Mossy Bog Mat

State Rank S4

Community Description
The bryophyte layer is the most obvious component of this peatland type. A dense and usually very wet layer of peat mosses contributes most of the cover. Low herbs and stunted shrubs are often scattered across the moss lawn, but usually form <25% cover overall. Characteristic vascular plant species include leatherleaf, bog rosemary (very dwarfed), horned bladderwort, small cranberry, and white beard-rush. The most typical bryophytes are Sphagnum cuspidatum and bog-mat liverwort.

Soil and Site Characteristics
Bog Moss Lawns occur within raised bogs and fens, typically in the wettest areas such as bog pools, boggy pond margins, and water tracks. They may form extensive areas on the higher areas of raised bogs. The substrate is highly acidic (pH ~ 4.0).

Diagnostics
A carpet of bryophytes, mostly Sphagnum mosses, is the main feature in this peatland setting. Vascular plants generally contribute <25% cover.

Similar Types
This is the only vegetation type in which bryophytes form the major continuous vegetation layer. Sedge - Leatherleaf Fen Lawns, Low Sedge - Buckbean Fen Lawns, and Leatherleaf Boggy Fens can all have similar vascular plant species, but will have the vascular plants more strongly dominant (typically >50% cover).

Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations
This community type is well represented in Maine and has been subject to few threats to date. Several examples occur on public lands and private conservation lands. Impoundment or draining would have negative impacts on bog hydrology and consequently on the vegetation. Slow vegetation growth rates, due to the nutrient-poor environment, result in slow recovery from physical disturbances, such as recreational trail use. If disturbance, such as foot traffic or logging access, is a necessity, traversing during frozen conditions or using boardwalks can minimize impacts.

Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

Location Map

Characteristic Plants
These plants are frequently found in this community type. Those with an asterisk are often diagnostic of this community.

Dwarf Shrub
- Black crowberry
- Dwarf huckleberry

Herb
- Leatherleaf
- Pale laurel
- Small cranberry

Bryoid
- Horned bladderwort
- Bog-mat liverwort
- Mylia liverwort
- Sphagnum mosses*

Associated Rare Animals
- Quebec emerald

Examples on Conservation Lands You Can Visit
- Crystal Bog Preserve – Aroostook Co.
- Great Heath Public Lands – Washington Co.
- Number Five Bog Public Lands – Somerset Co.
- Wiggins Brook, Squaw Mountain Public Lands – Piscataquis Co.

Distribution

Landscape Pattern: Small Patch