



MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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MASS.GOV/MASSWILDLIFE

DATE: July 15, 2026
TO: Planning Board
RE: Draft Priority Habitat Map of rare species available for public comment, August 5, 2026 through October 4, 2026

Dear Planning Board:

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA, M.G.L. c. 131A) and its implementing regulations (321 CMR 10.12), the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (Division) would like to inform you of the availability of the DRAFT Priority Habitat map for public comment beginning on August 5, 2026 at www.mass.gov/nhesp/mapcomment. The DRAFT map has been revised to reflect new biological information, as well as land use changes. *Specifically, the Division is requesting public comment on the status of areas proposed for delineation or removal as Priority Habitat regarding the physical or biological features of the habitat, or the current scope of existing development in the area.*

PLEASE NOTE: The DRAFT Priority Habitat Map for the 16th Edition of the Natural Heritage Atlas should be used for commenting purposes only and not for project planning or regulatory review. The 15th Edition Atlas (available through the Division website located at www.mass.gov/nhesp) is still in effect until the 16th Edition is officially published.

This comment period will end on October 4, 2026. Please encourage your constituents to view the DRAFT map and participate in the public comment period. Written comments on the proposed Priority Habitat map may be submitted to the Division electronically as explained on the website, or by submitting them to the Division at the following address:

Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program
Attn: Priority Habitat Comments
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA 01581

If you have additional questions regarding this notification, please contact NHESP at natural.heritage@mass.gov or (508) 389-6360.

Thank you for working with us to protect the Commonwealth's endangered species.

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