



Wetland Diversity in North Carolina



STATEWIDE

Riverine Forest

Riverine forests can include swamps, bottomland hardwoods, and floodplain pools where flooding from a nearby stream or river is an important water source. Vegetation is mixed, with large trees and small shrubs and herbs. Riverine forest wetlands provide important habitat for many animals.



STATEWIDE

Seep

Seeps are located along slopes, ridges, or hillsides and kept semi-permanently to permanently saturated by groundwater. Seeps are usually forested, but the downslope portion of a seep may transition to a different wetland type.



STATEWIDE

Basin

Basin wetlands form in natural depressions surrounded by uplands, where they hold rainwater and provide habitat for a range of woody and herbaceous plants. Seasonally wet basins are important breeding areas for amphibians, as predatory fish can't survive when the basins dry up.

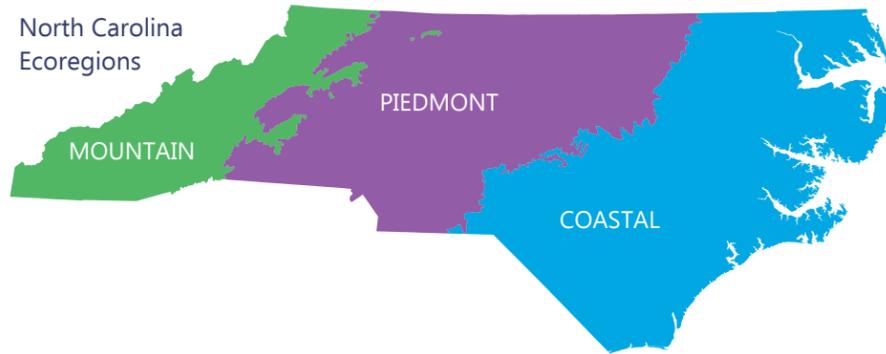


STATEWIDE

Freshwater Marsh

Freshwater marshes are in flat areas, saturated or inundated most of the time, and dominated by non-woody vegetation. They often result from disturbances such as fire, beaver activity, or utility line maintenance. Marshes that are influenced by tides in the Coastal Plain, and with a salinity of < 0.5 ppt, are considered tidal freshwater marshes.

Our variety of wetland types creates habitat diversity across the state.



COASTAL

Salt/Brackish Marsh

Salt/Brackish marshes are regularly flooded by salty ocean tides. The primary vegetation is grasses and rushes, mostly saltmarsh cordgrass and black needle rush. These wetlands are vital for lessening storm damage in coastal communities and hosting commercial fish and shellfish species.



MOUNTAIN

Bog

Bogs are found in the state's mountain region in relatively flat spaces at the base of slopes or mountains. Long-term saturation makes suitable habitat for a range of non-woody plants, particularly sphagnum moss and pitcher plants.



COASTAL

Pocosin

Pocosins, or "swamps on a hill," form atop hilly accumulations of dead plant matter. The primary water source is heavy precipitation, and a high water table is the result of poor drainage. Pocosins are dominated by densely growing waxy evergreen shrubs and pond pines.



COASTAL

Non-Riverine Swamp Forest

Non-riverine swamp forests are in flat areas between streams and are dominated by trees (e.g., bald cypress, black gum, Atlantic white cedar, loblolly pine, and pond pine). They are usually inundated by groundwater, precipitation, and surface run-off, not by overbank or tidal flooding.



COASTAL

Carolina Bay

Carolina Bays are not a wetland type per se, but are mysterious, isolated, elliptical landscape features in the Coastal Plain that can host a variety of wetland types (e.g., pocosins, marsh, swamp forest). Named for the bay trees that grow there, they are important breeding areas for amphibians and have high species diversity, including rare or endangered plant species.



COASTAL

Pine

Pine Flats or Pine Savannas occur on very flat surfaces with poor drainage and high water tables. Pines grow well in their sandy mineral soils and so do many flowering species. These wetlands are often planted with pine trees for harvesting and managed, which results in low species diversity.



COASTAL

Estuarine Woody

Estuarine woody wetlands are found on the edges of estuaries and saltmarshes, occasionally flooded with ocean tides during storms; they are dominated by woody vegetation like pines, cedars, red maples, and sweetgums.

