

DATA SHEET: WETLAND OBSERVATIONS

Name _____ **Date** _____

Use your powers of observation to complete the following questions and tables.

1. Draw an overhead view of the area, indicating trees, shrubs, grasses, emergent vegetation, open water, standing water, waterways, etc. Label or make a key for your sketch.

2. Observe the hydrology, or presence of water, at the site.

Is standing water present? Yes

No

If yes, ask your teacher for a yardstick and complete the following questions:

-is there standing everywhere? Yes No

-is the depth of the water uniform OR variable ?

-how deep is the standing water? _____ feet minimum
_____ feet maximum

More space available on the back of page if needed.

4.
 - a.) Ask your teacher for an auger and a plastic tray. Also ask your teacher where you should take your soil samples.
 - b.) Label this location on your diagram on page 1 and go to the assigned location. Use the auger to extract two 12-inch long soil samples.
 - c.) Carefully and without disrupting the soil samples, place one sample in your plastic tray and bring the other sample to your teacher and remind him/her of where you got the sample. Then ask the teacher for a ruler and a color chart.
 - d.) Use the ruler to measure 2 inches from the surface end of the soil sample.
 - e.) Remove a small section of the sample from that depth and make observations to fill in the chart below.
 - f.) Repeat e.) above for 4 inches, 6 inches, and 12 inches from the surface end of the soil sample, and the maximum depth of the soil sample. Be sure to measure and record exactly what the maximum depth is.

Depth from Soil Surface	General Observations/ patterns/ features / insects	Color # <i>(Use the color chart)</i>	Soil Particles <i>(organic matter, sand, minerals, clay, silt, pebbles, etc.)</i>	Soil Moisture <i>(Dry moist wet very wet dripping)</i>	Soil Texture <i>(crumbles, sticks, together, sticks to fingers, clay-like, oozes)</i>
2 Inches					
4 Inches					
6 Inches					

12 Inches					
Maximum Depth = _____ inches					

Soil numbers 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 16 (and 2 sometimes) are typically wetland soils.

g.) Based on your observations above, would you describe your soil sample as hydric wetland soil?
Why or why not?

5. List the three main conditions that are used to identify an area as a wetland.

- a.) _____
- b.) _____
- c.) _____

6. Based on your answer to Question 5 and your observations above, would you describe this site as a wetland? Why or why not?

7. If you would describe this site as a wetland,

a.) what specific type of wetland is it? A marsh, swamp, bog, fen other? Why?

b.) what are the boundaries of the wetland? (upland and/or waterway) Label them on your diagram on page 1.

c.) how can you tell where the wetland ends and the upland begins?

d.) list any evidence that this wetland has been altered by humans or nature.

8. If you would not describe this site as a wetland, record any evidence that this area was once a wetland and has been disturbed by human activity or nature.



HANDOUT: WETLAND OBSERVATIONS

Wetlands Summary

Grass or sedge?

Can you tell the difference between grasses and sedges? Here's an easy way to do it. Hold a stem between your thumb and forefinger and roll it around. You'll find that grass has a smooth, round stem and a



sedge has a three-sided stem that doesn't roll smoothly in your fingers. To remember the difference, just think of the simple rhyme, "sedges have edges." You'll find lots of sedges in a fen.

Wetland Summary

TYPE OF WETLAND	Marsh Cattail	Swamp Blueberry	Bog Sphagnum Moss	Fen Pitcher-plant
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">along shores of rivers, streams and coasts, in shallows of ponds and lakes, or in potholes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">along rivers, streams and lakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">in northern climatesoften in deep depressions with no drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">in northern climatesusually in low-lying areas with some drainage
Plant life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">soft-stemmed emergents such as cattail and arrowhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">mainly woody-stemmed plants such as shrubs and trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">layers of peatevergreen trees and shrubsa surface carpet of sphagnum mossinsect-eating plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">layers of peatsedges, grasses and low shrubsinsect-eating plants
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">up to 2 m (7 feet) of watersmall marshes may dry up in the summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">shallow water that may dry up by the end of the summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">stagnant and acidic water, sometimes covered with a floating mat of mossopen water may be very deep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">slow-moving, shallow surface water that may dry up during summer

Credit: *Birkow, Paula. Wetlands: Investigating Swamps, Fens, Bogs, and Marshes. Ontario: Kids Can Press, 1993.*