



New York State Archives

**New York State Division of Fish and Wildlife Freshwater
Wetlands Inventory Maps A0743**

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Overview of the Records

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| Repository: | New York State Archives |
| Summary: | This series consists of overlay maps (which coincide with U. S. Geographical survey quadrangles) that are products of a Division of Fish and Wildlife wetlands inventory project. Apparently created to compile a comprehensive statewide survey to seek out, identify, and collect data on state wetlands, the maps provide data on the location, size, plant composition, cover types, bogs, drainage links, channels, nearby lakes, and grid coordinates. Record are fragile, use is only with assistance of archivist. |
| Creator: | New York (State). Division of Fish and Wildlife (-1995) |
| Title: | Freshwater wetlands inventory maps |
| Quantity: | 40 cubic feet |
| Quantity: | 971 maps |
| Inclusive Date: | 1973-1975 |
| Series: | A0743 |
| Sponsor: | Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. |

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Arrangement

Alphabetical by county and then alphabetically by location within the county, and coincide with U.S. Geographical Survey quadrangles done to a scale of 1:24,000.

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Administrative History

The series consists of overlay maps that are products of a wetlands inventory project conducted by the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the Department of Environmental Conservation. The maps were apparently created as a result of the division's desire to

compile a comprehensive statewide survey designed to seek out, identify, and collect data on the wetlands of the state. Wetlands are lands which may be permanently, temporarily, or intermittently covered by fresh or saltwater. They are commonly referred to as flood basins or flats, meadows, marshes, shrub swamps, wooded swamps, or bogs. Previous to this project, several local or regional surveys of wetlands had been conducted, but the total area of wetlands in New York, and in what ways and at what rate they might be changing or disappearing, was unknown. The inventory was apparently begun in 1973 and completed in 1975.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife carried out mandated responsibilities for efficient management of the fish and wildlife resources of the state. Its programs for environmental protection were designed to protect critical elements of essential habitats and to preserve unique environments. Monitoring fish and wildlife populations and habitats provides a measure of the stresses affecting environmental quality and species productivity. A complete wetlands inventory was one part of an environmental inventory and monitoring sub-program that would in turn aid other wetlands development and maintenance programs. The Environmental Bond Act of 1972 established funds to be spent in land acquisition. Implementation of this act was written as Article VI of Chapter 659 of the Laws of 1972, which authorized millions of dollars for freshwater wetlands acquisition and restoration.

The survey coincided with public recognition of the importance of freshwater wetlands in areas other than the traditional recreational pursuits, specifically the contributions to flood water buffering, recharging ground water supplies, nutrient cycling and pollution treatment, and insuring open space, aesthetic values, and areas for educational and scientific research. The beaver had also been recently designated as the official state mammal, and a wildlife management objective was to maintain the species population levels in relation to human population density and land use. An annual aerial beaver survey covering 1,300 square miles was flown in the Adirondacks to determine population levels and to estimate trends. An added feature of these maps is a designation wherever there is evidence of beaver in a wetlands. The maps represent aerial photographic interpretation and mapping prepared by the Wildlife Habitat Management Section of the Bureau of Wildlife, which designed the inventory with the Resource Information Laboratory of Cornell University. The overlays are an attempt to use 1968 black and white aerial photographs and sampled field checking to insure interpretation accuracy. According to a user guide prepared by the division, the maps do not reflect natural succession or man induced changes after 1968, nor do the maps indicate additions or deletions as a result of field checking in the process of filing regulatory maps under section 240301 of the Freshwater Wetlands Act. Such official regulatory maps were to be used to regulate activities that would have adverse impact on wetlands or which would substantially impair any of the functions or benefits wetlands provide.

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Scope and Content Note

The series consists of overlay maps that are products of a wetlands inventory project conducted by the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the Department of Environmental Conservation. The maps provide data on the location, size, and plant composition of the wetlands. Vegetation are precise indicators of wetlands and most accurately reflect wetlands habitat and conditions. The maps also identify: fourteen different "covertypes" of wetlands based on plant classification, represented on the maps by number; three covertypes of wetlands based on size, represented on the maps as linear, fringe, and/or mixed; bogs and mats; drainage links (two or more wetlands less than 200 feet apart in which the combined area equals 6.2 acres or more are considered one wetland and referred to as "linked"); channels, represented as a dashed line and "ch"; summer vegetation for counties where satisfactory summer photography was available, represented by an "X" following the spring coertype and described by the covertypes following it; "Gazetteer lakes" (an open body of water that is 2.5 hectares or larger) assigned a number from a 1970 published U.S.G.S. Bulletin; and grid coordinates, based on the New York Transverse Mercator grid construction used in map construction.

Each overlay sheet has two preprinted blocks. The first is an identification block with information on map preparation and sources of support for the project. The second is a title block in the lower right corner which includes varying amounts of inked-in information on zone number, quadrangle name, corresponding Land Use and Natural Resources Inventory map number, base map information (usually "USGS topo"), information on the photography used (date and source) for each county, and a "status" section labeled "initial", "check", "DTO", and "draft" that is filed in with initials and dates. Each map also carries a printed disclaimer that the overlay is not an official Department of Environmental Conservation regulatory map under the Freshwater Wetlands Law.

The maps are arranged by county and then alphabetically by location within the county, and coincide with U.S. Geographical Survey quadrangles done to a scale of 1:24,000. They are executed in India ink on plastic sheets, and are designed to be positioned over a base map by placing the neat line corner marks over the outside borders of the base map. The bulk of the maps measure 72 x 53 cm. Information on alignment procedures and the codes and numbers used on the overlays is available from the user guide, prepared by the Division of Fish and Wildlife, that accompanies the series.

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Related Information

Related Material

A user's guide to the overlays, which provides detailed explanations of terms and codes, is available.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Use under supervision or with assistance of archivist due to adhesive sticking of sheets and possible damage to base maps.

Administrative Information

Processing Information

This collection's description was enhanced as a part of the New York State Archives Environmental History Virtual Research Collection Project, 2004. The National Endowment for the Humanities provided funding for this project.

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Access Terms

- Monitoring ecology
- Vegetation surveys--New York (State)
- Conservation of natural resources--New York (State)
- Maps (documents)
- New York (State)
- Wetland conservation
- Maintaining environmental protection
- Wetland ecology

- Water conservation projects
- Overlays
- Protecting environment
- Wetlands--New York (State)
- Beavers
- Freshwater ecology
- New York (State). Department of Environmental Conservation