

## Common Reed Marsh



**System:** Palustrine

**Subsystem:** Herbaceous

**PA Ecological Group(s):** Marsh Wetland and Basin Wetland

**Global Rank:** GNA

**State Rank:** S5

### General Description

Common Reed Marsh occurs in standing water for most or all of the year and is often associated with impounded drainages, ponded areas near streams, or saturated areas surrounding drainages. The community occurs on poorly drained soils, usually mucky silt loam or shallow mucky peat. Vegetation is strongly dominated by common reed (*Phragmites australis* ssp. *australis*), which can form nearly monotypic stands. Other associated species may include common cat-tail (*Typha latifolia*), wool-grass (*Scirpus cyperinus*), smartweeds (*Persicaria* spp.), bonesets (*Eupatorium* spp.), sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), and rice cutgrass (*Leersia oryzoides*). The exotic invasive species narrow-leaved cat-tail (*Typha angustifolia*) and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) can be present in these wetlands.

### Rank Justification

Common, widespread, and abundant in the jurisdiction.

### Identification

- Near monotypic stands of common reed (*Phragmites australis* ssp. *australis*)
- Occurs on impounded drainages, ponded areas near streams, or saturated areas surrounding drainages

### Characteristic Species

## Herbs

- [Common cat-tail \(\*Typha latifolia\*\)](#)
- [Wool-grass \(\*Scirpus cyperinus\*\)](#)
- [Smartweeds \(\*Persicaria\* spp.\)](#)
- [Joe-pye weed \(\*Eupatorium\* spp.\)](#)
- [Sensitive fern \(\*Onoclea sensibilis\*\)](#)
- [Rice cutgrass \(\*Leersia oryzoides\*\)](#)

## Exotic Species

- [Common reed \(\*Phragmites australis\* ssp. \*australis\*\)](#)
- [Purple loosestrife \(\*Lythrum salicaria\*\)](#)
- [Narrow-leaved cat-tail \(\*Typha angustifolia\*\)](#)

## International Vegetation Classification Associations:

[Eastern Reed Marsh](#) (CEGL004141)

## NatureServe Ecological Systems:

[North-Central Interior Freshwater Marsh](#) (CES202.899)

## Origin of Concept

Fike, J. 1999. Terrestrial and palustrine plant communities of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory. Harrisburg, PA. 86 pp.

## Pennsylvania Community Code

na : Not Available

## Similar Ecological Communities

Common Reed Marsh can have similar species as Bluejoint – Reed Canary-grass Marsh and Mixed Forb – Graminoid Wet Meadow but differs between these types as it is clearly dominated by an almost monotypic stand of common reed (*Phragmites australis* ssp. *australis*).

## Fike Crosswalk

None. This type is new to the Pennsylvania Plant Community Classification developed from PNHP inventory studies.

### **Conservation Value**

This community can colonize disturbed ponds, impounded drainages, ponded areas near streams, or saturated areas surrounding drainages and displace native plant species and communities. However while this community is associated with decreasing native species diversity, the community also serves as a buffer for sediment and pollution runoff from adjacent developed lands by slowing the flow of surficial water, causing sediment to settle within this wetland.

### **Threats**

This community can be a threat to other wetland communities through the clonal growth of common reed (*Phragmites australis* ssp. *australis*) and displacement of other vegetation types.

### **Management**

It is important to prevent the spread of this community through invasive species control, and a natural buffer around the wetland should be maintained in order to minimize the spread of this community into adjacent vegetation.

### **Research Needs**

This community is dominated by an exotic invasive species and there is an increasing need to document the impacts of this community on native plant species and communities.

### **Trends**

The trend of this community is increasing due to the strong competitive nature of common reed (*Phragmites australis* ssp. *australis*) within altered environments. Common reed is able to colonize disturbed areas and form monotypic clonal stands which decrease both light and nutrient availability to native species.

### **Range Map**



### **Pennsylvania Range**

Statewide.

### **Global Distribution**

Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Vermont, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.

### **References**

Stone, B., D. Gustafson, and B. Jones. 2006 (revised). Manual of Procedure for State Game Land Cover Typing. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Game Commission, Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management, Forest Inventory and Analysis Section, Forestry Division. Harrisburg, PA. 79 ppg.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). 1999. Inventory Manual of Procedure. For the Fourth State Forest Management Plan. Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, Division of Forest Advisory Service. Harrisburg, PA. 51 ppg.