

What is a Vernal Pool?

According to the [Vernal Pool Association](#), a vernal pool is a contained basin depression lacking a permanent above ground outlet. In the Northeast, vernal pools fill with water with the rising water table of fall and winter or with the meltwater and runoff of winter and spring snow and rain. They contain water for a few months in the spring and early summer. By late summer, a vernal pool is generally (but not always) dry. Vernal pools provide important habitat for a high diversity of organisms and provide essential habitat for certain amphibians and other species during portions of their life cycle. Because they are periodically dry, vernal pools do not support fish, which are major predators of young amphibians. Vernal pools are considered watercourses under the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act.

SELECT VERNAL POOL REFERENCES¹

Calhoun, A.J.K. and P.G. deMaynadier (ed.) 2007. *Science and Conservation of Vernal Pools in Northeastern North America*. CRC Press, Taylor & Francis Group, New York.

Colburn, E.A. 2004. *Vernal Pools: Natural History and Conservation*. The McDonald and Woodward Publishing Company, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Kenney, L.P. and M.R. Burne. 2000. *A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools*. Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Westborough, Massachusetts and the Vernal Pool Association.

Calhoun, A.J.K. and M.W. Klemens. 2002. *Best Development Practices: Conserving Pool Breeding Amphibians in Residential and Commercial Developments in the Northeastern United States*. MCA Technical Paper No. 5, Metropolitan Conservation Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx, New York.

Calhoun, A.J.K. and P. deMaynadier. 2004. *Forestry Habitat Management Guidelines for Vernal Pool Wildlife*. MCA Technical Paper No. 6, Metropolitan Conservation Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx, New York.

Websites

EPA: www.epa.gov/bioindicators/html/vernal_pools.html

The website contains general information on vernal pools and other seasonal pools, as well as website links to related information.

The Vernal Pool Association: www.vernalpool.org/vpa_1.htm

The website is sponsored by an independent group of individuals attempting to educate others about vernal pool ecology, the local environment, bio-diversity, and the protection of our resources by encouraging the appreciation, protection, and interdisciplinary study of vernal pools, particularly by students.

¹ from http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/water_inland/wetlands/2012websitesvernalpools.pdf

The University of Maine: <http://www.umaine.edu/vernalpools/>

The web site was designed to provide information on vernal pools for the people of Maine, but is relevant for Connecticut. You will find a variety of resources, including PowerPoint presentations, on vernal pool ecology, the animals that breed in and use vernal pools, and materials developed to assist you with field assessments.

The University of Massachusetts: www.umass.edu/landeco/research/vernal/vernal.html

The purpose of the website is to facilitate dissemination of information pertaining to studies conducted under the auspices of the Vernal Pool Ecology and Conservation and Amphibian Metapopulation Dynamics in Southern New England research program; specifically, to briefly describe each study, list the investigators and publications resulting from the project, and make available data and documents.

The University of Rhode Island: www.uri.edu/cels/nrs/paton

The website includes information on the characteristics of vernal pools, how to identify vernal pools, and the species associated with vernal pools.

Upper Susquehanna Coalition Vernal Pool Program: www.u-s-c.org/html/vernalpools.htm

The website provides an overview of vernal pools and a field guide to species found in and around vernal pools.