank
Maritime Juniper Woodland/Shrubland	S1	Calcareous Basin Fen	S1
Maritime Pitch Pine on Dunes	S1	Coastal Interdunal Marsh/Swale	S1
Oak - Tulip Tree Forest	S1	Sea-Level Fen	S1
Sandplain Grassland	S1	Alluvial Hardwood Flat	S2
Sandplain Heathland	S1	Atlantic White Cedar Bog	S2
Sassafras-Hackberry Maritime Cove Forest	S1	Black Ash Swamp	S2
Scrub Oak Shrubland	S1	Black Ash-Red Maple-Tamarack Calcareous Seepage Swamp	S2
Serpentine Outcrop Community	S1	Black Gum-Pin Oak-Swamp White Oak "Perched" Swamp	S2
Calcareous Forest Seep Community	S2	Black Gum Swamp	S2
Calcareous Rocky Summit/Rock Outcrop Community	S2	Calcareous Pondshore/Lakeshore	S2
Dry Riverside Bluff Community	S2	Calcareous Seepage Marsh	S2
Hickory - Hop Hornbeam Forest/Woodland	S2	Calcareous Sloping Fen	S2
High Elevation Spruce - Fir Forest/Woodland	S2	Coastal Atlantic White Cedar Swamp	S2
Maritime Dune Community	S2	Coastal Plain Pondshore Community	S2
Maritime Erosional Cliff Community	S2	Cobble Bar Forest	S2
Maritime Oak-Holly Forest Forest/Woodland	S2	High-Terrace Floodplain Forest	S2
Maritime Rock Cliff Community	S2	Inland Atlantic White Cedar Swamp	S2
Pitch Pine - Scrub Oak Community	S2	Kettlehole Level Bog	S2
Ridgetop Pitch Pine - Scrub Oak Community	S2	Major-River Floodplain Forest	S2
Sugar Maple-Oak-Hickory Forest	S2	Northern Atlantic White Cedar Swamp	S2
Yellow Oak Dry Calcareous Forest	S2	Red Maple - Black Ash - Bur Oak Swamp	S2
Circumneutral Rocky Summit/Rock Outcrop Community	S2S3	Riverside Seep	S2
Calcareous Rock Cliff Community	S3	Alluvial Atlantic White Cedar Swamp	S2
Calcareous Talus Forest/Woodland	S3	Small-River Floodplain Forest	S2
Circumneutral Rock Cliff Community	S3	Spruce-Tamarack Bog	S2
Circumneutral Talus Forest/Woodland	S3	Transitional Floodplain Forest	S2
Coastal Forest/Woodland	S3	Acidic Graminoid Fen	S3
Maritime Beach Strand Community	S3	Acidic Shrub Fen	S3
Maritime Shrubland Community	S3	Alluvial Red Maple Swamp	S3
Open Oak Forest / Woodland	S3	High-Energy Riverbank	S3
Rich, Mesic Forest Community	S3	Kettlehole Wet Meadow	S3
Riverside Rock Outcrop Community	S3	Level Bog	S3
Black Oak - Scarlet Oak Forest/Woodland	S3S4	Red Spruce Swamp	S3
		Rich Conifer Swamp	S3
		Riverine Pointbar and Beach	S3
Estuarine		Estuarine	
Estuarine Intertidal: Brackish Tidal Marsh	S1	Estuarine Intertidal: Coastal Salt Pond Marsh	S2
Estuarine Intertidal: Fresh / Brackish Tidal Shrubland	S1	Estuarine Subtidal: Coastal Salt Pond	S2
Estuarine Intertidal: Fresh / Brackish Tidal Swamp	S1	Marine Intertidal: Rocky Shore	S2
Estuarine Intertidal: Freshwater Tidal Marsh	S1	Estuarine Intertidal: Saline / Brackish Flats	S3
Estuarine Intertidal: Fresh / Brackish Flats	S2	Estuarine Intertidal: Salt Marsh	S3
Estuarine Subtidal: Fresh / Brackish Flats	S2		

Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Natural Community Ranks

Each type of natural community is assigned an “element rank”, based on the species element ranking developed for the Natural Heritage system by The Nature Conservancy and maintained by NatureServe. The state rank (S) reflects the rarity and threat within Massachusetts. Every state assigns its own “S” rank based on the rarity and threat within that state, with regard to regional conditions. Global ranks for communities are not included because Massachusetts’ classification system is different from the US National Vegetation Classification system.

State Ranks (Definitions derived from NatureServe, accessed December 2009)

<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/ranking.htm>

S1 = Critically Imperiled in Massachusetts —Critically imperiled in the state because of extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer occurrences) or because of some factor(s) such as very few remaining acres or miles of stream or other factors making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the state.

S2 = Imperiled in Massachusetts —Imperiled in the state because of rarity (typically 6 - 20 occurrences), very restricted range, few remaining acres, or miles of stream or other factors making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the state.

S3 = Vulnerable in Massachusetts—Vulnerable due to a restricted range, relatively few occurrences (often 80 or fewer), limited acreage, or miles of stream, recent and widespread declines, or other factors making it vulnerable to extirpation from the state.

S4 = Apparently Secure in Massachusetts —Uncommon but not rare; some cause for long-term concern due to declines or other factors.

S5 = Secure in Massachusetts —Common, widespread, and abundant in the state.

S#S# = Range Rank—A numeric range rank (e.g., S2S3) is used to indicate the range of uncertainty in the status of a species or community.