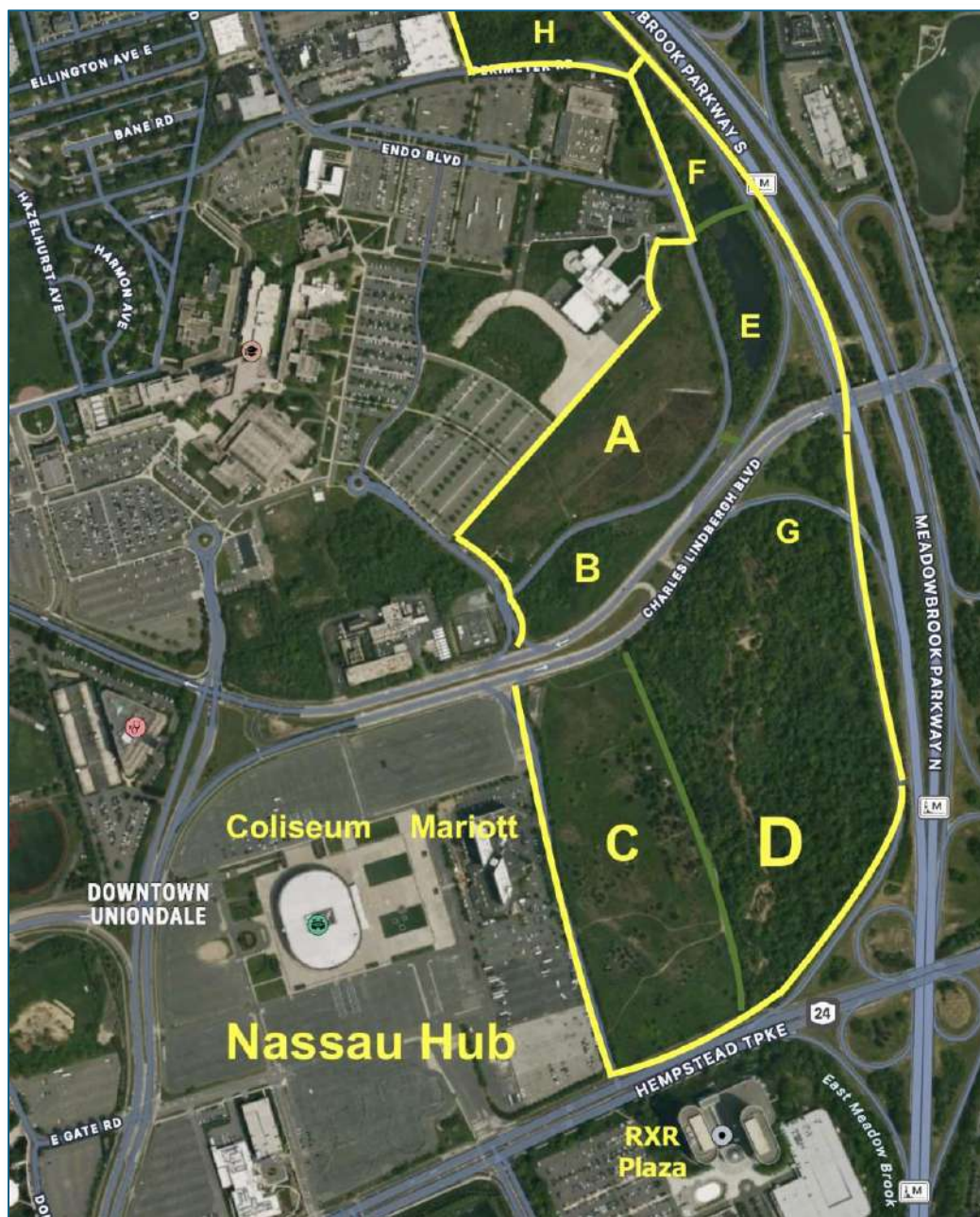


Proposed 100-acre Hempstead Plains Nature Study Area

A larger, more contiguous, and resilient Hempstead Plains Nature Study Area can better diffuse environmental impacts from the Nassau Hub. Simply, more grassland with wooded edge, forest, brook and wetland combined to approx. 100 acres, will be more attractive to grassland specialist birds and wildlife, being conducive to restoring a lush biodiversity of NY native flora and fauna. There aren't many preservable 100-acre tracts left in this part of Nassau County, making this proposal critical.



Parcels A, C, D (but currently not B) have substantial intact acreage of Hempstead Plains grassland. Nevertheless, sections of all 4 parcels (A, B, C, D) should be prioritized to be restored back to Hempstead Plains grassland habitat by selectively replacing invasive plant tracts, successional old field, scrubland and hardwoods with appropriate Hempstead Plains grassland plant species.

There's much to consider for preserving and restoring the following 8 different mini-ecosystems which are adjacent to yet distinctly demarcated from each other. Their proximity makes it possible for us to protect and preserve them as an exemplary series of Nassau County native habitats that reflect our natural heritage as well as our environmental legacy for future generations.

Now, that's not saying these parcels aren't disturbed by man, they all have been. Yet they all retain their own essence of what such diverse ecosystems should each provide in being able to host and harbor obligate flora and fauna ecotypes specific to each parcel - and they all can be carefully cultivated to increasingly restore them into their more natural states incrementally over the years they're under new management by concerned LI environmentalists. Envision them as a natural environmental college campus with distinct habitat classrooms next door to each other, where one can study, learn and marvel at exemplary and authentic ecologies of Long Island nature and wild species specific to each classroom/parcel, all next to each other, one after another.

These 8 discrete areas (marked A to H) exist here, each representing different ecological examples of Nassau County natural habitat variations, all coexisting in the same relatively compact and contiguous geographic area where these varied habitats such as meadows, forests, swamps, and stream provide ecological niches for obligate species of plants, birds, invertebrates, and other LI endemic wildlife.

These 8 different Long Island ecological niches are:

1. **Parcel A: Hempstead Plains Preserve:** Approx. 19 acres of managed grassland with Visitor Center.
2. **Parcel B: Successional Woodland Plot:** Approx. 7 acres of successional Southern hardwoods tapering off into grassland. Hardwoods to be converted to 4-5 acres of Founders Plots for establishing a Nassau County ecotype native seed supply, and for public education.
3. **Parcel C: Purcell Preserve:** Approx 27 acres of unmanaged Hempstead Plains grassland succeeding to scrubland and wooded areas.
4. **Parcel D: East Meadow Brook:** Approx 42 acres. Includes Nassau County's longest stream, the East Meadow Brook, with forest and wetland ecosystems running alongside the Meadowbrook Parkway. This adds valuable biodiversity including LI native woodland and wetland plants, pollinators, and bird species. Parcel D also includes substantial acreage of Hempstead Plains globally rare grassland bisected by dirt bike trails running through a NYS protected wetland.
5. **Parcel E: The Pond and Ravine:** Retention basin and apparent headwaters of the East Meadow Brook.
6. **Parcel F: Woodland Swamp:** Ecologically rich, tangled obligate hydrophytic flora with slow sluices of open water.
7. **Parcel G: Tall Pine-Oak Grove:** Slightly higher land with tallest, presumably oldest and most distinct stand of majestic pines and oaks within view - a bountiful ecosystem for obligate wildlife species.
8. **Parcel H: Sunken Forest:** Stand at eye level with birds foraging in the crowns and upper canopies of numerous trees that grow no taller than the ridge encircling them. In the flood basin below lies an ephemeral waterhole that's part of the hydrology of the East Meadow Brook headwaters.



As different as the 8 ecosystems are, yet they are all here and woven tightly into this tapestry of the Nassau County environments that need the surrounding municipalities and communities to join together to preserve, nurture and protect these special places for the benefit of wildlife and people, to conserve a remembrance of Nassau County's natural heritage and a lasting legacy for generations to come. If we don't, who will?

30 Endangered, Threatened, Rare Grassland Obligate Species

Existing remnant patches of Hempstead Plains grassland are surrounded by urban development and illegal garbage dumping has been common. It is extremely vulnerable to further development and associated disturbances. It has been colonized by invasive exotic species, and successional shrublands or successional southern hardwoods.

However, adequate protection, restoration, proper management, and no further development in and around the sites, should allow the Hempstead grassland's viability to improve.²⁰

LI Grassland Specialist Birds Endangered: 1, Threatened: 3, Special Concern: 3, High Priority: 2

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	Species Status
1.	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	NY/LI Endangered ¹
2.	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>	NY/LI Threatened ²
3.	Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	NY/LI Threatened ²
4.	Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Centronyx henslowii</i>	NY/LI Threatened ²
5.	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	NY/LI Special Concern ³
6.	Vesper Sparrow	<i>Poocetes gramineus</i>	NY/LI Special Concern ³
7.	Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	NY/LI Special Concern ³
8.	Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	NY/LI High Priority ⁴
9.	Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	NY/LI High Priority ⁴

¹: Endangered native species in imminent danger of extirpation or extinction in NYS.

²: Threatened native species likely to become an NYS endangered species within the foreseeable future.

³: Native species for which a welfare concern or risk of endangerment has been documented in NYS.

⁴: High Priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Source: NYS DEC

Pollinators of the Hempstead Plains Preserves Threatened: 1, Critically Imperiled: 1

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	Species Status
10.	Frosted Elfin	<i>Callophrys irus</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
11.	Hand-maid Moth	<i>Datana ranaecephs</i>	NY/LI Critically Imperiled

Plants of the Hempstead Plains Preserves Endangered: 4, Threatened: 14, Rare:1

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	Species Status
12.	Sandplain Gerardia	<i>Agalinis decemloba</i>	Fed & NY Endangered ^{5,6}
13.	Soapwort Gentian	<i>Gentiana saponaria</i>	NY/LI Endangered ^{6,9}
14.	Eastern Silvery Aster	<i>Symphyotrichum concolor</i>	NY/LI Endangered ^{6,9}
15.	Britton's Coast Violet	<i>Viola brittoniana</i>	NY/LI Endangered ⁶
16.	Stargrass	<i>Aletris farinosa</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
17.	Purple Milkweed	<i>Asclepias purpurascens</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
18.	Green Milkweed	<i>Asclepias viridiflora</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
19.	Midland Sedge	<i>Carex mesochorea</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
20.	Bushy Rock Rose	<i>Crocanthemum dumosum</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
21.	Low Rock Rose	<i>Crocanthemum propinquum</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
22.	Small-leaved Trefoil	<i>Desmodium ciliare</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
23.	Narrowleaf Bush Clover	<i>Lespedeza angustifolia</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
24.	Nuttall's Milkwort	<i>Polygala nuttallii</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
25.	Blunt Mountain Mint	<i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
26.	Few-flowered Nutrush	<i>Scleria pauciflora</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
27.	Narrowleaf Whitetop Aster	<i>Sricarpus linifolius</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
28.	Hyssopleaf Hedge Nettle	<i>Stachys hyssopifolia</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
29.	Northern Gama Grass	<i>Tripsacum dactyloides</i>	NY/LI Threatened ⁷
30.	Birds-foot Violet	<i>Viola pedata</i>	NY/LI Rare ⁸

⁵: Listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

⁶: Listed as Endangered by NYS: In imminent danger of extirpation in NY.

⁷: Listed as Threatened by NYS: Likely to become Endangered in the foreseeable future.

⁸: Listed as Rare by NYS: Likely to become Threatened in the near future.

⁹: Considered extirpated. Conservation translocation/reintroduction candidate.

Source: New York Natural Heritage Program

²⁰ Source: guides.nynhp.org/hempstead-plains-grassland/

New York State Wildlife Action Plan for 2025-2035

The US Endangered Species Act of 1973: Designed by Congress to protect critically imperiled species and to halt and reverse the trend toward species extinction caused by unscrupulous economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation. The purpose of the ESA is:

- 1) to prevent extinction, and
- 2) to recover species to the point where the law's protections are no longer needed, and
- 3) to get there, the ESA also protects ecosystems upon which listed species depend.

State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs) are updated with USFWS every 10 years. SWAPs serve to prevent species from becoming federally endangered. To be eligible for federal wildlife conservation funding, a SWAP must identify Species of Greatest Conservation Need, identify the habitats they require, and prescribe recommended actions to address the threats to ensure the conservation of SGCN, before they become too rare or costly to restore.

Of 79 birds on NY's 2025-35 SWAP, **34 imperiled species below require habitat found within the 100-acre HPNSA** and can benefit from conservation action and habitat improvement here so as not to become endangered species in NY.

Conservation action to establish a 100-acre Hempstead Plains Nature Study Area will also benefit several hundred other native birds, other wildlife species and native plants whose populations in Nassau County have been declining sharply, but not sharp enough yet to be listed as the highest state priorities on NY's SWAP plan such as these birds are:

Endangered Imminent danger of extirpation or extinction in NYS.	Legend: G: Grassland; F: Forest; W: Wetland
1. Loggerhead Shrike	G
2. Short-eared Owl	G
Threatened Likely to become a NYS endangered species within the foreseeable future.	
3. Common Nighthawk	G
4. Yellow-breasted Chat	F
5. Kentucky Warbler	F
6. Least Bittern	W
7. Upland Sandpiper	G
8. Sedge Wren	G
9. Henslow's Sparrow	G
Special Concern A welfare concern or risk of endangerment has been documented in NYS.	
10. Peregrine Falcon	
11. Bald Eagle	F, W
12. Northern Harrier	G, W
13. Barn Owl	G, W
14. American Bittern	W
15. Red-shouldered Hawk	W
16. Red-headed Woodpecker	F
17. Horned Lark	G
18. Vesper Sparrow	G
19. Grasshopper Sparrow	G
High Priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need	
20. American Black Duck	W
21. Bay-breasted Warbler	F
22. Bobolink	G
23. Brown Thrasher	F
24. Canada Warbler	F
25. Cape May Warbler	F
26. Eastern Meadowlark	G
27. Northern Bobwhite	G
28. Olive-sided Flycatcher	W
29. Prothonotary Warbler	W
30. Rusty Blackbird	W
Proposed New SGCN for 2025-35	
31. American Kestrel	G
32. Greater Yellowlegs	W
33. Long-eared Owl	F
34. Tennessee Warbler	F

Learn more: <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/biodiversity-species-conservation/state-wildlife-action-plan>