



Emergent Deep Marsh

Where to Go

- ☞ Arcola Creek Nature Preserve (Lake County, OH)
- ☞ Conneaut Outlet-State Game Land 214 (Crawford County, PA)
- ☞ Lake Pleasant Natural Area, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (Erie County, PA)
- ☞ Old Woman Creek State Nature Preserve (Erie County, OH)
- ☞ Presque Isle State Park (Erie County, PA)
- ☞ Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve (Erie County, OH)
- ☞ Watts Flats State Wildlife Area (Chautauqua County, NY)
- ☞ Wheeler Creek Marsh, Geneva State Park (Ashtabula County, OH)

Emergent Deep Marshes occupy intermittently or permanently flooded shores upstream from the mouths of many Lake Erie rivers, open ponds within abandoned river channels, shorelines of glacial lakes, beaver ponds, and depression wetlands within glacial deposits. Such marshes generally have two main zones—an emergent zone in the shallow waters along the shore and a floating-leaved zone in deeper water off shore—and the community responds dynamically to changes in water levels.

The floating-leaved zone within the deeper waters of Lake Erie bays and glacial lakes is usually dominated by white water lily, spatterdock, water smartweed, and several species of floating and submerged pondweeds, eel grass, Eurasian water-milfoil, and coontail. The emergent zone marshes, with typical water depths less than seven feet, were historically dominated by greater bur-reed, soft-stem bulrush, tussock sedge, lake sedge, pickerelweed, southern blue flag, rice cut-grass, common arrowhead, American three-square, hard-stem bulrush, and river bulrush.

Beavers are often a key actor in a marsh community, making dams that raise water levels and create ponds suitable for emergent vegetation. Birds include red-winged blackbird, sora, Virginia rail, American bittern, least bittern, wood duck, blue-winged teal, pied-billed grebe, prothonotary warbler, swamp sparrow, and green heron. Bullfrogs, leopard frogs, painted turtles, and snapping turtles can be found, as well as snakes, weasels, lemmings, shrews, and fish species.

High quality deep marshes formerly occurred at the mouths of rivers flowing into Lake Erie, and the few remaining examples, such as Arcola Creek in Lake County, OH, and Old Woman Creek in Huron, OH, are important breeding and nursery areas for many Lake Erie fish. Most other marshes in the region—including such popular locations as Mentor Marsh, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, and Cleveland Metroparks North Chagrin Reservation—have been impacted by non-native narrow-leaved cattail, purple loosestrife, reed canary grass, and common reed grass (*Phragmites*).



Pickerelweed



Water lily



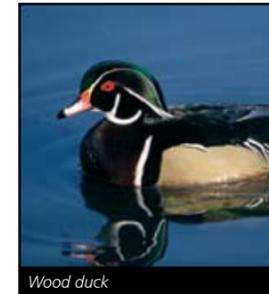
Spatterdock



Great blue heron



Green heron



Wood duck