

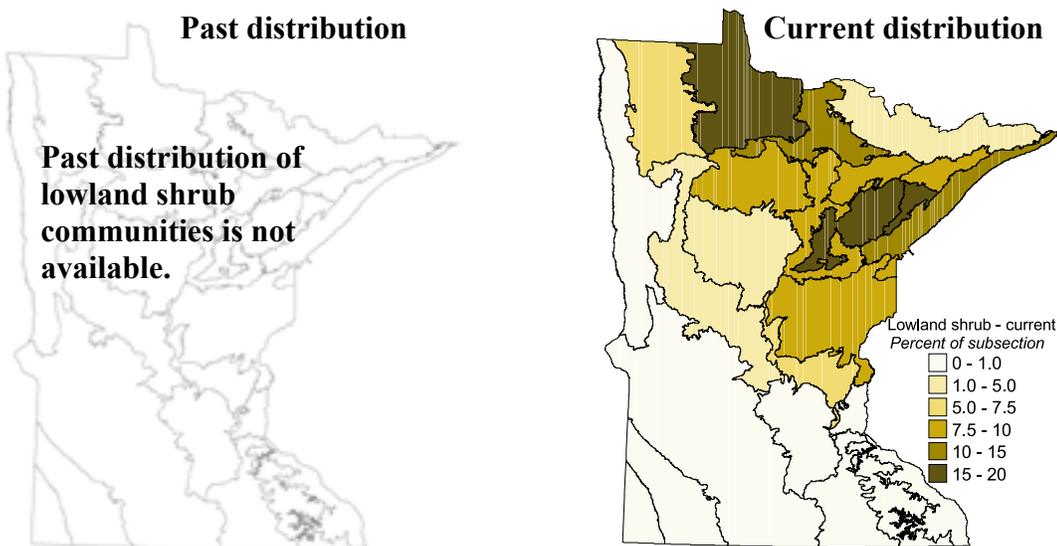
Lowland Shrub

<u>Ecological Systems</u>	<u>Native Plant Community Types (NPC)</u>	<u>NPC Codes</u>
<i>Open Rich Peatland (OP)</i>	Bog Birch-Alder Shore Fen Leatherleaf-Sweet Gale Shore Fen Shrub Rich Fen (Water Track)	OPn81a OPn81b OPn91a
<i>Acid Peatland (AP)</i>	Low Shrub Bog Low Shrub Poor Fen	APn90a APn91a
<i>Wet Forest (WF)</i>	Alder (Red Currant-Meadow Rue) Swamp	WFn74
<i>Forested Rich Peatland (FP)</i>	Alder (Maple-Loosestrife Swamp) Swamp	FPn73a
<i>Wet Meadow/Carr (WM)</i>	Willow-Dogwood Shrub Swamp	WMn82a
<i>Wetland Prairie (WP)</i>	Wet Brush-Prairie (Northern)	WPn53b



F. Harris MN DNR

Wet Brush-Prairie (Northern) (WPn53b)



Source: MN GAP 1993

General Description

The lowland shrub habitat occurs in areas with high water tables where broad-leaved shrubs are the dominant plant growth form. This habitat is found in basins, along streams and rivers, and around lakes and ponds. It is found throughout the state but is uncommon in the Blufflands Subsection. The dominant shrub species in the more acid wetlands include evergreen ericaceous shrubs such as leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*) along with bog birch (*Betula pumila*). Willows (*Salix* spp.) and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) are found across the state, whereas speckled alder (*Alnus incana*) is important primarily in the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province.

Lowland shrub habitats are a successional stage between wet meadows, wetland prairie, graminoid fens, bogs, lowland forests, and conifer swamps. For example, some alder swamps may succeed toward conifer swamps, whereas others on richer sites may succeed toward black ash swamps. Succession, however, is usually a very slow process in most lowland shrub habitats. The high water table impedes colonization by trees. In addition, natural disturbances such as wildfires, windstorms, and beaver activities often interrupt natural succession. As a result, lowland shrub habitats are often long-lived.

The lowland shrub habitat is most at risk in agricultural and exurban areas of the state, where extensive areas of this habitat have been drained for agricultural and other development. Extensive areas of this habitat remain in northern Minnesota; off-road vehicle use is a threat to the integrity of these ecosystems.

Examples of Important Features for Species in Greatest Conservation Need

The primary habitat for **golden-winged warblers** in Minnesota is the lowland shrub habitat, especially when associated with a low density of lowland conifers. **Sharp-tailed grouse** use a variety of open habitats, but in Minnesota large expanses of open brush and muskeg are the primary habitats for this species. **Swamp sparrows** inhabit a variety of open wetland habitats, including lowland shrub habitats.

Management Options to Support Species in Greatest Conservation Need

- Protect lowland shrub habitats from drainage and development.
- Manage lowland shrub habitats to maintain large expanses of open wetlands with few trees