Natural Communities of Maritime Ecoregion

Adapted with permission from Edwards, L., Ambrose, J., & Kirkman, L. K. (2013). Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Seven natural communities are separated into three categories: sparsely vegetated or unvegetated intertidal communities, upland and isolated wetland communities, and tidal marshes and swamps. Characteristic plants in each community are listed in the chart below.

Sparsely Vegetated or Unvegetated Intertidal Communities include the following natural community.

• Intertidal Beaches, Sand Bars, and Mud Flats: These essentially unvegetated intertidal communities with a substrate of unconsolidated sand or mud are found on ocean-facing edges of barrier islands, in estuaries, and in nearshore marine environments.

Upland and Isolated Wetland Communities include the following natural communities.

- Maritime Dunes: These sparsely vegetated herbaceous and woodland communities occur on exposed sand dunes, swales,
- Maritime Forests: These upland communities include a variety of mixed pine-evergreen
 hardwood forests and woodlands found in coastal settings, including barrier islands, backbarrier islands (marsh hammocks), and low ridges and bluffs near the coast. Canopy dominants
 may include several species of oaks (especially live oak), longleaf pine, pond pine, slash pine,
 southern red cedar, and cabbage palmetto.
- Interdunal Wetlands: Swamps or open-water wetlands typically found in flats and depressions between dune ridges on Georgia's coastal barrier islands. Depending on their location on the barrier island, they may be surrounded by maritime forest or by grass- or shrub-dominated maritime dune communities. They also occur in some near-coastal mainland settings where relict dune structures persist. They are also known as "freshwater sloughs" or "barrier island ponds."

Tidal Marshes and Swamps include the following natural communities. Characteristic plants in each community are listed in the chart below.

• Salt Marshes and Brackish Tidal Marshes: Marshes occur along the edges of tidal rivers, estuaries, and sounds, and on the mainland-facing sides of barrier islands, They are dominated by grasses, rushes, sedges, and forbs that are inundated regularly by salty tidal waters. By far the most abundant plant is smooth cordgrass. Other characteristic plants include black needlerush, sea lavender, seaside oxeye, saltgrass, and maritime marsh-elder.

- Freshwater and Oligohaline Tidal Marshes: These marshes are found along the edges of tidally influenced rivers, upstream of salt marshes and brackish tidal marshes. This natural community includes marshes with salinities ranging from less than 0.5 5 parts per thousand. Typical plant communities are dominated by a variety of emergent graminoids and forbs, such as giant cutgrass, sawgrass, southern wild-rice, giant cordgrass, pickerelweed, cattails, and green arowarum.
- **Tidal Swamps**: These freshwater forested wetlands exist as narrow to wide bands along the floodplains of tidal rivers and creeks. The canopy is usually dominated by bald-cypress and water tupelo, but may also include sweet gum, swamp tupelo, green ash, swamp red maple, water oak, and swamp bay.

		Intertidal Beach	Maritime Dunes	Maritime Forests	Interdunal Wetlands	Salt & Brackish Marshes	Freshwater & Brackish Marches	Tidal Swamps
Trees								
Acer rubrum	Red maple				Х			Х
Carpinus caroliniana	Musclewood							Х
Carya glabra	Pignut hickory			Х				
Fraxinus caroliniana	Carolina ash							Х
Ilex cassine	Dahoon							Х
Ilex opaca	American holly			Х				
Ilex vomitoria	Yaupon		Х	Х		Х		
Juniperus virginiana var. silicicola	Southern red cedar		Х	Х		Х		
Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweetgum							Х
Magnolia grandiflora	Southern magnolia			Х				
Nyssa aquatica	Water tupelo						Х	Х
Nyssa biflora	Swamp tupelo				Х			Х
Persea borbonia	Red bay			Х				
Persea palustris	Swamp bay				Х			Х
Pinus elliottii	Slash pine			Х				
Pinus palustris	Longleaf pine			Х				
Pinus taeda	Loblolly pine			Х				
Quercus geminata	Sand live oak			Х				
Quercus hemisphaerica	Sand laurel oak			Х				
Quercus nigra	Water oak							Х
Quercus virginiana	Live oak		Х	Х				
Sabal palmetto	Sabal palm			Х	Х	Х		
Salix caroliniana	Carolina willow				Х			
Taxodium distichum	Bald cypress						х	х
<u>Shrubs</u>								
Alnus serrulata	Tag alder							Х
Baccharis halimifolia	Groundsel tree		Х			Х	Х	
Borrichia frutescens	Seaside oxeye					Х		

Callicarpa americana	American beautyberry		х				
Cephalanthus occidentalis	Buttonbush			х			х
Cornus stricta	Southern swamp dogwood						х
Cyrilla racemiflora	Ti-ti						Х
Decodon verticillatus	Water-oleander			х			
Eubotrys racemosa	Coastal fetterbush						х
Forestiera acuminata	Swamp-privet						Х
Itea virginica	Virginia-willow						х
Iva frutescens	Maritime marsh-elder				х	х	
Iva imbricata	Dune marsh-elder	х					
Kosteletzkya virginica	Southern seashore-mallow				х		
Lyonia ferruginea	Crookedwood, rusty lyonia		Х				
Morella cerifera	Wax-myrtle	х	Х	х	х	Х	х
Planera aquatica	Water-elm						Х
Sabal minor	Dwarf palmetto						х
Serenoa repens	Saw palmetto	х	Х				
Sideroxylon tenax	Tough buckthorn	х					
Vaccinium arboreum	Sparkleberry		Х				
Vaccinium elliottii	Mayberry		Х				
Viburnum nudum	Southern wild raisin						х
Viburnum obovatum	Small-leaf viburnum						х
Xanthoxylum clava-herculis	Hercules'-club	х	х				
Yucca aloifolia	Spanish dagger	х					
Vines							
Ampelopsis arboreum	Peppervine	х	х				
Clematis crispa	Southern leatherflower						Х
Decumaria barbara	Climbing hydrangea						х
Parthenocissus quinquefolius	Virginia creeper		х				
Smilax auriculata	Dune greenbrier	х					
Vitis rotundifolia	Muscadine		Х				
Ferns							
Asplenium platyneuron	Ebony spleenwort		х				
Azolla caroliniana	Eastern mosquito fern			х			
Onoclea sensibilis	Sensitive fern						х
Osmunda regalis	Royal fern						х
Osmundastrum cinnamomeum	Cinnamon fern		х				х
Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken fern		Х				
Woodwardia aerolata	Netted chain fern						х
Herbaceous							

Acorus calamus	European calamus						х	
Amaranthus cannabinus	Salt-marsh water-hemp						х	
Arisaema dracontium	Green dragon							Х
Batis maritima	Saltwort					х		
Bidens laevis	Showy bur-marigold						Х	
Brasenia schreberi	Water-shield				х			
Cakile harperi	Southeastern sea rocket	х	х					
Clitoria mariana	Butterfly pea		Х					
Cnidoscolus stimulosus	Tread-softly		х					
Croton punctatus	Silverleaf croton	х						
Elephantopus nudatus	Coastal Plain elephant's-foot			х				
Euphorbia polygonifolia	Northern seaside spurge		х					
Heterotheca subaxillaris	Camphorweed		х					
Hibiscus moscheutos	Eastern rose-mallow				х		х	
Hydrocotyle bonariensis	Dune water-pennywort	х	х					
Impatiens capensis	Orange jewelweed						х	
Ipomoea imperati	Beach morning-glory	х	Х					
Ipomoea pes-caprae	Railroad vine	х	Х					
Iris virginica	Southern blue flag						х	
Justicia ovata var. ovata	Coastal Plain water-willow							х
Lemna spp.	Duckweed				Х			
Limnobium spongia	American frog's-bit				х			
Lippia nodiflora	Creeping frogfruit		Х					
Mitchella repens	Partridge-berry			Х				
Nelumbo lutea	American lotus-lily				х			
Nuphar advena	Broadleaf pondlily				х		х	
Nymphaea odorata	White waterlily				х			
Nymphoides aquatica	Big floating heart				х			
Oenothera humifusa	Seabeach evening-primrose		Х					
Opuntia pusilla	Dune prickly-pear		х					
Orontium aquaticum	Golden club						х	
Peltandra virginica	Green arrow-arum				х		Х	х
Persicaria arifolia	Halberd-leaf tearthumb						х	
Persicaria punctata	Dotted smartweed						х	
Persicaria sagittata	Arrowleaf tearthumb						х	
Pityopsis graminifolia	Silkgrass		х					
Pontederia cordata	Pickerelweed				х	х	х	
Potamogeton spp.	Pondweed				х			
Sagittaria graminea	Grassy arrowhead				х			

Sagittaria Indifolia Bulltongue arrowhead x x Sagittaria Indifolia Broadleaf arrowhead x x Salicornia bigelovii Dwarf saltwort x x Salicornia virginica Virginia glasswort x x Sezuorium pacifica Pacific swampfire x x Sesuvium portulacastrum Large sea-purslane x x Sesuvium portulacastrum Large sea-purslane x x Symphiotrichum subulutum Annual saltmarsh aster x x Symphiotrichum tenuifolium Perennial saltmarsh aster x x Typha admingensis Southern cattail x x x Typha dolifolia Common cattail x x x Utricularia spp. Bladderworts x x x Wolffic columbiana Watermeal x x x Chasmathium sessilifiorum Longleaf spikegrass x x x x Cladium jamaicense Sawgrass x	0 111 1 15 11	I = 11.	I					1	
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	Juncus roemerianus	Black needlerush					х		
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	Schoenoplectus tabermaemontani	Softstem bulrush					х	Х	