



SHIVERING SANDS & CONNECTED WETLAND TYPES

Eric Epstein

Coniferous bog, coniferous swamp, fen, sedge meadow, lowland hardwood swamp, ridge and swale

DOOR COUNTY



SHIVERING SANDS & CONNECTED WETLANDS

Property Owners: WDNR, Door County Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy

Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Land Legacy Place, WI Coastal Wetland Inventory Primary Site, WI Bird Conservation Initiative Important Bird Area

Funding for this project provided by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act, Grant #NA07NOS4190064.



Wisconsin Wetlands ASSOCIATION

wisconsinwetlands.org

ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

This Wetland Gem, located north of Sturgeon Bay along the eastern coast of Door County, comprises several smaller sites including Shivering Sands, Whitefish Dunes and Kellner's Fen. The Shivering Sands wetland complex is exceptional both because of its large size and natural community diversity. Complex hydrologic patterns, evident from the numerous springs that originate from the dolomite bedrock contribute to vegetation diversity. Whitefish Dunes is a State Natural Area located within Whitefish Dunes State Park that features excellent examples of various coastal communities, coniferous swamp and sedge meadow. Kellner's Fen is a large embayment wetland complex that is unique in part because historical dune formation isolated it from Lake Michigan. The diverse coastal wetlands of this Wetland Gem site support a great diversity of rare species.

FLORA & FAUNA

The Shivering Sands wetland complex includes three undeveloped lakes with large lake-edge fen habitats surrounded by extensive coniferous swamp. These fen communities support such rare species as tussock bulrush and the state threatened coast sedge. The large, central coniferous swamp, which is saturated with puddles, pools and ponds, is dominated by white cedar, tamarack, alder and balsam fir and also supports a diverse understory of lilies and sedges amidst mosses and downed trees. Whitefish Dunes features coniferous swamp of white cedar, balsam fir and hemlock as well as sedge meadow associated with a

small lake. Kellner's Fen features a floating peat mat with a series of interconnected open water pools at the center. The mat consists of a diversity of sedges including the brown beakrush. Rare plants include swamp pink, coast sedge, northern bog sedge, tussock bulrush, common bog arrowgrass and slender bog arrowgrass.

This Wetland Gem supports an impressive variety of mammals including black bear, snowshoe hare and porcupine. This site also provides breeding habitat for many bird species and receives very heavy use as a stopover site during migration. More than 110 species of breeding birds have been documented at Shivering Sands alone. Birds include black-throated blue warbler, black-throated green warbler, Blackburnian warbler, Canada warbler, northern waterthrush, red-eyed vireo, veery, American redstart, eastern wood-pewee, Cooper's hawk, goshawk, sharp-shinned hawk, black tern and sandhill crane. The site also provides critical habitat for the federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly and numerous other rare animals including Blanchard's cricket frog, oithona tiger moth, phyllira tiger moth, and Midwest Pleistocene vertigo (state endangered snail).

THREATS

Increasing residential development pressure in adjacent uplands is the most significant future threat to this site. Associated impacts may include habitat fragmentation, hydrologic disruption, polluted runoff and the further spread of invasive species. Current threats are less serious and include existing agricultural practices in adjacent uplands, heavy recreational use, and infestations of invasive species. Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees.

ACCESS

For details, visit the Whitefish Dunes and Cave Point-Clay Banks pages of the State Natural Areas Program website: [dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna).

Sources:

- Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
- Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Important Bird Areas (WBCI)



Blanchard's cricket frog — Allen Blake Sheldon