

## Appendix 4 Maine Natural Areas Program and Beginning with Habitat

The geospatial data used for Harpswell’s natural habitat assessment originated from the Maine Natural Areas and Beginning with Habitat Programs. The *Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP)* ( <http://www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mnap> ), within the Maine Department of Conservation, serves Maine citizens as the most comprehensive source of information on the State’s important natural features. With landowner permission, the Program inventories lands that support rare and endangered plants and animals, rare natural communities, and outstanding examples of common natural communities. MNAP also provides objective and comprehensive information to equip decision-makers with the necessary tools to make informed and responsible decisions.

The *Beginning with Habitat* program ([www.beginningwithhabitat.org](http://www.beginningwithhabitat.org)) is a cooperative, non-regulatory effort between state and federal agencies, conservation groups and regional governments in Maine. The goal of the program is to maintain sufficient habitat to support all native plant and animal species currently breeding in Maine by providing each Maine town with a collection of maps and accompanying information depicting and describing various habitats of statewide and national significance found in the town. These maps provide communities with information that can help guide conservation of valuable habitats. The program provides towns and land trusts with the best available information on rare plants and animals, important habitats, riparian areas, and undeveloped habitat blocks. Local planners can use the maps and data provided through Beginning with Habitat to answer the question, “What do we want our community to look like in 50 years?”

Resources available to local planners include:

- ◆ Maps
- ◆ Data
- ◆ Publications about habitat and planning
- ◆ Educational presentations
- ◆ Technical assistance

Assistance is available to town officials and groups such as planning boards, comprehensive planning committees, and conservation commissions, as well as to land trusts.

### **Note on Methodology for Rating of Habitat Type**

In order to determine if each focus area had **high value habitat**, the Harpswell Conservation Commission (HCC) consulted the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine program. This program defines a high value habitat as one that is important to 91 species of fish and wildlife in the Gulf of Maine watershed. These species regularly inhabit the Gulf and are listed as either threatened or endangered. The four basic habitats include forest, grass, wetland and salt water marshes over 5 acres in size. In addition, the HCC used the maps of the *Beginning with Habitat* program. The maps provide information about the location of essential and significant wildlife habitat for rare and/or exemplary

plants, threatened and/or endangered wildlife, high and moderate value deer wintering areas and travel corridors; high and moderate value waterfowl and wading bird habitats; shorebird nesting, feeding, and staging areas and seabird nesting islands. Harpswell has five (5) locations with rare and threatened species, 19 seabird nesting islands, as well as, waterfowl and wading bird habitat on the majority of its shores.

In each of the Open Space Plan Focus Areas, the Conservation Commission identified at least one, if not more, essential and/or significant wildlife habitats for:

- Endangered / threatened species
- Deer wintering / feeding areas
- Tidal waterfowl / wading birds
- Inland waterfowl/wading birds
- Shorebird areas (feeding, nesting, staging and roosting)
- Seabird nesting islands

Please see the details on the following page.

**Significant and Essential Wildlife Habitat in the  
Focus Areas of Harpswell**

Focus Area	Significant Wildlife Habitat for				Essential Wildlife Habitat for
	Tidal Waterfowl / Wading Birds	Inland Waterfowl/ Wading Bird	Shorebird Area (Feeding/ Nesting/ Staging Areas)	Seabird Nesting Island	Endangered/ Threatened Species (Bald Eagle / Rosette Tern)
1. Long Reach	X				X
2. Brickyard Cove Watershed	X				
3. Bethel Point-SE Quahog Bay	X	X			
4. Sandy Cove- East Cundy's Point	X				
5. Ice Pond	X				
6. Wilson Pond		X			
7. Cedar Beach	X				
8. Otter Brook Corridor	X				
9. Widgeon- Wilson Coves	X				
10. Lookout Point Corridor	X		X		
11. Allen Point Corridor	X				
12. Basin-Curtis Coves	X				
13. Islands	X			X	