



Great Lakes/Coastal: Great Lakes nearshore

Description

The area of the Great Lakes that range from 3 to 30 meters in depth. This area includes both submergent and emergent aquatic vegetation, but not marshes. Great Lakes are considered to be the Michigan waters of Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and the connecting waterways of the St. Mary's, St. Clair, and Detroit rivers and Lake St. Clair.

General Condition of Feature

Most of the Great Lakes nearshore area in the Southern Lower Peninsula is considered of fair to good condition as terrestrial wildlife habitat (~70%). About 25% is considered degraded or very degraded.

Associated Natural Communities

N/A – No defined natural communities

Associated Species of Greatest Conservation Need

BIRDS

- Common Loon (*Gavia immer*)
- Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

BIRDS cont.

- Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Associated Threats

HABITAT CONVERSION

- Industrial, residential, and recreational development: Winter navigation by cargo carrying ships may be a threat.
- Dredging and channelization: Both dredging and deposition of dredge spoil materials may impact nearshore areas.

POLLUTION

- Urban, municipal, and industrial

CONSUMPTIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE USE

- Removal of wildlife: Overfishing may modify community composition.

NON-CONSUMPTIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE USE

- Non-consumptive recreation: Recreational boating may have an impact.

BIOLOGICAL INTERACTIONS

- Invasive plants and animals

Conservation Actions Needed [Threats addressed]

LAND, WATER & SPECIES MANAGEMENT

- Assess management goals to ensure that they provide for a diversity of communities across the landscape. [Removal of wildlife]
- Institute invasive species monitoring, prevention and control programs. [Invasive plants and animals]
- Manage for sustainable fish harvests, both commercial and recreational, in the Great Lakes. [Removal of wildlife]

LAW & POLICY

- Develop new legislation and ordinances, where necessary, to regulate or limit dredging of the Great Lakes and to control dumping of dredge spoil. Enforce existing regulations concerning dredging. [Dredging and channelization]
- Enforce existing and develop new legislation to restrict emissions that contribute to acid rain and mercury deposition. Also address industrial discharge issues for both waste chemicals and return of water used in cooling systems. [Urban, municipal, and industrial pollution]
- Develop and enforce regulations to curtail recreational activities that cause significant damage. [Non-consumptive recreation]

RECREATION

- Promote responsible watercraft use. [Non-consumptive recreation]

Research and Survey Needs

- Examine the impacts of dredging, deposition of dredge spoil, recreational use, and commercial fishing on the value of these systems to wildlife.
- Identify invasive species that may degrade the value of nearshore systems for wildlife. Develop techniques to control invasive species.
- Assess the impacts of contaminants on the wildlife habitat quality of nearshore systems.
- Inventory current and historic avian staging areas. Identify Important Bird Areas and delineate the characteristics that indicate potential Important Bird Areas.
- Determine the impacts of winter navigation of cargo carrying ships through the Great Lakes on wildlife and their associated habitats.

**MICHIGAN'S WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN
TERRESTRIAL SYSTEMS: SOUTHERN LOWER PENINSULA**

- Determine the impacts of recreational boating in the Great Lakes on wildlife and their habitats.

Monitoring

- Track the usage of Great Lakes nearshore areas by migrating birds with attention to its use as a staging area.
- Track contaminant inflows and the concentration of contaminants.