

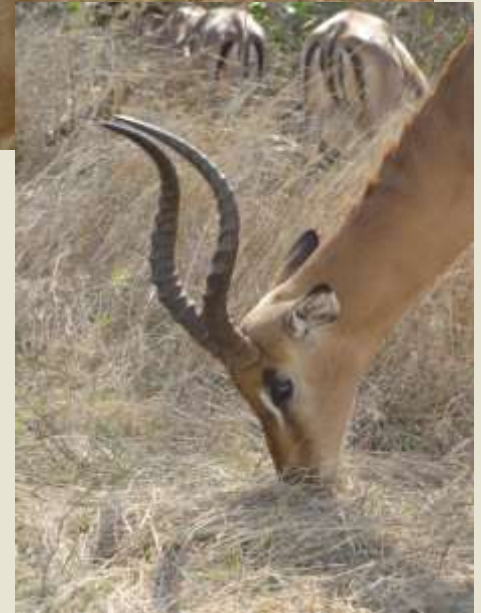
Special Habitats In Greene County



What does Greene County have in common with these animals.....



That need special grassland habitat to survive?



Or these...



That need special wetland habitat to survive?



We have BOTH

Globally Rare
Freshwater
Tidal Wetlands



Grasslands
that are
Disappearing



What are grasslands?

- Simply put - land that has mostly grassy vegetation
- Can include old fields, pasture, hayfields, cropland
- In the Northeast, grasslands eventually succeed to forest, so they require management such as mowing or grazing to keep out woody plants
- Provide habitat for more than a dozen grassland-dependent bird species



Current threats to Grasslands and Grassland Birds

- Development pressures lead to loss of farmland, small family farms
- Increase in intensive farming methods, early and more-frequent haying
- Habitat fragmentation
- Succession to forest
- Invasive species
- Not a priority for protection in current planning process



Grassland Birds at Risk

- In the past 40-50 years, some grassland bird species have declined in population by 70-90%. Most at-risk group of birds in the United States.

- Short-eared Owl (NYS endangered)



Short-eared Owl

- Northern Harrier and Upland Sandpiper (NYS threatened)



Savannah Sparrow

- Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Horned Lark, Grasshopper Sparrow (Special Concern or Species of Greatest Conservation Need)

- Other grassland bird species: Savannah Sparrow, American kestrel, Snow bunting, American Pipit, Lapland longspur, Eastern Bluebird, Rough-legged hawk

Northern Harrier pair



Habitat needs of Grassland Birds



Male and female Bobolink

- Habitat: food, shelter, nesting sites, refuge, etc.
- Grassland birds are “habitat specialists”
- Four major habitat requirements:
 1. Large expanses of connected grasslands – “area sensitive” birds
 2. Suitable grassland vegetation
 3. Safe nesting areas in the summer months (May through July)
 4. Suitable winter habitat for wintering grassland birds

Importance and Benefits of Grasslands to People

- Preservation of rural character and cultural heritage
- Open space protection and conserving small, family farms
- Environmental services provided by grasslands – water quality and downstream flood protection
- Benefits to farmers – grassland birds prey on harmful insects
- Multiple uses of grasslands – recreation, birding, agriculture



Grasslands in New York through History to Today...



- 1800's, NY forests were cleared for agriculture.
- Grassland birds thrived on small family farms, hayfields and pastures
- Today, our landscape is changing again with dramatic losses of these small farms and open spaces.

Coxsackie Creek Grassland Preserve

Conservation success upon which to build:

- Over 300 acres of protected grasslands, wetlands and Coxsackie Creek riparian lands
- Owned and managed by the Greene Land Trust
- Created through an innovative partnership with GCIDA, GCSWCD, Greene County Habitat Advisory Committee
- Excellent first step for core grassland habitat protection...



Did you know there is a 4 foot tide in the Hudson River Estuary?

Between high tide and low tide are areas that are under water and exposed with every tide change.

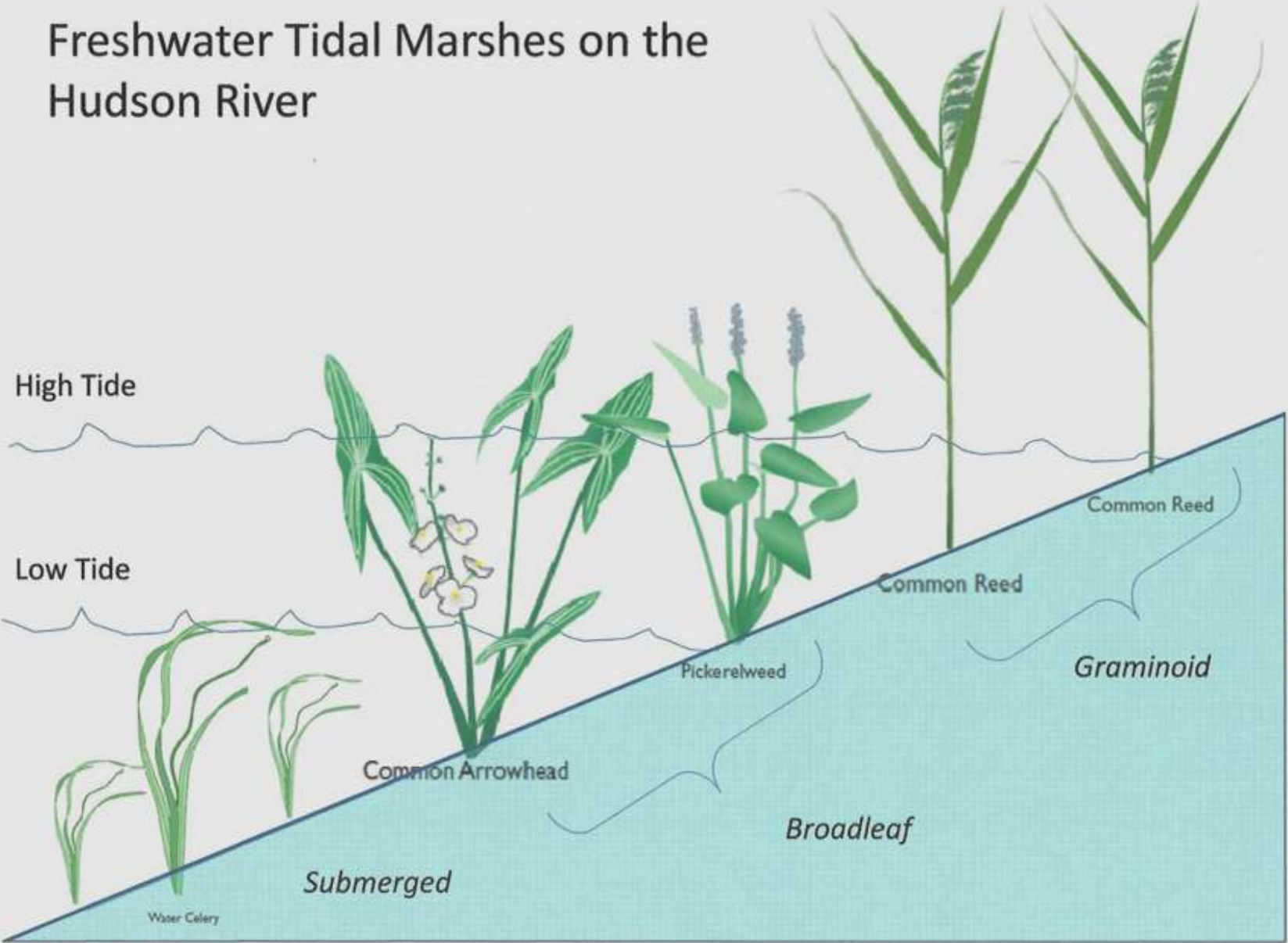
Usually tidal areas have salt water – but not where we live.

This gives us a habitat that is so unusual that it is considered globally rare!



Freshwater
Tidal
Wetland

Freshwater Tidal Marshes on the Hudson River



What are some of the plants and animals I might see here?



One of the most interesting animals is one that is just passing through

- These tiny creatures are called glass eels – they are baby American Eels
- Just a couple of inches long they swim all the way from the Caribbean sea to grow up in the Hannacroix Creek



What threats does this habitat face?

- Fill for development or dredging
- Invasive species
- Pollution
- Sea level rise



What are some of the benefits of this habitat?

- Biodiversity
- Protect shoreline from erosion
- Make flooding less severe
- Filter pollutants



Where can I see a freshwater tidal wetland?

- Hannacroix Creek Preserve/
Hudson River Interpretive Trail in
New Baltimore
- Boat launch in Coxsackie
- Willows at Brandow Point in
Athens
- Ramshorn Livingston Sanctuary
in Catskill



Thank you for your interest



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