

COASTAL FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of Area: **Culloden Point**
Designated: **March 15, 1987**
Date Revised: **May 15, 2002**
County: **Suffolk**
Town(s): **East Hampton**
7½' Quadrangle(s): **Montauk Point, NY**

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: Complex perched kettle and stream course system draining to Block Island Sound; marshy meltwater depressions at seaward end of watercourse system. Rare on Long Island. 25

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: Blue-spotted salamander (SC) and eastern box turtle (SC). Northern harrier (T) probable breeder. Calculation: $16 + (16/2) =$ 24

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: Recreational fishing use of regional significance. Nature study, hiking, fishing from shore, of county-level significance. Access for offshore diving. Calculation: $9 + (4/2) =$ 11

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: Very large concentrations of blue-spotted salamander and eastern newt, significant on Long Island. 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

Habitat Index = [ER + SV + HU + PL] = 69

Significance = HI x R = 82.8

NEW YORK STATE
SIGNIFICANT COASTAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT
NARRATIVE

CULLODEN POINT

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT:

Culloden Point consists of 222 acres located on Block Island Sound and Fort Pond Bay in northern Montauk in the Town of East Hampton, Suffolk County (7.5' Quadrangle: Montauk Point, NY). This tract was subdivided and developed in the early 1990s, resulting in the creation of 54 residential lots and 188.3 acres of protected land in a contiguous block. The protected block is a Town of East Hampton, Suffolk County, and New York State preserve, encompassing all of the property's wetlands. The fish and wildlife habitat at this site consists of varied knob and kettle terrain with a surface area consisting of about 20% wetlands and 80% uplands. The wetlands are of the riparian and kettlehole type. The uplands are vegetated with alternating areas of oak-hickory hardwoods and brushy downs grasslands.

FISH AND WILDLIFE VALUES:

The Culloden Point area is a relatively uncommon ecosystem type on Long Island. The varied knob and kettle terrain provides an excellent habitat for several species of fish and wildlife.

The fern covered stream banks and regularity of stream flow (running to Block Island Sound) make this an ideal habitat for certain amphibians, particularly the blue-spotted salamander. A very large group of blue-spotted salamander (SC) lives in the stream system. Forty-five individuals were found occupying one small breeding hole in 1985. A 1992 herpetological survey in the area encountered 18 individuals. Other species observed were: Four-toed salamander, spring peeper, bull frog, green frog, gray tree frog, snapping turtle, painted turtle, eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*, SC), eastern ribbon snake, and eastern garter snake. The eastern newt occupies several kettleholes including the largest freshwater pond, Culloden Pond.

The habitat area is also important to several species of birds for feeding and nesting. A 1993 breeding bird survey found 25 species of breeding birds here, and is an especially important site for yellow-billed cuckoo, blue-grey gnatcatcher, American goldfinch, and blue-winged warbler. Nest density reached 137 nests per 100 acres. Great horned owls breed in the Culloden Point habitat area; northern harrier (T) is a probable breeder but is not confirmed. Colonies of bank swallows nest in the coastal bluff faces of the area, and wild turkeys and ruffed grouse are found at this site. The littoral zone of Culloden Point is a prime feeding area for the common loon (SC) which overwinters in large numbers (several hundred) in the inshore waters between Montauk Point and Napeague Harbor each year. Other overwintering species observed in the area include Canada goose, common eider, white-winged scoter, bufflehead, red-breasted merganser, oldsquaw, and mallard.

A variety of mammals occupy the area, most notably the gray fox which is quite rare on Long Island.

The long, undisturbed coastline is an important area in the winter months as a haul-out area for harbor seals that feed in Block Island Sound and Fort Pond Bay.

The New York Natural Heritage Program has documented several listed and rare plants at this site, including scotch lovage (*Ligusticum scothicum*, E) and southern arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum* var *venosum*).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

The fish and wildlife resources of Culloden Point would be affected primarily by major habitat alterations, or modification of public access to the area. Habitat modifications which substantially change the natural character of the area, such as residential, commercial, or industrial developments which would fragment important vegetative communities, clear woodlands, or disturb wetlands vegetation, would have a significant impact on the wildlife species in this area. *Phragmites australis* is encroaching on the wetlands in this area. 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 activity that would degrade water quality or increase turbidity in the streams and wetlands of Culloden Point would also have a significant impact on fish and wildlife resources. 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.

Collection of amphibians or reptiles from this area, as well as other fauna or flora, could have a significant impact on survival of species of special concern in New York State. Any permanent alteration or human disturbance of the harbor seal haulout area along the coastline of Culloden Point would adversely affect this species.

KNOWLEDGEABLE CONTACTS:

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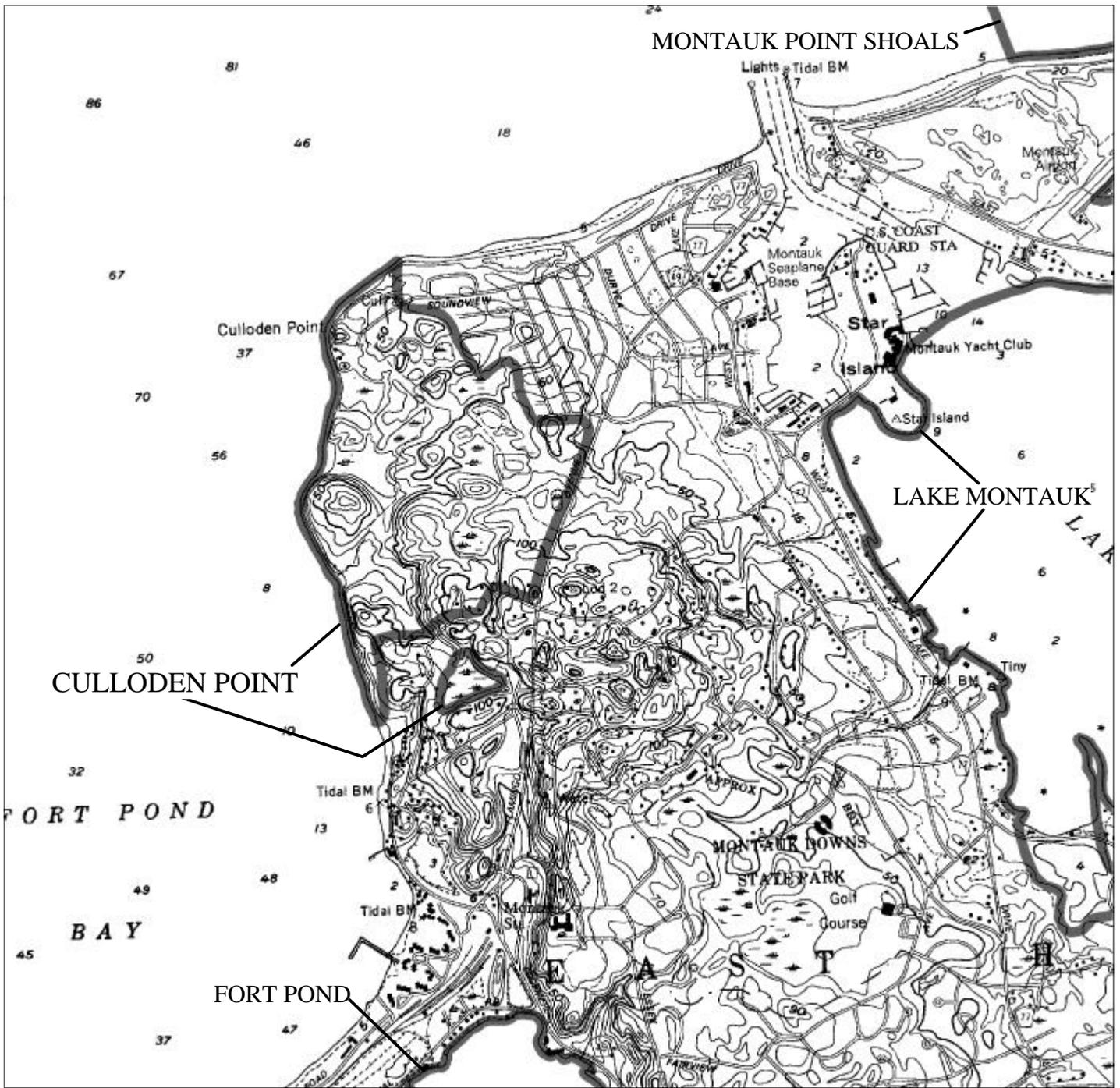
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Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats



New York State
Department of State
Division of
Coastal Resources

Culloden Point
Fort Pond (In part)
Lake Montauk (In part)
Montauk Point Shoals (In part)

