

Adopt-a-Swamp Pink Population

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Monitoring Guidelines

(Revised March 2011)



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Identification: Swamp pink (*Helonias bullata*) is characterized by a bright pink flower cluster that blooms in early spring. The stocky hollow flower stem grows from one to three feet tall and has sparse modified leaves along its length. In April or early May, the stem is topped by a cluster (approximately one to three inches long) of pink flowers dotted with pale blue anthers. However, only 10 to 15 percent of the plants in a population typically flower in any one season. When the plant is not flowering, swamp pink can be identified by its smooth, evergreen, lance-shaped leaves (approximately 3 to 10 inches long), which lie almost flat on the ground in a basal rosette. The leaves are shiny green when young and often attain a purplish tint in mature plants. In New Jersey, the plant is easiest to identify when in bloom or in the winter months when few other herbaceous plants are still green. Population sizes may vary from a few to several thousand plants.

Habitat: Considered an obligate wetland species, swamp pink occurs in a variety of palustrine forested and scrub/shrub wetlands in New Jersey including: forested wetlands bordering meandering streamlets, headwater wetlands, sphagnum Atlantic white cedar or red maple swamps, and spring seepage areas. Specific hydrologic requirements of swamp pink limit its occurrence to wetlands that are perennially saturated, but not inundated by floodwater. The water table must be at or near the surface, fluctuating only slightly during spring and summer months.

POPULATION SIZE: Count the number of swamp pink plants throughout the population. If the population covers a large area and the plants are densely populated, flagging may be useful to divide the habitat into smaller areas. This will ensure that all plants are counted, but not counted more than once. All available suitable habitat within the wetlands should be surveyed, concentrating on forested wetland areas as described above, with suitable hydrology.

Starting in 2011: Record each plant in **only one** of the following (mutually exclusive) categories: single rosette (center is at least 4" from the center of its nearest neighbor); small clump (2-9 rosettes with centers within 4" of one another); medium clump (10-24 rosettes with centers within 4" of one another); and large clump (≥ 25 rosettes with centers within 4" of one another). See photos on page 2. Please note that the 4" separation distance and the number of rosettes per clump can be **estimated** – it is not necessary to measure or count. Also changed in 2011, please record the number blooming plants in each of these same four categories. Count a plant as blooming if the current year's growth includes one or more flower heads/stalks, even if the flowers have been eaten or are past bloom. During your survey, you can use the Tally Sheet on page 3. After the survey, please transfer the final numbers to the Monitoring Form.

POPULATION EXTENT: Using the population map you were provided, mark the extent of the swamp pink population as you observe it in the field. If the population varies in density, identify on the map where dense and sparse areas are located. A written description of the extent of the population may be provided on the Monitoring Form. If you are not able to survey the entire population, please mark the area(s) surveyed on your map.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS: Note general habitat conditions (*i.e.*, erosion, sedimentation, accumulation of trash) and potential impacts from adjacent areas (*i.e.*, development). Take photographs, if possible.

SUGGESTED FIELD EQUIPMENT:

Clip Board
Compass
Pencil

Knee boots or Hip waders
Flagging (pink or blue)
Mosquito and tick repellent

****Please take caution not to trample or destroy swamp pink plants. Do not collect specimens or send plants or parts of plants to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for identification.**

****Do not disclose the location of your population to anyone.**



Two individual rosettes, centers $\geq 4''$ apart.



Large clump, ≥ 25 rosettes with centers $< 4''$ apart.



Medium clump, 10-24 rosettes with centers $< 4''$ apart; blooming. Last year's growth still visible.

Adopt-a-Swamp Pink Population Tally Sheet

Population Name: _____ Survey Date: _____

	Record each plant in <u>only one</u> of the boxes below.	
	Not Blooming	Blooming (Note: a blooming clump may have multiple flowers; count as just one blooming plant.)
Single Rosettes: center >4" from center of nearest neighbor	total: _____	total: _____
Small Clumps: 2-9 rosettes with centers within 4" of one another	total: _____	total: _____
Medium Clumps: 10-24 rosettes with centers within 4" of one another	total: _____	total: _____
Large Clumps: ≥25 rosettes with centers within 4" of one another	total: _____	total: _____