

# Shallow Open Water

Shallow waters are distinct wetlands that represent a transition from marshes to deeper aquatic ecosystems such as lakes or rivers. They include shallow lakes and ponds, as well as wetlands found beside rivers, coastlines and shorelines.

## Identifying Characteristics

- Water is less than 2 meters deep
- Usually permanently flooded
- Contains submerged vegetation and floating-leaved plants like pond-lilies
- Less than 25% of the wetland area is covered by emergent or submergent vegetation

## Benefits and Functions

- Provides conditions for dense submergent vegetation
- Habitat for a variety of aquatic insects and fish
- Provides food for many different birds
- Can recharge groundwater supplies



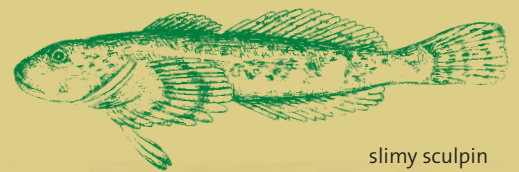
Pond near the MacMillan River—J. Hawkings



Osprey—J. Jantunen

## *Slimy Sculpin*

*Slimy sculpins are widespread and live at the bottoms of lakes and streams. They are one of the few fish species in the Yukon that spend their entire life in the same location. Because of this, they can be used as indicators of wetland health.*



slimy sculpin

## *Red-necked Grebe and Pond-lilies*

*Red-necked grebes use floating vegetation like pond-lilies to build their nests, anchoring them to emergent vegetation. Both adults take responsibility for tending to nests of 4-6 eggs and raising the young. Parents carry chicks on their backs soon after they hatch.*



Red-necked grebe and pond-lilies  
—J. Jantunen





# Yukon Wetlands Shallow Open Water



- 1 water sedge
- 2 bulrush
- 3 scouring rush
- 4 small yellow pond-lily
- 5 spike water-milfoil

Waterfowl are most commonly associated with shallow open water as a place to feed and raise young, but this habitat is also important for a diversity of other birds. Raptors such as bald eagles and ospreys use open water as a place to hunt. This habitat is also important for lesser yellowlegs, a species of shorebird which feeds on small aquatic insects and worms in the substrate.

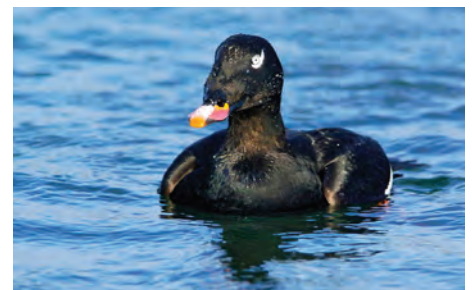
Another species, Bonaparte's gull, commonly nests in colonies at the tops of spruce trees near open water.

Shallow open water provides the opportunity to view a variety of birds and wildlife.



Top: American wigeon, male

Middle: White-winged scoter, male  
—J. Jantunen



Bottom: Lesser yellowlegs  
—J. Jantunen



Birdwatcher in wetland near Elsa

