

# Lake Plain Swamp Forest

Now reduced to small fragments, this community formerly occupied large areas of level, poorly drained flats on the Lake Plain from Sandusky, OH, to Erie, PA. South of the Lake Plain, swamp forests were formerly common on level till plains, depressions within glacial end moraines (ridges of glacial till deposited at the terminal margins of glaciers), peatlands adjacent to glacial lakes, and abandoned river channels. Canopy cover is complete and dominated by red maple, silver maple, red ash, black ash, and American elm. American elm was probably the dominant species prior to the introduction of Dutch elm disease. Other canopy trees are tupelo, black willow, peach-leaf willow, eastern cottonwood, bur oak, swamp white oak, and shellbark hickory. Hemlock-yellow birch-tupelo swamps are common within western Pennsylvania on level, poorly drained flats. Smaller patch communities, such as vernal ponds (small, isolated wetlands that flood seasonally), buttonbush shrub swamps, and mixed shrub swamps are present within many Lake Plain swamp forests.

Spicebush is the most common understory shrub, and winterberry, elderberry, and viburnums are often present. Typical ground-cover species include marsh violet, lizard's tail, many sedges, marsh marigold, arrow arum, turtlehead, wood reed, fringed loosestrife, tufted loosestrife, orange jewelweed, cardinal flower, sensitive fern, cinnamon fern and royal fern. Many rare plants not considered wetland plants, such as rose-shell azalea, dewdrop, dwarf dogwood, velvet-leaf blueberry, painted trillium, and awned shorthusk are confined to hummocks adjacent to vernal ponds within this forest in the snowbelt northeast of Cleveland. These forests often have hummocky topography, which develops from the wind-throw of the shallow-rooted trees.

Vernal ponds within this forest are home to wood frogs, spring peepers, spotted salamanders, Jefferson's salamanders, four-toed salamanders, and red-spotted newts. Nesting birds include ovenbird, veery, warbling vireo, yellow-throated vireo, hooded warbler, and wood thrush. The community also includes the woodland jumping mouse, long-eared bat, and rat snake.

## Where to Go

- ☞ Bradley Woods Reservation and along abandoned river channels in the Rocky River Reservation, Cleveland Metroparks (Cuyahoga County, OH)
- ☞ Carlisle Reservation, Lorain County Metro Parks (Lorain County, OH)
- ☞ Eldon Russell Park, Geauga Park District (Gauga County, OH)
- ☞ Erie Bluffs State Park (Erie County, PA)
- ☞ Grand River Terraces Preserve, Berger Preserve, and Kingsville Swamp Preserve, of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (Ashtabula County, OH)
- ☞ Morgan Swamp Preserve of The Nature Conservancy (Ashtabula County, OH)
- ☞ New Lyme Wildlife Area, Ohio Division of Wildlife (Ashtabula County, OH)
- ☞ Roderick Wildlife Reserve-State Game Land 314 (Erie County, PA)
- ☞ Veterans Park, Lake Metroparks (Lake County, OH)



Spotted salamander



Vernal pool



Cardinal flower



Buttonbush



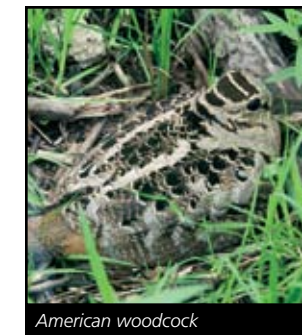
Wood thrush



Veery



Wood frog



American woodcock



Painted trillium