



Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Long Island Sound Area: 130 Year Assessment

Executive Summary

Wetlands are declining globally. This report provides the first 130 year assessment of tidal wetland change for the Long Island Sound area. The results indicate a 31% overall loss of Long Island Sound's tidal wetlands from the 1880s to the 2000s, with a 27% loss in Connecticut and 48% loss in New York. Despite wetland legislation passed in the 1970s, a general decline in wetland health and function in the Long Island Sound area continues to be a concern. Current research points to multiple, nuanced and complex causes of present-day wetland decline.



Wetland change was assessed in the areas of Connecticut and New York that fall within the Long Island Sound Study coastal boundary (red).

A major contemporary concern is wetland vulnerability due to potentially increased amounts of open water on the marsh surface. An open water assessment initially conducted in Connecticut indicates an average of 47% permanent open water on the marshes studied – a less healthy status.



An increased amount of permanent open water on marshes throughout the Northeast is a concern. This study includes an assessment of the extent of permanent open water on marshes in Connecticut.

Understanding the extent and context of wetland change is important for effective protection. In addition to overall loss, this report includes a discussion on historic extent, present-day stressors and the implications of wetland decline to Long Island Sound's ecosystems. The report also includes a summary of other local studies on marsh decline and degradation in portions of the

Sound and concludes with recommendations for protecting this valuable habitat given historic context and current stressors.

