

User Friendly Metadata

Biodiversity/Wildlife Habitat Assessment North Carolina Conservation Planning Tool

April 2026



<http://ncnhp.org/conservation/conservation-planning-tool>

1) Data Layer

Biodiversity/Wildlife Habitat Assessment (BWHA) - NC Conservation Planning Tool

2) File names

The BWHA is available in TIFF (cpt_bwha_0426.tif) format. The associated layer file is cpt_bwha_raster_0426.lyrx or cpt_bwha_0426.lyr.

3) Overview

This dataset shows the state's conservation priorities for aquatic and terrestrial species and habitats, and landscape functions and connectivity. The relative conservation values displayed by this dataset focus on (1) the biodiversity of aquatic and terrestrial species and communities, (2) large-scale landscapes, including core wildlife habitats and habitat connectors, and (3) lands important to ecosystem processes, such as riparian buffers and wetlands.

4) Source agency and program

North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

5) Source agency logo



6) Location

North Carolina – statewide dataset

7) Description

This dataset was created by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program to identify, evaluate, and prioritize areas that are important for maintaining healthy and sustainable ecosystems statewide. The relative conservation values displayed by this dataset focus on (1) the biodiversity of aquatic and terrestrial species and communities, (2) large-scale landscapes, including core wildlife habitats and habitat connectors, and (3) lands important to ecosystem processes, such as riparian buffers and

wetlands. These data illustrate the locations and conservation values of significant natural resources throughout North Carolina, and have been applied by local governments, state agencies, regional councils of governments, funding programs, conservation organizations, and the private sector to support planning and decision-making for land use, conservation, mitigation, and transportation projects.

Priorities for conservation of important biodiversity and wildlife habitats are depicted using a scale of 1 (moderate conservation value) to 10 (maximum conservation value). Datasets used in this assessment are contributed by various state agencies and conservation organizations, and each individual data input is assigned a relative conservation value based on resource rarity and distinctiveness, resource function, and data precision, accuracy, and completeness. These data inputs are processed and combined to show conservation priorities statewide. Data inputs include significant natural heritage areas, rare species occurrences, core wildlife habitats and their connections, important aquatic resources (e.g., trout streams, fish habitat, fish nursery areas, outstanding resources waters), wetlands, and watershed priorities based on Federally-listed species and other factors. (For more information on the data inputs, see the Conservation Planning Tool detailed report at <https://www.ncnhp.org/cpt-report-2026>. This assessment is intended to be used for planning purposes and should not substitute for field work at the project level.

8) How to get the data layer

Visit the NC Conservation Planning Tool website (<http://ncnhp.org/conservation/conservation-planning-tool>) and click on Maps and Data, or contact Mitch East, Natural Heritage Data Manager, NC Natural Heritage Program, at mitch.east@dnr.nc.gov. This assessment is also available on NC OneMap (<https://www.nconemap.gov/>) or from the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program's Data Explorer Data Download page (<https://ncnhde.natureserve.org/content/data-download>).

9) How you might make use of this data layer

This dataset illustrates the locations and conservation priorities of significant natural resources in North Carolina, and is utilized by local governments, state agencies, regional councils of governments, funding programs, and conservation organizations to support land use, conservation, mitigation and transportation planning and decision-making.

10) How to get more information

Visit the NC Conservation Planning Tool website (<http://ncnhp.org/conservation/conservation-planning-tool>), or contact Mitch East, Natural Heritage Data Manager, NC Natural Heritage Program, at mitch.east@dnr.nc.gov.

11) Credits

North Carolina Conservation Planning Tool (CPT) – Biodiversity/Wildlife Habitat Assessment. April 2026. North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

12) Tags & Keywords

North Carolina, green infrastructure, natural resources, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, terrestrial and aquatic resources, connectivity, landscape habitat indicator guilds, rare species, rare plants, rare animals, element occurrences, significant natural heritage areas, streams, wetlands, Outstanding Resource Waters, High Quality Waters, stream bioclassification, wild brook trout, anadromous fish spawning areas, fish nursery areas, threatened and endangered species, priority watersheds, oyster sanctuaries, submerged aquatic vegetation, shellfish growing areas, shellbottom, hardbottom,

important bird areas, conservation planning, conservation priorities, conservation value, ecosystems, One NC Naturally, NC Natural Heritage Program, NCNHP, NCDNCR

13) Sample map

