

WETLAND GEMS



JUNEAU COUNTY



SUK-CERNEY WETLANDS

Property Owner: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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

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**Wisconsin
Wetlands**
ASSOCIATION

wisconsinwetlands.org



SUK-CERNEY WETLAND TYPES

Eric Epstein

Sedge meadow, open bog, coniferous bog, alder thicket, shrub carr

ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

This Wetland Gem site features a large (> 3000 acre) wetland complex in the southwestern corner of the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Juneau County. The more than 43,000-acre Refuge was established in 1939 as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife. Suk-Cerney Wetlands is a remnant of the once vast Central Wisconsin Swamp in the bed of the extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The site is now highly managed to maintain wildlife habitat using water level manipulations, prescribed burns and other management tools. These wetlands are thus excellent habitat for an abundance and diversity of wildlife, including migratory waterfowl and a number of rare and endangered species. This site and the larger Refuge are a popular destination for recreational activities including hunting, trapping, fishing and wildlife observation.

FLORA & FAUNA

Suk-Cerney Wetlands features a mosaic of sedge meadow, open bog, marsh and other wetland habitats. Open bog areas are dominated by woollyfruit sedge and

yellow lake sedge. Other bog plants include bluejoint grass, steeplebush tawny cottongrass, purple pitcher plant and orchids. Marsh vegetation includes smartweed, arrowhead, rice cutgrass and duckweed. Shrubby areas are dominated by willows and alder.

This Wetland Gem and the rest of Necedah Wildlife Refuge support a great diversity and abundance of wildlife. Thousands of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds use wetlands for stopover habitat during migration each spring and fall. Sedge meadows at the site support a variety of birds including northern harrier, sedge wren and sora rail. Other birds at the site include American bittern, willow flycatcher, golden-winged warbler, Henslow's sparrow, sandhill crane, osprey, bald eagle, mallard, wood duck, blue-winged teal, American black duck and herons. Trumpeter swans were reestablished on the Refuge in the 1990s and Wisconsin's first wild flock of whooping cranes, a federally endangered species, was reestablished here on the Refuge. Other endangered and threatened species found at the site include Karner blue butterfly, Blanding's turtle and timber wolf.

THREATS

The site has undergone extensive hydrologic alteration, including miles of ditches. Shrubs are encroaching on open areas; controlled burns are necessary to maintain sedge meadow habitat. Heavy recreational use may cause impacts. Invasive species are also of concern.

ACCESS

Visit the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge website: www.fws.gov/midwest/Necedah.

Sources:

Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (WDNR)
Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)
The Prairie-Forest Border: An Ecoregional Plan (TNC)
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Wisconsin Important Bird Areas (WBCI)



Sandhill crane and whooping cranes — Dennis Malueg