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**America's National
Wildlife Refuge System**

Description of Special Focus Areas

1a. Great Island Marshes/Black Hall River/Lieutenant River - 2,120 acres: This site includes a barrier beach and extensive salt, brackish and freshwater tidal marshes. It provides habitat for several rare plant and animal species, rails, thousands of migrating and wintering waterfowl including black ducks, several nesting pairs of endangered piping plovers and wintering bald eagles. This site also provides important spawning habitat for blueback herring and alewives.

1b. North and South Coves - 50 acres: This shallow brackish open water habitat provides resting and foraging habitat for hundreds of migrating pintail and black ducks. It also serves as wintering habitat for several hundred black ducks.

1c. Ragged Rock Creek - 315 acres: This site provides salt marsh habitat for hundreds of migrating black ducks, green-winged teal and mallards and wintering habitat for hundreds of black ducks and rare species like the black and king rail.

1d. Ferry Point - 110 acres: This is primarily a brackish tidal marsh and provides spawning habitat for alewives, and stopover and wintering habitat for several waterfowl species including the black duck.

1e. Turtle Creek - 120 acres: This site consists of hemlock/mixed hardwoods, alder swamp, and freshwater tidal marsh. It is a winter roost site for threatened bald eagles. About 100 acres are already protected by The Nature Conservancy

1f. Lord Cove - 1,110 acres: This site encompasses an extensive brackish tidal marsh, freshwater marsh and a small levee of floodplain forest. It is important for thousands of migrating black ducks and mallards and lower numbers of wintering black ducks. It is excellent habitat for king, sora and Virginia rails and a winter roost site for threatened bald eagles.

1g. Essex Great Meadows - 85 acres: This site is primarily brackish tidal marsh and several rare plant species occur here. It is also the site of a winter bald eagle roost.

1h. Pratt and Post Coves - 130 acres: This site encompasses two adjacent freshwater tidal marshes which are used by hundreds of black ducks, mallards, teal and wood ducks during migration. Several rare plant species occur here. The coves also provide important spawning habitat for alewives.

1i. Joshua Creek - 25 acres: This site is a freshwater tidal marsh and is used by migrating black ducks, wood ducks and teal. It also provides spawning habitat for alewives.





1j. Deep River - 70 acres: This site is a freshwater tidal marsh and is used by hundreds of migrating black ducks, wood ducks and teal. It also provides spawning habitat for alewives.

1k. Chester Creek - 120 acres: This site is a freshwater tidal marsh and is used by hundreds of migrating black ducks, wood ducks and teal. It also provides spawning habitat for blueback herring and alewives.

1l. Whalebone Cove - 180 acres: This is a freshwater tidal marsh which is used by hundreds of wood ducks and black ducks during migration. A bald eagle winter roost and two rare plant species occur at the site. Blueback herring and alewives spawn at this site.

2. Hamburg Cove/Eightmile River & East Branch - 2,200 acres: This is a freshwater tidal marsh which is an important foraging and resting site for diving ducks such as the bufflehead. A bald eagle winter roost and several rare plant species occur at the site. Blueback herring and alewives spawn here.

3. Burnham Brook - 1,300 acres: This is a large contiguous tract of forested habitat which provides important breeding habitat for forest interior birds.

4. Selden Creek - 1,115 acres: This site includes a 600 acre bedrock island, cove and creek, freshwater tidal marshes and associated wetlands. It is important for thousands of migrating black ducks, wood ducks and mallards and hundreds of wintering black ducks. Several rare plant species occur here. It is a bald eagle winter roost site as well as an important site for spawning alewives.

5. Chapman Pond - 850 acres: This site includes a 60 acre freshwater pond surrounded by low floodplain forest, freshwater tidal marsh and steep forested slopes. It is important for hundreds of migrating black ducks, wood ducks and mallards and hundreds of wintering black ducks. Several rare plant species occur here. It is a bald eagle winter roost site as well as an important site for spawning alewives.

6. Salmon Cove - 2,000 acres: This area includes an extensive freshwater tidal marsh and flat surrounded by forested uplands. It is important for thousands of migrating black ducks, wood ducks, mallards and green winged teal and hundreds of wintering black ducks and mallards. At least two rare plant species occur here. It is a bald eagle winter roost site as well as an important site for spawning alewives.

7. Salmon River including tributaries below dams - 965 acres: This focus area is tidally influenced riverine habitat and is important spawning habitat for blueback herring and alewives. This is one of Connecticut's two premier Atlantic salmon restoration streams. This river and its tributaries are used by juvenile salmon for rearing or nursery habitat. Adult sea-run salmon will use the river for natural reproduction.





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8. Pecauset Meadows - 160 acres: This is a freshwater tidal marsh and used by migrating waterfowl. At least three rare plant and animal species are recorded from the site.
9. Round and Boggy Meadows/Mattabesset, Coginchaug Rivers/Wilcox Island - 860 acres: This site includes freshwater tidal marsh and riverine habitat. It is important habitat for migrating wood ducks, black ducks and teal nesting wood ducks. American shad, blueback herring and alewives spawn in these tributaries. Several rare plant species occur at this site.
- 10a. Dead Mans Swamp - 920 acres: This site consists of alluvial floodplain forest and freshwater marsh. Several rare bird species such as the sora rail, black rail and yellow-breasted chat have been recorded from this site. Many species of wading birds and waterfowl use the marsh while the floodplain forest provides breeding and stopover habitat for many species of migrant landbirds.
- 10b. Guildersleeve Island - 80 acres: This site consists of a sandy island, sand bars, riverine beach and floodplain forest. An endangered species occurs here.
- 10c. Wangunk Meadows - 1,155 acres: This site is comprised of floodplain forest and alluvial marsh. Several rare bird species such as the sora rail, black rail and yellow-breasted chat have been recorded from this site. Many species of wading birds and waterfowl use the marsh while the floodplain forest provides breeding and stopover habitat for many species of migrant landbirds.
- 11a. Meshomasic Highlands - 20,000 acres: This focus area encompasses extensive forest habitat and overlays hilly terrain with many rock outcrops. It also includes small marshes, swamps and two cold water reservoirs. Several rare species occur at this site. It hosts one of the best remaining populations of the timber rattlesnake in the watershed. The cold water reservoirs and riparian forest provide habitat for breeding hooded mergansers. The large expanse of contiguous forest habitat provides important breeding habitat for many species of migrant landbirds.
- 11b. Roaring Brook in Glastonbury - 25 acres: This site comprises riverine and wooded riparian habitat and provides important spawning habitat for alewives and blueback herring.
12. Great Meadows - 4,500 acres: This site is comprised of freshwater marsh, floodplain forest and agricultural lands. This is an important wetland for migrating waterfowl. Several rare bird and plant species occur at the site.
13. Windsor Meadows/Farmington River Mouth - 1,550 acres: This is an extensive floodplain forest with some freshwater marsh and agricultural lands. The forest provides a wintering roost site for bald eagles. The agricultural fields provide stopover habitat for





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1000 to 3000 Canada geese during migration. Alewives and blueback herring spawn in the river. Three rare plant and animal species are known to occur at this site.

14. Farmington River and West Branch - 490 acres: This site comprises riverine and wooded riparian habitat. The Farmington River and West Branch provide important spawning habitat for alewives and blueback herring. This is one of Connecticut's two premier Atlantic salmon restoration streams. This river and its tributaries are used by juvenile salmon for rearing or nursery habitat. Adult sea-run salmon will use the river for natural reproduction. Several rare plant and animal species occur within this focus area.

15. Scantic River - 610 acres: This site includes riverine, wooded and agricultural riparian habitat. The river is important spawning habitat for alewives and American shad. It is a major stopover area for migrating black ducks and provides important nesting habitat for wood ducks.

16. Enfield Rapids/Kings Island - 40 acres: This site includes riverine habitat, a riverine island and wooded riparian habitat. It is the most important bald eagle wintering site in Connecticut, important stopover habitat for hundreds of migrating black ducks and mallards. This is considered the most important main stem spawning area for blueback herring in the Connecticut River.

17. Honeypot Road Wetlands - 960 acres: This site consists of a complex of vernal pools and scrub/shrub wetlands and associated forest and fields. This site hosts three rare vertebrate and two rare invertebrate species.

18. Mt. Tekoa - 5,000 acres: This is primarily a forested upland site with extensive talus slopes and a pitch pine/ scrub oak community along rocky ridges. Several rare plant and animal species including the New England cottontail occur here. This area offers a large block of contiguous forest and hosts a diversity and abundance of migrant land birds. It is also along the migratory path of thousands of fall raptor migrants.

19. Westfield Sandplain - 400 acres: This is a remnant glacial sandplain site and one of the few remaining in the watershed. It is a mix of grassland and pitch pine/scrub oak. Five species of grassland birds breed at this site. Two rare species also are recorded from this site.

20. Westfield River including West Branch and Middle Branch - 750 acres: This focus area includes riverine and riparian habitat and provides important spawning habitat for blueback herring and American shad. This river and its tributaries are used by juvenile salmon for rearing or nursery habitat. Adult sea-run salmon will use the river for natural reproduction. It is one of Massachusetts' premier Atlantic salmon restoration rivers.

21. Chicopee River Mouth - 115 acres: This focus area includes riverine and riparian habitat and provides important spawning habitat for blueback herring and American shad.





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22. Westover Air Reserve Base, MA - 2,365 acres: This site has the largest contiguous grassland in the watershed and is inhabited by and provides habitat for the largest populations of grasshopper sparrows and upland sandpipers in the watershed. Both species are rare W-2 species. Three other grassland bird species also nest at this site.

23. Quaboag, MA - 2,185 acres: This area comprises a wetland complex along the Quaboag River. The wetlands are primarily open shallow water ponds and emergent freshwater marsh. Eleven rare plants, amphibians, reptiles and birds are recorded from the site. The wetland complex provides excellent habitat for a variety of waterbirds including rails, grebes, bitterns and herons.

24. Mt. Tom/Mill River/Mt. Holyoke Range, MA - 8,200 acres: This area is primarily forested and consists of two extensive traprock ridges with scattered small forested wetlands, riverine habitat and freshwater emergent marsh. The federal endangered dwarf wedge mussel has been recorded from the Mill River and bald eagles nest here. Over 30 rare plant and animal species occur at this site. This area offers a large block of contiguous forest and hosts a diversity and abundance of migrant land birds. It is also along the migratory path of thousands of fall raptor migrants.

25. Grassland Complex - 2,200 acres: This area consists of hayfields, pasture and various rowcrops. Its importance lies in its potential to become a large block of contiguous grassland habitat in relative proximity to the Westover grassland site. With proper management this area could support significant populations of grassland bird species, such as upland sandpipers, grasshopper sparrows and savannah sparrows, and bobolinks.

26. Hatfield Oxbow - 1,200 acres: This site includes about 500 acres of freshwater wetlands including an old Connecticut River oxbow. There are 700 acres of agricultural lands (primarily rowcrops) adjacent to the oxbow and the Connecticut River. The wetlands provide breeding habitat for wood ducks, foraging habitat for herons, egrets, least bitterns and important stopover habitat for a variety of waterfowl species. The oxbow serves as an important nursery area for juvenile American shad and blueback herring. Two rare plant species occur at this site. The agricultural lands provide one of the best potential sites for restoration of grassland habitat and management of several grassland bird species such as upland sandpipers, grasshopper sparrows, and vesper sparrows.

27. Whately Great Swamp - 950 acres: This site is the best remaining example of the hemlock/red maple swamp community associated with glacial lake bottom in the Massachusetts Connecticut River valley. Since it is only seasonally wet, a blend of wetland species such as pin oak, swamp white oak and black gum occur along with





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upland species such as American beech. This site provides a large block of forest breeding habitat for migrant landbirds.

28. Mt. Toby - 6,220 acres: This is primarily a large forested site with trap rock ridges and small wetlands including calcareous fens, seepage marshes and wooded swamps. About 20 rare plant and animal species are found within this focus area. The extensive contiguous forest habitat provides important breeding habitat for a variety of migrant landbirds.

29a. Connecticut River mainstream, Turners Falls Dam to 116 Bridge to Sunderland - 80 acres: This site includes riverine and riparian habitat and several river islands. American shad, blueback herring and shortnose sturgeon spawn within this stretch of the mainstem. There are two bald eagle nesting sites and over 30 other rare plant and animal species found within this focus area. This reach also contains one of the largest freshwater mussel populations in the river.

29b. Sawmill River to dam above Rt. 63 - 50 acres: This is a stretch of riverine and riparian habitat and is important spawning habitat for blueback herring. This river is used by juvenile salmon for rearing or nursery habitat. Adult sea-run salmon will use the river for natural reproduction.

30a. Montague Plains - 2,200 acres: This is the largest and least fragmented and developed remaining glacial sandplain in the watershed. It features a unique inland pitch pine/scrub oak plant community with at least 10 rare plant and invertebrate species. A wetland within the sandplain is habitat for the endangered northeastern bulrush. This site also provides a large block of forest habitat for a variety of migrant landbirds.

30b. Turners Falls Airport - 250 acres: This site is a developed part of Montague Plains but still has remnants of pitch pine/scrub oak plant community. Grassland habitat is maintained as part of the airport maintenance requirements. Four species of grassland birds breed here including grasshopper sparrows and vesper sparrows.

31. Deerfield River including most tributaries - 1,205 acres: This is a stretch of riverine and riparian habitat. Blueback herring and American shad spawn in the Deerfield River and its tributaries. This river and its tributaries are used by juvenile Atlantic salmon for rearing or nursery habitat. Adult sea-run salmon will use the river for natural reproduction. It is one of Massachusetts' premier Atlantic salmon restoration rivers.

32. Fall River in Massachusetts - 75 acres: This is a stretch of riverine and riparian habitat and is important spawning habitat for blueback herring. It is also potential spawning habitat for Atlantic Salmon as well as nursery and rearing habitat for juveniles.

33. Ashuelot River to Surry Mtn. Dam including tributaries below the first dam - 350 acres: This is a stretch of riverine and riparian habitat and is important spawning habitat





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for American shad. It is also an important area for American eels. Several rare plant and animal species occur within this focus area.

34a. Retreat Meadows - 55 acres: This is a marsh along the mainstem of the Connecticut River. It serves as important stopover habitat for migrating wood ducks, black ducks, mallards, hooded mergansers and a variety and abundance of shorebirds.

34b. Wantastiquet Mountain - 6,600 acres: This is forested mountainous habitat with extensive rock outcrops and talus slopes. Four rare plant and animal species have been recorded at this site. This large contiguous block of forest provides important breeding habitat for forest interior migrant landbirds.

35. West River, including Rock and Winhall tributaries and Wardsboro Brook - 710 acres: This focus area encompasses a stretch of riverine and riparian habitat. It provides spawning habitat for blueback herring and potential spawning habitat for Atlantic salmon. This river and its tributaries are used by juvenile salmon for rearing or nursery habitat. Adult sea-run salmon will use the river for natural reproduction. It is one of Vermont's premier Atlantic salmon restoration rivers. It is an important river system for a rare mussel. Several rare plants also occur within this focus area.

36. Cold River - 80 acres: The Cold River provides nursery and rearing habitat for juvenile Atlantic salmon as well as potential spawning habitat for adults.

37. Williams River to Brockway Mills Dam - 30 acres: The Williams River provides nursery and rearing habitat for juvenile Atlantic salmon.

38. Macrosite including mouth of Ompompanoosuc River - 850 acres: This is a stretch of riverine and riparian habitat along the mainstem of the Connecticut River. This area currently hosts the best population of endangered dwarf wedge mussels in the watershed as well as provides summer foraging habitat for bald eagles. All known sites for the endangered Jesup's milk vetch occur within this focus area. Several species of rare plants and animals are found here. The mouth of the Ompompanoosuc is used heavily by migrating shorebirds.

39. White River, including 1st, 2nd, 3rd, West, Tweed and Hancock tributaries - 1,280 acres: This is a pristine and the only tributary of the Connecticut River with no dams. It provides nursery and rearing habitat for juvenile Atlantic Salmon as well as potential spawning habitat for adults.

40. Ammonoosuc and Wild Ammonoosuc Rivers - 530 acres: This focus area provides nursery and rearing habitat for juvenile Atlantic Salmon as well as potential spawning habitat for adults.





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41. Pondicherry - 1,665 acres: This is a wetland complex of bogs, streams and ponds surrounded by spruce/fir forest. It is the site of a great blue heron rookery and important feeding habitat for several other species of waterbirds. It is also important stopover habitat for wood ducks, ring-necked ducks and black ducks.

42. Victory Basin - 8,950 acres: This is a complex of bogs and other freshwater wetlands and surrounding boreal forest. It provides good nesting habitat for hooded mergansers, black, ring-necked and wood ducks. Three rare animal species occur here: southern bog lemming, black-backed woodpecker and the gray jay. It is a potential reintroduction site for the spruce grouse and pine martin. This site provides extensive contiguous forest for breeding migrant landbirds.

43. Connecticut River mainstem, Murphy Dam downstream to below the Northumberland Dam - 420 acres: This stretch of riverine habitat is important nursery and rearing habitat for juvenile Atlantic salmon and also provides potential spawning habitat for adults.

44. Paul Stream - 140 acres: This is a pristine brook and provides excellent habitat for native brook trout. The site also provides nesting habitat for loons, and wood, black, and mallard ducks. Important stopover habitat for migrating wood, black and mallard ducks.

45. Nulhegan Basin - 71,900 acres: This is a complex of bogs, other freshwater wetlands, and surrounding spruce fir forest. It provides nesting habitat for loons, hooded mergansers, black, ring-necked and wood ducks. At least 13 rare plant and animal species have been recorded from this site. This site has the best and only viable population of spruce grouse in the watershed. It also provides extensive contiguous forest for breeding migrant landbirds.

46. Mohawk River - 90 acres: This river provides nursery and rearing habitat for juvenile Atlantic salmon. It also provides high quality habitat for native brook trout.

47. Colebrook Hill Farms - 2,000 acres: This is an extensive area of pasture, hayfields, old fields reverting to shrubs and forest, and small fens and swamps. This area is the only significant breeding site for marsh hawks in the watershed but also important breeding habitat for other grassland birds such as the bobolink. At least 10 rare plants occur in this area.

48. Indian Stream - 180 acres: This is a pristine brook and provides excellent habitat for native brook trout.

