

COASTAL FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSESSMENT FORM

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Name of Area: **Alewife -Scoy Pond Wetlands**  
Designated: **March 15, 1987**  
Date Revised: **May 15, 2002**  
County: **Suffolk**  
Town(s): **East Hampton**  
7½' Quadrangle(s): **Gardiners Island West, NY**

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**Assessment Criteria**

**Ecosystem Rarity (ER)--the uniqueness of the plant and animal community in the area and the physical, structural, and chemical features supporting this community.**

ER assessment: Undeveloped kettle wetland complex unusual on Long Island. 16

**Species Vulnerability (SV)--the degree of vulnerability throughout its range in New York State of a species residing in the ecosystem or utilizing the ecosystem for its survival.**

SV assessment: Osprey (SC) nesting and feeding. Marbled salamander (SC), spotted turtle (SC), eastern spadefoot toad (SC). Cerulean warbler (SC) present.  
Calculation:  $16 + (16/2) + (16/4) + (16/8) + (16/16) =$  31

**Human Use (HU)-- the conduct of significant, demonstrable commercial, recreational, or educational wildlife-related human uses, either consumptive or non-consumptive, in the area or directly dependent upon the area.**

HU assessment: Birdwatching and recreational fishing are significant to Suffolk County residents and park visitors. Hunting permitted at Grace Estate.  
Calculation:  $4 + (4/2) + (4/4) =$  7

**Population Level (PL)--the concentration of a species in the area during its normal, recurring period of occurrence, regardless of the length of that period of occurrence.**

PL assessment: Unusual concentrations and diversity of reptiles and amphibians; of county-level significance. One of only 4 major documented alewife spawning areas in Peconics. 9

**Replaceability (R)--ability to replace the area, either on or off site, with an equivalent replacement for the same fish and wildlife and uses of those same fish and wildlife, for the same users of those fish and wildlife.**

R assessment: Irreplaceable. 1.2

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**Habitat Index = [ER + SV + HU + PL] = 63**

**Significance = HI x R = 75.6**

NEW YORK STATE  
SIGNIFICANT COASTAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT  
NARRATIVE

**ALEWIFE AND SCOY POND WETLANDS**

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT:

Alewife and Scoy Pond wetlands are located on the north shore of the south fork of Long Island, between Northwest Harbor and Three Mile Harbor in the Town of East Hampton, Suffolk County (7.5' Quadrangle: Gardiners Island West, NY). The fish and wildlife habitat consists of an approximately 310 acre network of freshwater and brackish ponds, wetlands, kettles and creeks interconnected by direct surface water or subsurface hydrologic connections. The wetland areas have a diverse assemblage of vegetative types including swamp forest, swamp shrub, emergent marsh, floating aquatic, and submerged aquatic communities. Scoy Pond is considered a good example of the rare coastal plain pond community by the New York Natural Heritage Program. The wetland areas are bordered by mature oak-pine forest. Alewife Pond is an approximately 25 acre brackish pond, connected to Northwest Harbor by a relatively narrow tidal creek (Alewife Brook). Scoy Pond connects to Alewife Pond through a stream. Part of the habitat is in Cedar Point County Park; this area receives much recreational use for camping and picnicking, and non-motorized boats are available for use on Alewife Pond. The Scoy Pond area is part of the Town-owned Grace Estate Park.

FISH AND WILDLIFE VALUES:

The undeveloped kettle-type wetlands found in the Alewife and Scoy Pond area are unusual on Long Island. The Alewife and Scoy Pond habitat is important to many species of fish and wildlife.

Alewife Pond and Brook comprise a significant osprey (SC) feeding and nesting area; osprey historically have nested here in trees bordering these waterbodies. Other rare bird species which regularly use this wetland system include northern harrier (T), and 1993-1994 breeding bird surveys found scarlet tanager, cerulean warbler (SC) and acadian flycatcher. Between 19 and 28 species were found breeding in the vicinity of Scoy Pond during the 1993-1994 surveys, and an extremely high nest density of 184 nests per 100 acres was observed. Several waterfowl species, including bufflehead, red-breasted merganser, and hooded merganser, feed and overwinter here; American black duck, wood duck, mallard, Canada goose and mute swan also breed here. Eastern bluebird, broad-winged hawk, red-tailed hawk, and great horned owl nest in this area. Belted kingfishers and herons also feed in the waters of this system.

Amphibians found here include large concentrations of spotted salamander and marbled salamanders (SC), as well as the eastern spadefoot toad (SC), spring peeper, bull frog, wood frog, green frog, and gray tree frog. Reptiles found here include snapping turtle, painted turtle, spotted

turtle (SC), and diamondback terrapin. A rare damselfly, the New England bluet (*Enallagma laterale*), is also found here.

The ponds and wetland system contain chain pickerel and other recreationally valuable freshwater fishes. Alewife spawn in Alewife Pond at the end of the annual run upstream from Northwest Harbor; this is one of only four major documented alewife spawning runs in the Peconics region. The historical run between Alewife Pond and Scoy Pond is blocked by barriers and no longer occurs. The concentration of wildlife and fish in this readily accessible location provide valuable recreational opportunities for local residents and other visitors to the park. Alewife Brook and Alewife Pond are closed to shellfishing year round.

Scoy Pond supports several listed and rare plants documented by the New York Natural Heritage Program, including long-tubercled spikerush (*Eleocharis tuberculosa*, T), bushy rockrose (*Helianthemum dumosum*, T), and fibrous bladderwort (*Utricularia fibrosa*).

#### IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Any activities that would degrade water quality, increase turbidity, or alter water depths would have a significant impact on fish and wildlife species inhabiting the Alewife-Scoy Pond wetlands. All species may be affected by water pollution, such as chemical contamination (including food chain effects resulting from bioaccumulation), oil spills, excessive turbidity, waste disposal (including boat wastes), and stormwater runoff. The waters of Alewife Brook and Alewife Pond have been decertified for shellfishing since 1990 because of high fecal coliform levels.

Alewife would be most sensitive April 1 through July 30, when spawning takes place. Barriers to fish migration, whether physical or chemical, have a significant effect on the biological resources of this area. Removal of barriers, such as the inadequate culvert under Alewife Brook Road, would restore the alewife run to Scoy Pond. This culvert has also promoted extensive invasion by *Phragmites australis*. Control of invasive nuisance plant species, through a variety of means, may improve fish and wildlife species use of the area and enhance overall wetland values.

Any substantial alteration or human disturbance of the vegetative communities, such as changes to wetland or brook hydrology or configuration, filling, or introduction of invasive or exotic species, within or adjacent to the habitat, may adversely affect wildlife species in the area, especially the area's important populations of amphibians. Alterations to site hydrology, including loss of tidal connection, ditching, excavation, or filling, would result in a direct loss of valuable habitats. Collection of amphibians and reptiles from this area could also have a significant impact on these populations.

In addition, the oak-pine forest uplands bordering the peninsula form an important core forest area in the Town of East Hampton. Clearing or fragmentation of this habitat would be detrimental to forest wildlife, including breeding birds, and could affect water quality in the

ponds.

Access to the area for compatible recreational uses during appropriate time periods, such as birdwatching, hiking, or recreational fishing, should be maintained. Public use of the area should be limited or managed to prevent or minimize disturbance, especially to the sensitive shoreline areas of the coastal plain pond community.

**KNOWLEDGEABLE CONTACTS:**

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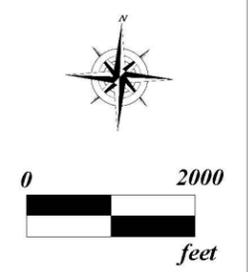
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**Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats**

- Alewife - Scoy Pond Wetlands
- Cedar Point / Hedges Bank Shallows
- Cedar Point Peninsula
- Three Mile Harbor
- Mashomack Preserve - Shelter Island (In part)
- Northwest Creek (In part)
- Sag Harbor Bay & Northwest Harbor (In part)

