



PESHTIGO RIVER DELTA WETLAND TYPES

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Floodplain forest, lowland hardwood, swamp, sedge meadow, marsh, shrub carr

MARINETTE COUNTY



PESHTIGO RIVER DELTA

Property Owner: WDNR

Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Coastal Wetland Inventory Primary Site, WI Land Legacy Place, The Nature Conservancy Priority Conservation Area, WI Bird Conservation Initiative Important Bird Area

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ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

This Wetland Gem site comprises a very large coastal wetland complex along the northwest shore of Green Bay three miles southeast of the city of Peshtigo. The wetland complex extends upstream along the Peshtigo River for two miles from its mouth. This site is significant because of its size, the diversity of wetland community types present, and the overall good condition of the vegetation. The complexity of the site – including abandoned oxbow lakes and a series of sloughs and lagoons within the river delta – offers excellent habitat for waterfowl. A number of rare animals and plants have been documented using these wetlands. The area supports a variety of recreational uses, such as hunting, fishing, trapping and boating. The Peshtigo River Delta has been described as the most diverse and least disturbed wetland complex on the west shore of Green Bay.

FLORA & FAUNA

The lower Peshtigo River forms an extensive delta that hosts a diversity of wetland community types – marsh, sedge meadow, shrub carr, floodplain forest and lowland hardwood forest – as well as a variety of interesting habitat features such as abandoned oxbow lakes, beach, sand bar and channels within the river delta. Marsh areas are characterized by dense colonies of the submergent aquatics, coontail and pondweeds. Tussock sedge and bluejoint grass dominate the sedge meadow, which also

supports cordgrass, marsh fern, sensitive fern, northern tickseed sunflower, spotted joe-pye weed, orange jewelweed, turtlehead, marsh cinquefoil, blue skullcap and marsh bellflower. Shrub carr habitat is dominated by slender willow; other shrub species include alder, red osier dogwood and white meadowsweet. Floodplain forest habitats are dominated by silver maple and green ash. Wetlands of the Peshtigo River Delta support several rare plant species including few-flowered spikerush, variegated horsetail and northern wild raisin.

This Wetland Gem provides extensive, diverse and high quality wetland habitat for many species of waterfowl, herons, gulls, terns and shorebirds and is an important staging, nesting and stopover site for many migratory birds. Rare and interesting bird species documented at the site include red-shouldered hawk, black tern, yellow rail, bald eagle, osprey, Peregrine falcon, American bittern, Forster's tern and common tern. Rare reptiles and amphibians documented at the site include bullfrog, wood turtle and Blanding's turtle.

THREATS

The Peshtigo River Delta experiences less disturbance than many other wetlands along Green Bay's west shoreline. Protected wetlands at this site are surrounded by privately owned lands with low development pressure. These wetlands are subject to pollution from upstream sources in the Peshtigo River as well as from the city of Green Bay. Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees. Increasing recreational use and invasive species like Phragmites (common reed grass) are also concerns. Future invasion by the emerald ash borer beetle threatens the site's ash trees.

ACCESS

For details, visit the State Natural Areas Program website: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna.

Sources:

- Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
- Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Important Bird Areas (WBCI)



Forster's tern — Brian Hansen