



BIBON SWAMP WETLAND TYPES

Drew Feldkirchner

Coniferous swamp, lowland hardwood swamp, alder thicket, shrub carr, open bog and coniferous bog

BAYFIELD COUNTY



ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

Bibon Swamp, located southwest of Ashland, is Bayfield County's largest wetland complex at more than 10,000 acres. This Wetland Gem is valuable not just because of its tremendous size, but also valuable because of its roadlessness, the quality and diversity of its natural communities, and the fact that it provides habitat for at least seven rare species. The swamp is fed by the White River, which meanders through the site's clay plain wetlands from west to east, and a number of other small streams. The swamp is important to maintaining clean water in the Bad River downstream and provides important habitat connections between forests to the south and the Bad River corridor downstream to the north. The swamp is also important to the maintenance of a popular sport fishery in the White River, a cold water trout stream.

FLORA & FAUNA

Bibon's coniferous swamp habitat is dominated by white cedar with a groundlayer of bunchberry, twinflower, small bishop's cap and a number of orchid species. The lowland hardwood swamp, found west of the cedars, is dominated by mature black ash and has a groundlayer of speckled alder, sensitive fern, wood nettle and poison ivy. While most of the forest stand is medium aged, some

of the trees in this swamp are nearly 150 years old. North of the river, the site is characterized by open bog and coniferous bog peatlands. The open bog habitat is made up of black spruce, tamarack and ericaceous shrubs like leatherleaf, bog laurel and Labrador tea. Three-leaved false Solomon's seal and three-seeded sedge are common under the coniferous bog canopy. Shrub swamp habitat, both shrub carr and alder thicket, is extensive and thick with slender willow, red osier dogwood and speckled alder. Other plants present include meadowsweet, rough bedstraw and many types of sedge. Rare plants at the site include marsh horsetail, arrow-leaved sweet coltsfoot (state threatened), sheathed pondweed (state threatened) and New England violet.

The varied natural communities at this site provide habitat for a diversity of birds. Species include Nashville warbler, Canada warbler, palm warbler, yellow warbler, mourning warbler, northern parula, winter wren, red-eyed vireo, veery, Lincoln's sparrow, sharp-shinned hawk, alder flycatcher, sedge wren, gray catbird, American woodcock, black-billed cuckoo, and northern waterthrush. Several rare birds, yellow-bellied flycatcher, boreal chickadee, great gray owl, bald eagle and osprey, as well as the state threatened wood turtle have been documented at the site.

THREATS

While the quality of wetland habitat at Bibon Swamp is very good, there are threats to the health of this site from surrounding lands, including runoff from adjacent agricultural areas. Heavy deer browsing has limited the regeneration of white cedar and has led to species loss in some areas of the site. Future invasion by the emerald ash borer beetle threatens the site's ash stands.

ACCESS

There are several access points on foot and the site can be reached via canoe on the White River. Visit the Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program website: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna.

Sources:

Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
 Priority Wetland Sites of Wisconsin's Lake Superior Basin (WDNR)
 Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)

BIBON SWAMP

Property Owner: WDNR

Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Land Legacy Place, WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site, WI Bird Conservation Initiative Important Bird Area

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Northern parula — Scott Franke