



Connecticut River Watershed

The longest river in New England, the Connecticut River originates in Canada just north of the Fourth Connecticut Lake in Pittsburg, New Hampshire, flowing 410 miles into Long Island Sound at Old Saybrook, Connecticut. The Watershed is long and narrow, constrained by mountains to the west (*e.g.*, Berkshire Hills and Green Mountains) and to the east (*e.g.*, Pelham Hills, Holyoke Range, White Mountains).

Many different plant communities exist in the Watershed, including common types of wetlands, forests, and grasslands, as well as a number of rare communities. There are roughly 3,000 plant species in the watershed. Upland forests are the dominant land cover type and are increasing as abandoned agricultural lands revert to forest cover. A number of non-forested, or open plant communities occur in the Watershed such as grasslands, shrublands, and unique or rare uplands types. Invasive plant species are an ongoing and increasing threat to biological diversity. The magnitude of this concern is exemplified in Massachusetts where roughly 35 percent of the plants are not native.

Since the Watershed encompasses such a large, diverse area, there are a great number of species which occur here. It is estimated that 142 species of fish, 59 mammals, 250 birds, 22 reptiles, 23 amphibians, 1,500 invertebrates, and over 3,000 plants inhabit the Watershed.

In addition to those species and resources listed by Congress in the Refuge purposes, the Refuge focuses its conservation efforts on federal trust resources including federal threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, migratory fish, and wetlands.

