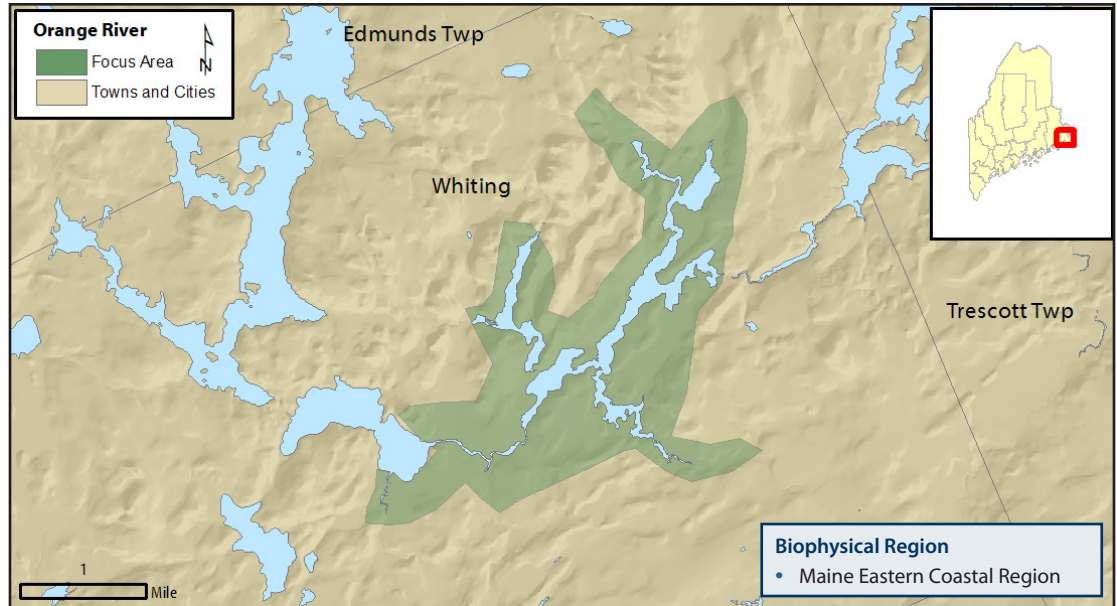
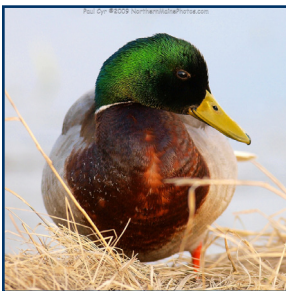
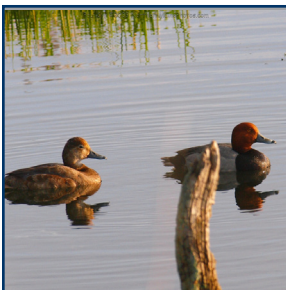


# Orange River



## WHY IS THIS AREA SIGNIFICANT?

This 600+ acre complex of wetlands and uplands is one of the region's more important Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitats, providing undisturbed nesting habitat and undisturbed, uncontaminated feeding areas that are essential for maintaining viable waterfowl and wading bird populations. Two rare bird species, the Endangered least bittern and the Special Concern bald eagle have been documented in the focus area as well.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION

- » Work with willing landowners to secure permanent conservation status for unprotected significant features in the focus area.
- » Encourage landowners to maintain enhanced riparian buffers.
- » Encourage best management practices for forestry, vegetation clearing, and soil disturbance activities near significant features.
- » Maintain natural hydrologic regime by avoiding drainage or impoundment of the wetlands, streams and water bodies.
- » Educate recreational users about the ecological and economic benefits provided by the focus area.

For more conservation opportunities, visit the Beginning with Habitat Online Toolbox: [www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/about\\_toolbox.html](http://www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/about_toolbox.html).

*Photo credits, top to bottom: Paul Cyr (top 4 photos), MDIFW (bottom photo)*

## Rare Animals

- Least Bittern
- Bald Eagle

## Significant Wildlife Habitats

- Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat
- Deer Wintering Area

## Public Access Opportunities

- Orange River Wildlife Management Area, MDIFW



Orange River, Craig Snapp

## FOCUS AREA OVERVIEW

The Orange River Focus Area provides one of the region's more important areas of **Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat**. Wetlands that provide wading bird and waterfowl habitat provide undisturbed nesting habitat and uncontaminated feeding areas and are essential for maintaining viable waterfowl and wading bird populations. Maine's location at the southern limit of some species range and the northern limit of others gives it a unique mix of waterfowl (ducks and geese) and wading birds (herons, egrets, bitterns, ibises, coots, moorhens, and rails). These species are an important part of Maine's natural heritage, they contribute to the state's biodiversity, they support recreational opportunities such as wildlife watching, and many are important game species.

In addition to wading bird and waterfowl habitat, the state Endangered **least bittern** (*Ixobrychus exilis*) was documented from Reynold's Brook in June, 1999. Two birds (assumed to be a pair) were observed in a patch of cat-tails just south of Route 1 (outside but adjacent to the WMA). A member of the heron family, the very secretive least bittern inhabits large marshes with dense vegetation. The numbers of these birds have declined due to loss of habitat.



Orange River Wildlife Management Area, MCHT

A **Deer Wintering Area** has been identified just east of Little Lake as well. Deer congregate in wintering areas which provide reduced snow depths, ample food and protection from wind. The Orange River, Lively Brook and Reynolds Brook support high value **brook trout fisheries** as well.

## CONSERVATION CONSIDERATIONS

- » There is a concrete roll dam at the site of the old hydro dam. The state owns the dam site and a right-of-way to it.
- » There are no records of invasive plants, however, invasive plants and aquatic organisms have become an increasing problem in Maine and a threat to the state's natural communities. Disturbances to soils and natural vegetation and introductions of non-native species to terrestrial and aquatic habitats can create opportunities for colonization. Landowners and local conservation groups should be made aware of the potential threat of invasive species, of methods to limit establishment, and/or of appropriate techniques for removal. For more information on invasive plants visit: <http://www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mnap/features/invasives.htm>.
- » Trials of establishment of wild rice in the past were unsuccessful.
- » Natural habitat occurring on the uplands adjacent to significant wetlands should be conserved as part of the greater ecosystem. The integrity of wetlands and aquatic systems including all the processes and life forms they support are dependent on the maintenance of the current hydrology and water quality of these systems. Intensive timber harvesting, vegetation clearing, soil disturbance, new roads, and development on buffering uplands can result in greater runoff, sedimentation, and other non-point sources of pollution.
- » A buffer of 250 feet or more will serve to limit impacts from adjacent development, help prevent erosion, provide habitat needed by numerous species that depend on the wetlands, limit opportunities for colonization of invasive species, and prevent reckless impacts from off road vehicle use. In addition, improperly sized crossing structures such as culverts can impede movement of fish and aquatic invertebrates effectively fragmenting local aquatic ecosystems and ultimately leading to local extirpation of some species. Fu-

### Ecological Services of the Focus Area

- Provides high quality habitat for waterfowl, wading birds, deer, and other wildlife.
- Supports regional biodiversity by providing habitat for rare animals.
- Contributes to water quality and ecological integrity of the region.
- Provides nursery habitat for fish and other aquatic animals

### Economic Contributions of the Focus Area

- Contributes to recreational value of the region by protecting water quality, fisheries, and wildlife habitat.
- Attracts tourism to the area and serves as a valuable recreational resource.
- Provides wildlife habitat for a number of game species that are seasonally important to Maine's rural economy.
- Provides scenic vistas.

- ture management activity should avoid additional impacts to the site's hydrology.
- » This area includes Significant Wildlife Habitat for waterfowl and wading birds. Both land managers and private landowners should follow best management practices with respect to forestry activities in and around wetlands, shoreland areas, and Significant Wildlife Habitat. Maintaining wide forested buffers along all lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands will provide valuable riparian habitat for many wildlife species.



Orange River, Craig Snapp

For more information about Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance, including a list of Focus Areas and an explanation of selection criteria, visit [www.beginningwithhabitat.org](http://www.beginningwithhabitat.org)

**RARE SPECIES AND EXEMPLARY NATURAL COMMUNITIES OF THE FOCUS AREA**

	Common Name	Scientific Name	State Status*	State Rarity Rank	Global Rarity Rank
Animals	Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	E	S2B	G5
	Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	SC	S4B,S4N	G5

State Status\*

- E Endangered: Rare and in danger of being lost from the state in the foreseeable future, or federally listed as Endangered.
- T Threatened: Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened.
- SC Special Concern: Rare in Maine, based on available information, but not sufficiently rare to be Threatened or Endangered.

*\*State status rankings are not assigned to natural communities.*

State Rarity Rank

- S1 Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres).
- S2 Imperiled in Maine because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- S3 Rare in Maine (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
- S4 Apparently secure in Maine.
- S5 Demonstrably secure in Maine.

Global Rarity Rank

- G1 Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation.
- G2 Globally imperiled because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- G3 Globally rare (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
- G4 Apparently secure globally.
- G5 Demonstrably secure globally.