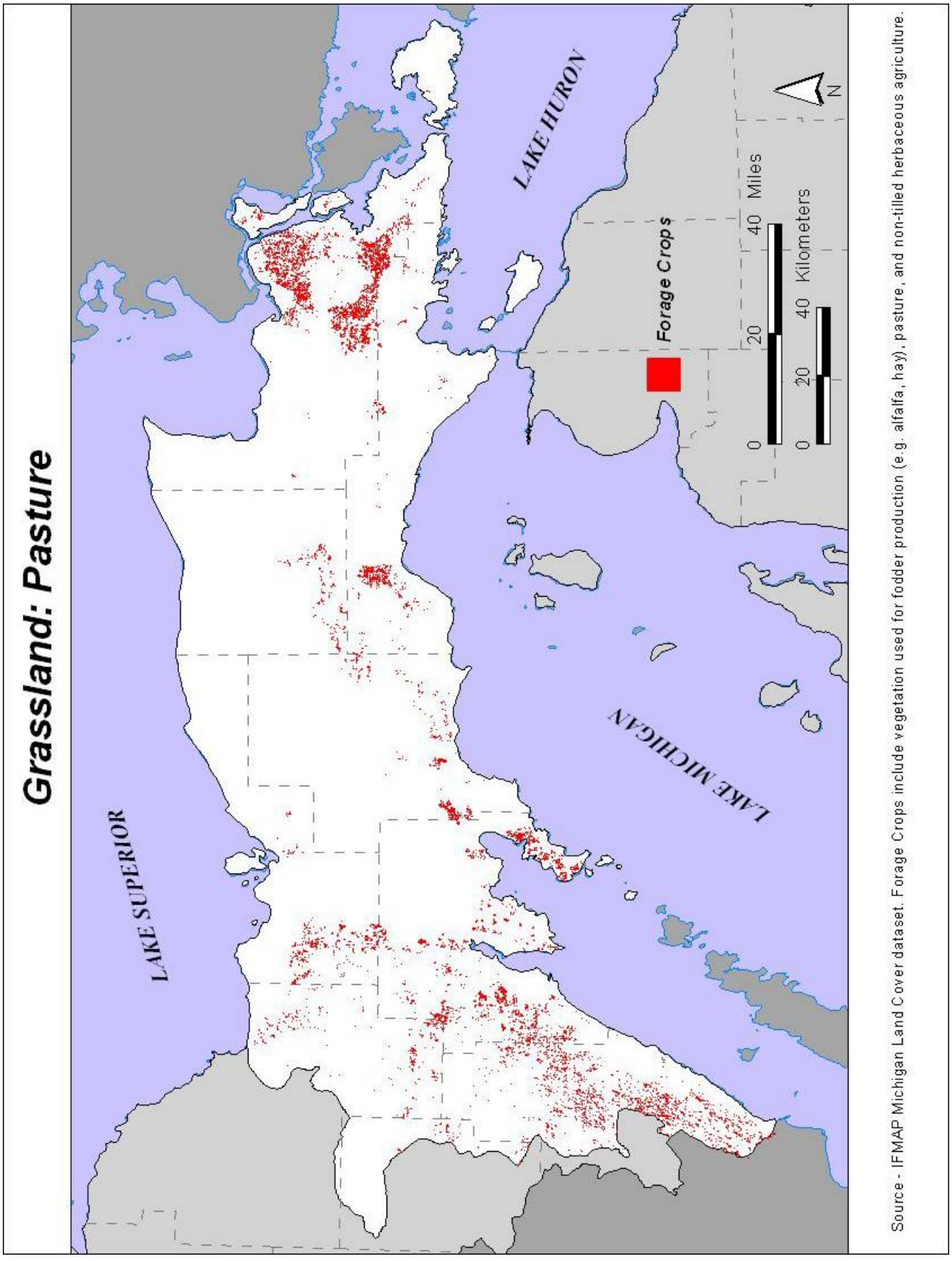
Grassland: Pasture
LAKE SUPERIOR
LAKE MICHIGAN
LAKE HURON
Forage Crops
0
20
40 Miles
0
20
40 Kilometers
N
Source - IFMAP Michigan Land Cover dataset. Forage Crops include vegetation used for fodder production (e.g. alfalfa, hay), pasture, and non-tilled herbaceous agriculture.

Grassland: Pasture

Description

Pastures are agricultural grasslands used for grazing livestock. They are simpler structurally (shorter grass) and have fewer plant species than prairie or idle/old fields. Exotic plant species that are more resistant to impacts from heavy grazing generally have displaced the native plants, except on some dry sites where native species may hold on due to the higher moisture demand of most exotics.

General Condition of Feature

Much of the pasture in the Eastern Upper Peninsula is considered to be in fair or good condition as wildlife habitat (~40%) and about 30% is considered excellent condition. Most of the remaining pasture is considered degraded.

Associated Natural Communities

N/A – no native natural communities

Associated Species of Greatest Conservation Need

INSECTS
spatterdock darner *(Aeshna mutata)*
tawny crescent *(Phyciodes batesii)*

AMPHIBIANS
northern leopard frog *(Rana pipiens)*

REPTILES
western fox snake *(Elaphe vulpina)*
eastern hognose snake *(Heterodon platirhinos)*
smooth green snake *(Liochlorophis vernalis)*
Blanding's turtle *(Emydoidea blandingii)*

BIRDS
Blue-winged Teal *(Anas discors)*
Sharp-tailed Grouse *(Tympanuchus phasianellus)*
Northern Bobwhite *(Colinus virginianus)*
Northern Harrier *(Circus cyaneus)*
Upland Sandpiper *(Bartramia longicauda)*

BIRDS cont.
American Woodcock *(Scolopax minor)*
Short-eared Owl *(Asio flammeus)*
Northern Flicker *(Colaptes auratus)*
Eastern Kingbird *(Tyrannus tyrannus)*
Sedge Wren *(Cistothorus platensis)*
Northern Mockingbird *(Mimus polyglottos)*
Vesper Sparrow *(Pooecetes gramineus)*
Savannah Sparrow *(Passerculus sandwichensis)*
Henslow's Sparrow *(Ammodramus henslowii)*
Le Conte's Sparrow *(Ammodramus leconteii)*
Bobolink *(Dolichonyx oryzivorus)*
Eastern Meadowlark *(Sturnella magna)*

MAMMALS
red bat *(Lasiurus borealis)*
hoary bat *(Lasiurus cinereus)*

Associated Threats

MODIFICATION OF NATURAL PROCESSES
- Grazing and mowing patterns: A loss of disturbance leads to succession to forested feature types. Grazing may result in soil compaction.
- Altered hydrologic regimes: Flooding may impact pastures.

HABITAT CONVERSION
- Conversion to agriculture: Economic pressures can fuel a conversion from pasture to hayland.

BIOLOGICAL INTERACTIONS
- Invasive plants and animals: Brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) nest parasitism may alter community composition.

Conservation Actions Needed [Threats addressed]

LAND, WATER & SPECIES MANAGEMENT
- Manage to approximate natural disturbance regimes using controlled grazing and restoration of water flow patterns. [Grazing and mowing patterns; Altered hydrologic regimes]
- Institute invasive species monitoring, prevention and control programs. [Invasive plants and animals]

ECONOMIC & OTHER INCENTIVES
- Provide guidance for developing agricultural strategies for family farms to help support them and prevent the conversion of pasture to other uses. [Conversion to agriculture]

Research and Survey Needs
- Assess the impact of soil compaction on vegetative and wildlife diversity.
- Study the effects of timing and intensity of grazing and pasture management on the value to wildlife of these systems. Are there other variables associated with grazing and pasture management that affect their value to wildlife? Economically realistic alternatives to high impact grazing practices are needed.
- Determine the impacts of invasive plant and animal species.
- Evaluate the relationship between the species of livestock being pastured to the value to wildlife of the land in use.

Monitoring

- Track species composition changes in pastures.
- Analyze county agriculture statistics to determine changes in the types of livestock being pastured and livestock densities.