CRITICAL HABITAT INDOOR LAB

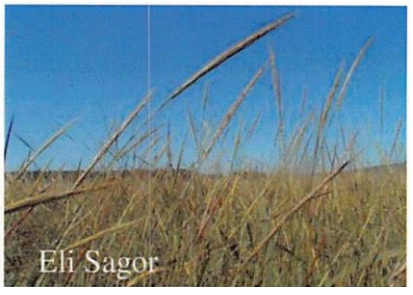
WI DNR CRITICAL HABITAT DESIGNATION DESCRIPTIONS

Biologically Diverse Submerged Aquatic Plants produce oxygen through photosynthesis and use nutrients that might otherwise fuel midsummer algae blooms. Submerged aquatic plants also provide spawning and nursery areas for certain types of fish; northern pike and yellow perch lay their eggs on aquatic plants.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Important to Fish and Wildlife Habitat. Aquatic plants provide food for waterfowl and habitat for insects, invertebrates, zooplankton, and many species of fishes. Specifically, the leaves and stems of aquatic plants are colonized by invertebrates offering forage opportunities for fish.

Emergent and Floating Leaf Vegetation help prevent shoreline erosion by stabilizing shoreline sediments and buffering wave action. The floating leaves offer shade and shelter for fish, reptiles, and invertebrates. The seeds of emergent and floating leaf plants are eaten by waterfowl including mallard, pintail, ringneck, and scaup. Muskrats and beaver also eat the rhizomes.

Rush Beds trap and prevent silt carried by waves from covering gravel used by bass and panfish for spawning. Bulrushes and other Rushes also reduce shoreline erosion by absorbing wave energy and stabilizing bank sediments. Rushes provide food and nesting material for muskrats, waterfowl, and marsh birds.



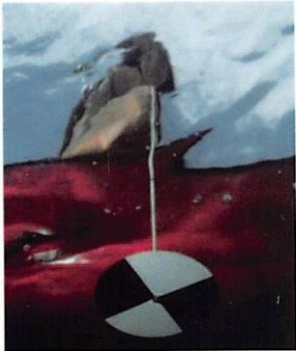
Wild Rice is valued by some waterfowl during migration specifically Sora rails. Red-wing blackbirds will also move into rice beds as the grains mature and consume the rice grains. Muskrats use the wild rice stems as both a food source as well as construction material for building their lodges.

Extensive Riparian Wetlands are spawning grounds for northern pike, nurseries for fish and ducklings, critical habitat for shorebirds and songbirds and lifelong habitat for some frogs and turtles. Wetlands also provide essential habitat for smaller aquatic organisms in the food web, including crustaceans, mollusks, insects, and plankton. Wetland vegetation provides food and cover for waterfowl, muskrats, and other wildlife. Wetlands also help keep lakes and rivers clean by filtering sediments and excess nutrients. Wetlands slow down the flow of water and act like natural sponges to reduce flooding, stabilize stream flow and lake levels, and provide recharge for groundwater.

Woody Habitat is critical for all kinds of aquatic and terrestrial life. Water insects such as mayflies graze on the algae that grow on decomposing wood. Dragonfly nymphs hunt prey among the stems and branches. Fish often find food, shelter, or nesting habitat among these fallen trees. Above water, ducks and turtles loaf and sun themselves on the trunks. Muskrats use the trees as feeding platforms.

Spawning Substrate. Walleyes use clean gravel along wind swept shores for spawning. Aquatic insects, crayfish, rock bass, and smallmouth bass also hide and forage among the rocks and gravels.

Water Quality. Physical features of lakes and streams that ensure protection of water quality. Physical features that protect water quality include stands of aquatic plants (that protect against erosion and so minimize sedimentation), natural streambed features such as riffles or boulders (that cause turbulent stream flow and so provide aeration), and natural ground water springs.



Natural Scenic Beauty. Reaches of bank, shore or bed that are predominantly natural in appearance (not man-made or artificial) or that screen man-made or artificial features. Reaches include those with stands of vegetation that include intermixed trees, shrubs, and grasses; stands of mature pines or other conifer species; bog fringe; bluffs rising from the water's edge; beds of emergent plants such as wild rice, wild celery, reeds, arrowhead.

Navigation Thoroughfares are areas traditionally used for navigation during recreational boating, angling, hunting or enjoyment of natural scenic beauty. Physical features indicative of navigation thoroughfares includes shallow water areas typically used by wading anglers or areas frequently occupied by regularly repeated public uses such as water shows.