

BOGS

BOGS are more common in northern regions and are relatively rare in the south. Where they occur, bogs are fascinating wetlands.

Bogs are “old” wetlands, occurring where drainage and water circulation is poor. Most of the nutrients that enter a bog come from rainwater, and not from adjoining lakes, creeks, or rivers. Bogs are “nutrient poor” ecosystems which are not as productive as marshes or swamps. The low productivity of bogs is reflected by the smaller number of animals that live in them.

Plants that live in bogs are unique because they have adapted to the acidic, nutrient-poor soils. Carnivorous plants, such as the pitcher plant and sundews, get the nutrients they need from

insects they trap in their leaves. Bogs provide the only habitat for a number of uncommon wildflowers, orchids, and insects.

Sphagnum moss forms the vegetative mat in most bogs (commercial dew worms are often packed in sphagnum moss). Sometimes this mat floats over water, as in quaking bogs. Trees, if present, are usually black spruce or tamarack. They grow slowly in bogs, and seldom reach a large size.

Bogs provide habitat for weasels, foxes, owls and a variety of small mammals. Many songbirds, including the white-throated sparrow and Wilson’s warbler, inhabit bogs. Moose often feed along the edges of bogs.

