This report and associated map provide information about important sites for biodiversity conservation in your area.

This information is intended for conservation planning, and is not intended for use in state regulations.
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Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game, through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife’s Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), and The Nature Conservancy’s Massachusetts Program developed BioMap2 to protect the state’s biodiversity in the context of climate change.

BioMap2 combines NHESP’s 30 years of rigorously documented rare species and natural community data with spatial data identifying wildlife species and habitats that were the focus of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife’s 2005 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). BioMap2 also integrates The Nature Conservancy’s assessment of large, well-connected, and intact ecosystems and landscapes across the Commonwealth, incorporating concepts of ecosystem resilience to address anticipated climate change impacts.

Protection and stewardship of BioMap2 Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape is essential to safeguard the diversity of species and their habitats, intact ecosystems, and resilient natural landscapes across Massachusetts.

What Does Status Mean?

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife determines a status category for each rare species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, M.G.L. c.131A, and its implementing regulations 321 CMR 10.00. Rare species are categorized as Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern according to the following:

- Endangered species are in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range or are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts.
- Threatened species are likely to become Endangered in Massachusetts in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.
- Special Concern species have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked or occur in such small numbers or with such restricted distribution or specialized habitat requirements that they could easily become Threatened in Massachusetts.

In addition NHESP maintains an unofficial watch list of plants that are tracked due to potential conservation interest or concern, but are not regulated under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act or other laws or regulations. Likewise, described natural communities are not regulated by any law or regulations, but they can help to identify ecologically important areas that are worthy of

Get your copy of the BioMap2 report! Download from www.mass.gov/nhesp or contact Natural Heritage at 508-389-6360 or natural.heritage@state.ma.us.
The status of natural communities reflects the documented number and acreages of each community type in the state:

- Critically Imperiled communities typically have 5 or fewer documented sites or have very few remaining acres in the state.
- Imperiled communities typically have 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state.
- Vulnerable communities typically have 21-100 sites or limited acreage across the state.
- Secure communities typically have over 100 sites or abundant acreage across the state; however, excellent examples are identified as Core Habit to ensure continued protection.

In 2005 the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife completed a comprehensive State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) documenting the status of Massachusetts wildlife and providing recommendations to help guide wildlife conservation decision-making. SWAP includes all the wildlife species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), as well as more than 80 species that need conservation attention but do not meet the requirements for inclusion under MESA. The SWAP document is organized around habitat types in need of conservation within the Commonwealth. While the original BioMap focused primarily on rare species protected under MESA, BioMap2 also addresses other Species of Conservation Concern, their habitats, and the ecosystems that support them to create a spatial representation of most of the elements of SWAP.

**BioMap2: One Plan, Two Components**

BioMap2 identifies two complementary spatial layers, Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape.

Core Habitat identifies key areas that are critical for the long-term persistence of rare species and other Species of Conservation Concern, as well as a wide diversity of natural communities and intact ecosystems across the Commonwealth. Protection of Core Habitats will contribute to the conservation of specific elements of biodiversity.

Critical Natural Landscape identifies large natural Landscape Blocks that are minimally impacted by development. If protected, these areas will provide habitat for wide-ranging native species, support intact ecological processes, maintain connectivity among habitats, and enhance ecological resilience to natural and anthropogenic disturbances in a rapidly changing world. Areas delineated as Critical Natural Landscape also include buffering upland around wetland, coastal, and aquatic Core Habitats to help ensure their long-term integrity.

The long-term persistence of Massachusetts biological resources requires a determined commitment to land and water conservation. Protection and stewardship of both Critical Natural Landscapes and Core Habitats are needed to realize the biodiversity conservation vision of BioMap2.

**Components of Core Habitat**

Core Habitat identifies specific areas necessary to promote the long-term persistence of rare species, other Species of Conservation Concern, exemplary natural communities, and intact ecosystems.

**Rare Species**

There are 432 native plant and animal species listed as Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) based on their rarity, population trends, and threats to survival. For
Table 1. Species of Conservation Concern described in the State Wildlife Action Plan and/or included on the MESA List and for which habitat was mapped in BioMap2. Note that plants are not included in SWAP, and that marine species such as whales and sea turtles are not included in BioMap2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomic Group</th>
<th>MESA-listed Species</th>
<th>Non-listed Species of Conservation Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mammals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptiles</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphibians</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invertebrates</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plants</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>413</strong></td>
<td><strong>62</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BioMap2, NHESP staff identified the highest quality habitat sites for each non-marine species based on size, condition, and landscape context.

Other Species of Conservation Concern

In addition to species on the MESA List described previously, the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) identifies 257 wildlife species and 22 natural habitats most in need of conservation within the Commonwealth. BioMap2 includes species-specific habitat areas for 45 of these species and habitat for 17 additional species which was mapped with other coarse-filter and fine-filter approaches.

Priority Natural Communities

Natural communities are assemblages of plant and animal species that share a common environment and occur together repeatedly on the landscape. BioMap2 gives conservation priority to natural communities with limited distribution and to the best examples of more common types.

Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat, especially for amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. BioMap2 identifies the top 5 percent most interconnected clusters of Potential Vernal Pools in the state.

Forest Cores

In BioMap2, Core Habitat includes the best examples of large, intact forests that are least impacted by roads and development, providing critical habitat for numerous woodland species. For example, the interior forest habitat defined by Forest Cores supports many bird species sensitive to the impacts of roads and development, such as the Black-throated Green Warbler, and helps maintain ecological processes found only in unfragmented forest patches.

Wetland Cores

BioMap2 used an assessment of Ecological Integrity to identify the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

Aquatic Cores

To delineate integrated and functional ecosystems for fish species and other aquatic
Species of Conservation concern, beyond the species and exemplary habitats described above, BioMap2 identifies intact river corridors within which important physical and ecological processes of the river or stream occur.

**Components of Critical Natural Landscape**

Critical Natural Landscape identifies intact landscapes in Massachusetts that are better able to support ecological processes and disturbance regimes, and a wide array of species and habitats over long time frames.

**Landscape Blocks**

BioMap2 identifies the most intact large areas of predominately natural vegetation, consisting of contiguous forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and ponds, as well as coastal habitats such as barrier beaches and salt marshes.

**Upland Buffers of Wetland and Aquatic Cores**

A variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers.

**Upland Habitat to Support Coastal Adaptation**

BioMap2 identifies undeveloped lands adjacent to and up to one and a half meters above existing salt marshes as Critical Natural Landscapes with high potential to support inland migration of salt marsh and other coastal habitats over the coming century.

The conservation areas identified by BioMap2 are based on breadth and depth of data, scientific expertise, and understanding of Massachusetts’ biodiversity. The numerous sources of information and analyses used to create Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape are complementary, and outline a comprehensive conservation vision for Massachusetts, from rare species to intact landscapes. In total, these robust analyses define a suite of priority lands and waters that, if permanently protected, will support Massachusetts’ natural systems for generations to come.

**Legal Protection of Biodiversity**

BioMap2 presents a powerful vision of what Massachusetts would look like with full protection of the land most important for supporting the Commonwealth’s biodiversity. While BioMap2 is a planning tool with no regulatory function, all state-listed species enjoy legal protection under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (M.G.L. c.131A) and its implementing regulations (321 CMR 10.00). Wetland habitat of state-listed wildlife is also protected under the Wetlands Protection Act Regulations (310 CMR 10.00). The Natural Heritage Atlas contains maps of Priority Habitats and Estimated Habitats, which are used, respectively, for regulation under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and the Wetlands Protection Act. For more information on rare species regulations, and to view Priority and Estimated Habitat maps, please see the Regulatory Review page at http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/regulatory-review.

BioMap2 is a conservation planning tool that does not, in any way, supplant the Estimated and Priority Habitat Maps which have regulatory significance. Unless and until the BioMap2 vision is fully realized, we must continue to protect our most imperiled species and their habitats.

For more information on rare species and natural communities, please see our fact sheets online at www.mass.gov/nhesp.
Understanding Core Habitat Summaries

Following the Town Overview, there is a descriptive summary of each Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape that occurs in your city or town. These summaries highlight some of the outstanding characteristics of each Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape, and will help you learn more about your city or town’s biodiversity. You can find out more information about many of these species and natural communities by looking at specific fact sheets at www.mass.gov/nhesp.

Additional Information

For copies of the full BioMap2 report, the Technical Report, and an interactive mapping tool, visit the BioMap2 website via the Land Protection and Planning tab at www.mass.gov/nhesp. If you have any questions about this report, or if you need help protecting land for biodiversity in your community, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program staff looks forward to working with you.

Contact the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

By phone 508-389-6360
By fax 508-389-7890
By email natural.heritage@state.ma.us
By Mail 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230
West Boylston, MA 01583

The GIS datalayers of BioMap2 are available for download from MassGIS at www.mass.gov/mgis.
**Town Overview**

Hamilton lies within the Southern New England Coastal Plains and Hills Ecoregion, an area comprised of plains with a few low hills. Forests are mainly central hardwoods with some transition hardwoods and some elm-ash-red maple and red and white pine. Many major rivers drain this area.

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**Hamilton at a Glance**

- Total Area: 9,536 acres (14.9 square miles)
- Human Population in 2010: 7,764
- Open space protected in perpetuity: 2,880 acres, or 30.2% percent of total area*
- BioMap2 Core Habitat: 1,802 acres
- BioMap2 Core Habitat Protected: 386 acres or 21.4%
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape: 2,841 acres
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape Protected: 1,191 acres or 41.9%.

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**BioMap2 Components**

**Core Habitat**

- 2 Forest Cores
- 1 Wetland Core
- 2 Aquatic Cores
- 8 Species of Conservation Concern Cores**
  - 2 amphibians, 1 mussel, 2 plants

**Critical Natural Landscape**

- 3 Landscape Blocks
- 7 Wetland Core Buffers
- 2 Aquatic Core Buffers

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* Calculated using MassGIS data layer “Protected and Recreational Open Space—March, 2012”.

** See next pages for complete list of species, natural communities and other biodiversity elements.
BioMap2 Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape in Hamilton

For more information on rare species and natural communities, please see our fact sheets online at [www.mass.gov/nhesp](http://www.mass.gov/nhesp).
Species of Conservation Concern, Priority and Exemplary Natural Communities, and Other Elements of Biodiversity in Hamilton

Mussels

Triangle Floater, \((Alasmidonta undulata)\), Non-listed SWAP species

Amphibians

Northern Leopard Frog, \((Rana pipiens)\), Non-listed SWAP
Blue-spotted Salamander, \((Ambystoma laterale)\), SC

Plants

River Bulrush, \((Bolboschoenus fluviatilis)\), recently de-listed
New England Blazing Star, \((Liatris scariosa var. novae-angliae)\), SC

Other BioMap2 Components

Forest Core
Aquatic Core
Wetland Core
Landscape Block
Aquatic Core Buffer
Wetland Core Buffer

E  = Endangered
T  = Threatened
SC = Special Concern
S1  = Critically Imperiled communities, typically 5 or fewer documented sites or very few remaining acres in the state.
S2  = Imperiled communities, typically 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state.
S3  = Vulnerable communities, typically have 21-100 sites or limited acreage across the state.

For more information on rare species and natural communities, please see our fact sheets online at [www.mass.gov/nhesp](http://www.mass.gov/nhesp).
BioMap2 Core Habitat in Hamilton

Core IDs correspond with the following element lists and summaries.
### Elements of BioMap2 Cores

This section lists all elements of BioMap2 Cores that fall *entirely or partially* within Hamilton. The elements listed here may not occur within the bounds of Hamilton.

#### Core 2475/2605/2648/2656/2660/2700
Wetland Core

#### Core 2477/2630/2655/2691
Species of Conservation Concern
- Blue-spotted Salamander *Ambystoma laterale* SC

#### Core 2536
Forest Core
Wetland Core
Species of Conservation Concern
- Four-toed Salamander *Hemidactylium scutatum* Non-listed SWAP
- Spotted Turtle *Clemmys guttata* Non-listed SWAP

#### Core 2683
Species of Conservation Concern
- New England Blazing Star *Liatris scariosa var. novae-angliae* SC

#### Core 2757
Forest Core
Aquatic Core
Wetland Core
Species of Conservation Concern
- Blue-spotted Salamander *Ambystoma laterale* SC
- Northern Leopard Frog *Rana pipiens* Non-listed SWAP

#### Core 2805
Aquatic Core
Wetland Core
Species of Conservation Concern
- Triangle Floater *Alasmidonta undulata* Non-listed SWAP
- Blue-spotted Salamander *Ambystoma laterale* SC
- Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus* SC

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For more information on rare species and natural communities, please see our fact sheets online at [www.mass.gov/nhesp](http://www.mass.gov/nhesp).
Core 2837

Forest Core
Aquatic Core
Wetland Core

Species of Conservation Concern

- Blue-spotted Salamander: *Ambystoma laterale* SC
- Least Bittern: *Ixobrychus exilis* E
- Pied-billed Grebe: *Podilymbus podiceps* E
- Sharp-shinned Hawk: *Accipiter striatus* SC

For more information on rare species and natural communities, please see our fact sheets online at [www.mass.gov/nhesp](http://www.mass.gov/nhesp).
Core Habitat Summaries

Core 2475
A 10-acre Core Habitat featuring Wetland Core.

Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

Core 2477
A 173-acre Core Habitat featuring a Species of Conservation Concern.

Adult and juvenile Blue-spotted Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late winter or early spring to breed in vernal pools and fish-free areas of swamps, marshes, or similar wetlands. Larvae metamorphose in late summer or early fall, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

Core 2536
A 1,628-acre Core Habitat featuring Forest Core, Wetland Core, and Species of Conservation Concern.

Forest Cores are the best examples of large, intact forests that are least impacted by roads and development. Forest Cores support many bird species sensitive to the impacts of roads and development and help maintain ecological processes found only in unfragmented forest patches.

Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

Four-toed Salamanders live in forested habitats surrounding swamps, bogs, marshes, vernal pools, and other fish-free waters that are used as breeding sites. Most breeding sites in Massachusetts are characterized by pit-and-mound topography with significant sphagnum-moss cover. Eggs are typically laid in mounds or patches of sphagnum moss that overhang water. Upon hatching, the larvae wriggle through the moss and drop into the water, where they will develop for several weeks prior to metamorphosis.

Strong populations of Spotted Turtles in good habitat - large, unfragmented, protected open space - continue to be of interest for the conservation of this species. This small, dark-colored turtle with yellow spots on its carapace inhabits a variety of wetlands year-round and nests in nearby uplands during spring. Road and collection are the primary conservation concerns.
Core 2605
A 16-acre Core Habitat featuring Wetland Core.

Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

Core 2630
A 160-acre Core Habitat featuring a Species of Conservation Concern.

Adult and juvenile Blue-spotted Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late winter or early spring to breed in vernal pools and fish-free areas of swamps, marshes, or similar wetlands. Larvae metamorphose in late summer or early fall, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

Core 2648
A 19-acre Core Habitat featuring Wetland Core.

Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

Core 2655
A 104-acre Core Habitat featuring a Species of Conservation Concern.

Adult and juvenile Blue-spotted Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late winter or early spring to breed in vernal pools and fish-free areas of swamps, marshes, or similar wetlands. Larvae metamorphose in late summer or early fall, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

Core 2656
A 63-acre Core Habitat featuring Wetland Core.

Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

Core 2660
A 17-acre Core Habitat featuring Wetland Core.
Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

**Core 2683**

A 6-acre Core Habitat featuring a Species of Conservation Concern.

New England Blazing Star is an endemic, globally rare, perennial composite of dry, sandy grasslands and clearings. In Massachusetts, New England Blazing Star inhabits open, dry, low-nutrient sandy soils of grasslands, heathlands, and barrens. It thrives in fire-influenced natural communities that are periodically disturbed and devoid of dense woody plant cover.

**Core 2691**

A 72-acre Core Habitat featuring a Species of Conservation Concern.

Adult and juvenile Blue-spotted Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late winter or early spring to breed in vernal pools and fish-free areas of swamps, marshes, or similar wetlands. Larvae metamorphose in late summer or early fall, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

**Core 2700**

A 227-acre Core Habitat featuring Wetland Core.

Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

The 227-acre Wetland Core is among the largest 20% of Wetland Cores statewide and in this ecoregion.

**Core 2757**

A 3,349-acre Core Habitat featuring Forest Core, Wetland Core, Aquatic Core, and Species of Conservation Concern.

Forest Cores are the best examples of large, intact forests that are least impacted by roads and development. Forest Cores support many bird species sensitive to the impacts of roads and development and help maintain ecological processes found only in unfragmented forest patches.

Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.
Aquatic Cores are intact river corridors within which important physical and ecological processes of the river or stream occur. They delineate integrated and functional ecosystems for fish species and other aquatic Species of Conservation Concern.

Adult and juvenile Blue-spotted Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late winter or early spring to breed in vernal pools and fish-free areas of swamps, marshes, or similar wetlands. Larvae metamorphose in late summer or early fall, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

Adult Northern Leopard Frogs are found in marshes, wet meadows, and peatlands in the narrow transition zone between open water and uplands; they retreat to the water of ponds and small streams when threatened. The herbivorous tadpoles require open water of sufficient permanence for their development.

Core 2805

An 842-acre Core Habitat featuring Wetland Core, Aquatic Core, and Species of Conservation Concern.

Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes — those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

Aquatic Cores are intact river corridors within which important physical and ecological processes of the river or stream occur. They delineate integrated and functional ecosystems for fish species and other aquatic Species of Conservation Concern.

Triangle Floaters are freshwater mussels commonly found in low-gradient river reaches with sand and gravel substrates and low to moderate water velocities, although they are found in a wide range of substrate and flow conditions.

Core 2837

A 2,461-acre Core Habitat featuring Forest Core, Wetland Core, Aquatic Core, and Species of Conservation Concern.

Forest Cores are the best examples of large, intact forests that are least impacted by roads and development. Forest Cores support many bird species sensitive to the impacts of roads and development and help maintain ecological processes found only in unfragmented forest patches.
This 1,318-acre Forest Core is among the largest 20% of Forest Cores in the ecoregion, provides important and relatively large forest interior habitat in highly developed eastern Massachusetts, and is almost completely protected through Willowdale State Forest.

Wetland Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

Aquatic Cores are intact river corridors within which important physical and ecological processes of the river or stream occur. They delineate integrated and functional ecosystems for fish species and other aquatic Species of Conservation Concern.

Adult and juvenile Blue-spotted Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late winter or early spring to breed in vernal pools and fish-free areas of swamps, marshes, or similar wetlands. Larvae metamorphose in late summer or early fall, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

Least Bitterns are heron-like birds that typically nest in cattail marshes interspersed with open water and are very sensitive to disturbance.

Pied-billed Grebes are secretive marshbirds that typically nest in dense cattail beds adjacent to open water. They are very sensitive to disturbance and changes in water levels.

Sharp-shinned Hawks nest in mixed woodlands and coniferous forests, often with nearby open areas. They are sensitive to disturbance around the nest, but they do occasionally nest near human development.
BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape in Hamilton

Critical Natural Landscape IDs correspond with the following element lists and summaries.
Elements of BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscapes

This section lists all elements of BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscapes that fall *entirely or partially* within Hamilton. The elements listed here may not occur within the bounds of Hamilton.

**CNL 1245**
- Wetland Core Buffer

**CNL 1254**
- Coastal Adaptation Area
- Landscape Block
- Wetland Core Buffer

**CNL 1266**
- Aquatic Core Buffer
- Wetland Core Buffer

**CNL 1287**
- Aquatic Core Buffer
- Landscape Block
- Wetland Core Buffer

**CNL 1362**
- Aquatic Core Buffer
- Coastal Adaptation Area
- Landscape Block
- Tern Foraging Area
Critical Natural Landscape Summaries

**CNL 1245**

A 154-acre Critical Natural Landscape featuring Wetland Core Buffer.

A variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers. One, the variable width buffers methodology, included the most intact areas around each wetland and river, by extending deeper into surrounding unfragmented habitats than into developed areas adjacent to each wetland. Other upland buffers were identified through the rare species habitat analysis. In this way, the conservation of wetland buffers will support the habitats and functionality of each wetland, and also include adjacent uplands that are important for many species that move between habitat types.

**CNL 1254**

A 1,735-acre Critical Natural Landscape featuring Wetland Core Buffer, Landscape Block and Coastal Adaptation Area.

A variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers. One, the variable width buffers methodology, included the most intact areas around each wetland and river, by extending deeper into surrounding unfragmented habitats than into developed areas adjacent to each wetland. Other upland buffers were identified through the rare species habitat analysis. In this way, the conservation of wetland buffers will support the habitats and functionality of each wetland, and also include adjacent uplands that are important for many species that move between habitat types.

Landscape Blocks, the primary component of Critical Natural Landscapes, are large areas of intact predominately natural vegetation, consisting of contiguous forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and ponds, as well as coastal habitats such as barrier beaches and salt marshes. Pastures and power-line rights-of-way, which are less intensively altered than most developed areas, were also included since they provide habitat and connectivity for many species. Collectively, these natural cover types total 3.6 million acres across the state. An Ecological Integrity assessment was used to identify the most intact and least fragmented areas. These large Landscape Blocks are most likely to maintain dynamic ecological processes such as buffering, connectivity, natural disturbance, and hydrological regimes, all of which help to support wide-ranging wildlife species and many other elements of biodiversity.

In order to identify critical Landscape Blocks in each ecoregion, different Ecological Integrity thresholds were used to select the largest intact landscape patches in each ecoregion while avoiding altered habitat as much as possible. This ecoregional representation accomplishes a key goal of *BioMap2* to protect the ecological stages that support a broad suite of biodiversity in the context of climate change. Blocks were defined by major roads, and minimum size thresholds differed among ecoregions to ensure that *BioMap2* includes the best of the best in each ecoregion.

The coastal habitats of Massachusetts are particularly vulnerable to potential sea-level rise in the next century, which many estimates suggest is likely to exceed one meter. Therefore, in addition to prioritizing current coastal habitats, the creators of *BioMap2* examined the landward side of salt marshes to determine where these habitats might move to as sea levels rise. Undeveloped lands adjacent to and up to one and a half meters above existing salt marshes were identified, and included as Critical Natural Landscapes with...
high potential to support inland migration of salt marsh and other coastal habitats over the coming century.

CNL 1266
A 366-acre Critical Natural Landscape featuring Aquatic Core Buffer and Wetland Core Buffer.

A variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers. One, the variable width buffers methodology, included the most intact areas around each wetland and river, by extending deeper into surrounding unfragmented habitats than into developed areas adjacent to each wetland. Other upland buffers were identified through the rare species habitat analysis. In this way, the conservation of wetland buffers will support the habitats and functionality of each wetland, and also include adjacent uplands that are important for many species that move between habitat types.

CNL 1287
A 5,713-acre Critical Natural Landscape featuring Aquatic Core Buffer, Wetland Core Buffer and Landscape Block.

A variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers. One, the variable width buffers methodology, included the most intact areas around each wetland and river, by extending deeper into surrounding unfragmented habitats than into developed areas adjacent to each wetland. Other upland buffers were identified through the rare species habitat analysis. In this way, the conservation of wetland buffers will support the habitats and functionality of each wetland, and also include adjacent uplands that are important for many species that move between habitat types.

Landscape Blocks, the primary component of Critical Natural Landscapes, are large areas of intact predominately natural vegetation, consisting of contiguous forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and ponds, as well as coastal habitats such as barrier beaches and salt marshes. Pastures and power-line rights-of-way, which are less intensively altered than most developed areas, were also included since they provide habitat and connectivity for many species. Collectively, these natural cover types total 3.6 million acres across the state. An Ecological Integrity assessment was used to identify the most intact and least fragmented areas. These large Landscape Blocks are most likely to maintain dynamic ecological processes such as buffering, connectivity, natural disturbance, and hydrological regimes, all of which help to support wide-ranging wildlife species and many other elements of biodiversity.

In order to identify critical Landscape Blocks in each ecoregion, different Ecological Integrity thresholds were used to select the largest intact landscape patches in each ecoregion while avoiding altered habitat as much as possible. This ecoregional representation accomplishes a key goal of BioMap2 to protect the ecological stages that support a broad suite of biodiversity in the context of climate change. Blocks were defined by major roads, and minimum size thresholds differed among ecoregions to ensure that BioMap2 includes the best of the best in each ecoregion.

This 4,878-acre Landscape Block is the ninth largest of 62 Blocks in the ecoregion. Unlike Landscape Blocks in much of the state that are dominated by upland forests, over 45% of this Landscape Block is made up of important wetland habitats. This Block is relatively well protected by public and private entities.
CNL 1362

A 50,627-acre Critical Natural Landscape featuring Aquatic Core Buffer, Landscape Block, Coastal Adaptation Area, and Tern Foraging Area.

A variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers. One, the variable width buffers methodology, included the most intact areas around each wetland and river, by extending deeper into surrounding unfragmented habitats than into developed areas adjacent to each wetland. Other upland buffers were identified through the rare species habitat analysis. In this way, the conservation of wetland buffers will support the habitats and functionality of each wetland, and also include adjacent uplands that are important for many species that move between habitat types.

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This 8,989-acre Landscape Block is the fourth largest of 62 Blocks in the ecoregion. Unlike Landscape Blocks in much of the state that are dominated by upland forests, this coastal Landscape Block is dominated by unique and important salt marsh, barrier beach, and estuary habitats.

The coastal habitats of Massachusetts are particularly vulnerable to potential sea-level rise in the next century, which many estimates suggest is likely to exceed one meter. Therefore, in addition to prioritizing current coastal habitats, the creators of BioMap2 examined the landward side of salt marshes to determine where these habitats might move to as sea levels rise. Undeveloped lands adjacent to and up to one and a half meters above existing salt marshes were identified, and included as Critical Natural Landscapes with high potential to support inland migration of salt marsh and other coastal habitats over the coming century.

Terns range widely from their breeding colonies to forage. While the breeding and staging areas for Roseate, Arctic, Common, and Least Terns were included in the Species of Conservation Concern Core Habitat for BioMap2, tern foraging areas were included in BioMap2 as part of Critical Natural Landscape. The extent of foraging habitat for Arctic, Common, and Roseate Terns depends on the size of the breeding colony. For Least Tern, all shallow marine and estuarine waters within 2 miles of recent colony sites and up to 1 mile offshore were mapped as foraging habitat.
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Please contribute on your Massachusetts income tax form or directly to the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund

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