



KOHLER ANDRAE DUNES WETLAND TYPES

Eric Epstein

Interdunal wetland, marsh, coniferous swamp, alder thicket

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



KOHLER ANDRAE DUNES

Property Owner: WDNR

Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Land Legacy Place, WI Coastal Wetland Inventory Primary Site, WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site

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ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

This Wetland Gem site includes the Kohler Park Dunes State Natural Area located within the Kohler-Andrae State Park. The site is significant because it protects an excellent example of interdunal wetland habitats unique to the Great Lakes region. And Kohler Andrae Dunes is particularly important because it comprises the largest dune complex along Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shoreline, including more than one mile of Lake Michigan beach. The unique interdunal wetlands at Kohler Andrae Dunes provide habitat for many rare plants, some of which are endemic to Great Lakes shorelines.

FLORA & FAUNA

Sand dunes at the site are separated by low, wet swales. These interdunal wetlands are thickly vegetated with lakeshore rush and sedges and some rare plants including slender bog arrowgrass. A variety of plants grow on the dunes and stabilize the sand, including sand reed, marram grass, Canada wild rye, northern wheat grass, common and trailing junipers, sand cherry and willow species. The dunes also support many rare species including the state threatened clustered broomrape, dune goldenrod and dune thistle. The only known population of the state endangered prairie dunewort was once documented on these dunes. At the west end of this site along the Black

River are coniferous swamp habitats dominated by ash and white cedar as well as alder thicket and marsh habitats.

More than 150 bird species are known to use the Kohler Andrae area. During the fall and spring, the area is frequented by a diverse collection of migratory birds, including many species of waterfowl and shorebirds and more than 20 species of warblers. Duck species that stopover at Kohler Andrae include American black duck, northern shoveler, canvasback, greater scaup, lesser scaup, bufflehead and red-breasted merganser. Shorebirds that use Kohler Andrae as stopover habitat include greater yellowlegs, lesser yellowlegs, ruddy turnstone and dunlin. Many birds also live and nest in wetland habitats of this site, ranging from great blue and green herons to American woodcock. The rare red-shouldered hawk also nests in these wetlands and a rare tiger moth has also been documented at the site.

THREATS

Because this Wetland Gem is located within a state park, damage from overuse is of concern. Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees. Invasive species, including purple loosestrife, are also a threat. Future invasion by the emerald ash borer beetle threatens the site's ash trees.

ACCESS

A trail with an extensive "cordwalk" provides access to the sensitive interdunal wetlands at this site. For details, visit the State Natural Areas Program website: [dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna). Also visit the Kohler Andrae State Park website: [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/specific/ka/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/specific/ka/).



Greater yellowlegs — Gary Shackelford

Sources:

- Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
- Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (WDNR)
- Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)