Yellowstone Highlands Section

This area comprises the western margins of the Yellowstone Plateau. Much of this area has been glaciated and moraines are common. Perennial streams, wet meadows, and lakes are numerous and prevalent. Major waterbodies include Henrys Lake, Henrys Fork of the Snake River, and Island Park Reservoir. Elevation ranges from 1500–2500 m (5100–8500 ft). Soils in the basins and valleys are generally coarse and shallow to moderately deep.

Precipitation ranges from 51–114 cm (20–45 in) annually with most occurring during the fall, winter and spring. Precipitation occurs mostly as snow above 1800 m (6000 ft) and mostly as rain during the growing season. Climate is cold, moist continental. Temperature averages 2–8°C (35–47°F). The growing season lasts 25–120 days with a shorter growing season at higher elevations.

Communities are small and primarily scattered along the Henrys Fork. Recreation, timber harvest, and livestock grazing are the dominant land uses. A small amount of forage and other crops are grown in some valleys.

Table 1. Yellowstone Highlands land use and land ownership.

Land use	Area (ha)	Area (ac)	Percent
Dryland Agriculture	2269	5607	1
Timberland	208,335	514,805	77
Irrigated–Gravity Flow	3687	9112	1
Irrigated–Sprinkler	10,827	26,755	4
Rangeland	34,583	85,455	13
Riparian	5598	13,834	2
Urban	190	469	<1
Water	4943	12,215	2
Total	270,433	668,252	100

Land ownership	Area (ha)	Area (ac)	Percent
USDI Bureau of Land Management	7996	19,758	3
USDI Bureau of Reclamation	1693	4183	1
USDA Forest Service	178,850	441,946	66
USDI National Park Service	14,597	36,070	5
Open water	5815	14,370	2
Private	46,626	115,216	17
State of Idaho	15,018	37,110	6
Total	270,595	668,651	100

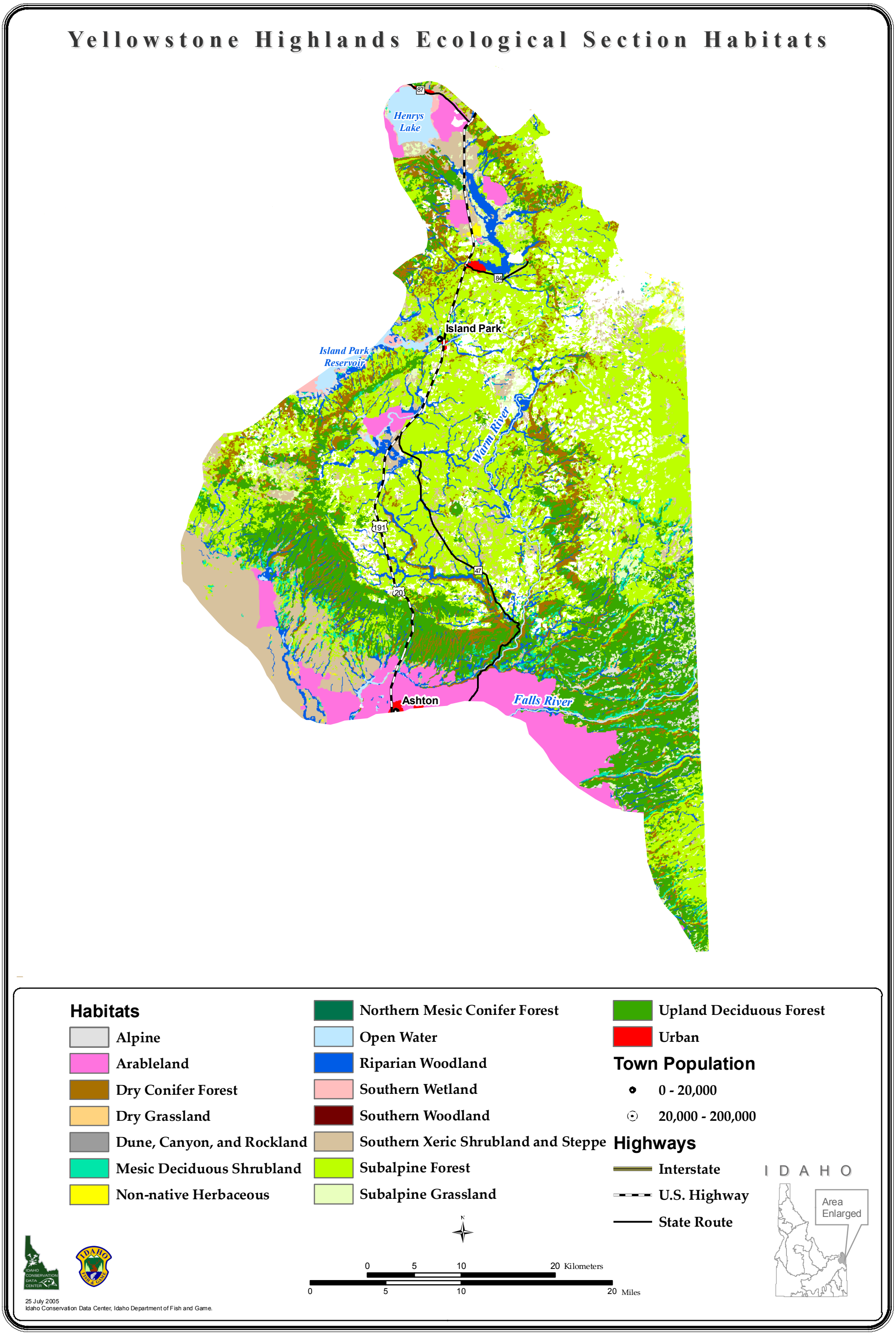

Figure 23. Yellowstone Highlands habitats.

Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Yellowstone Highlands

Fishes

Bluehead Sucker *Catostomus discobolus*[a]
Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout *Oncorhynchus clarkii bouvieri*

Amphibians

Northern Leopard Frog *Rana pipiens*

Birds

Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator*[a]
Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*
Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*
Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus*
Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*
Greater Sage–Grouse *Centrocercus urophasianus*
Sharp–tailed Grouse *Tympanuchus phasianellus*
Common Loon *Gavia immer*
Red–necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*
Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis*
American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*
Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*
Black–crowned Night–Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
White–faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*
Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*
Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis*
Merlin *Falco columbarius*
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*
Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis*
American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*
Long–billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*
Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*
Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*
California Gull *Larus californicus*
Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*
Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*
Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*
Yellow–billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*
Flammulated Owl *Otus flammeolus*
Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia*
Short–eared Owl *Asio flammeus*
Boreal Owl *Aegolius funereus*
Lewis's Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis*
American Three–toed Woodpecker *Picoides dorsalis*
Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri*

Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum*

Mammals

Merriam's Shrew *Sorex merriami*
Dwarf Shrew *Sorex nanus*
Townsend's Big–eared Bat *Corynorhinus townsendii*
Pygmy Rabbit *Brachylagus idahoensis*
Wyoming Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus elegans*
Great Basin Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus mollis*
Idaho Pocket Gopher *Thomomys idahoensis*
Gray Wolf *Canis lupus*
Grizzly or Brown Bear *Ursus arctos*[a]
Fisher *Martes pennanti*
Wolverine *Gulo gulo*
Canada Lynx *Lynx canadensis*
Mountain Goat *Oreamnos americanus*

Gastropods

Rustic Pondsnail *Stagnicola hinkleyi*[a]

Insects

A Mayfly *Ameletus sparsatus*
Gillette's Checkerspot *Euphydryas gillettii*

[a] Vertebrate species for which the Yellowstone Highlands represents a significant portion of their range.

Habitats in the Yellowstone Highlands

Table 2. Yellowstone Highlands habitats.

Habitat	Area (km²)	Area (ac)	Percent
Urban	6	1380	<1
Arableland	191	47,075	8
Non–native Herbaceous	12	2897	<1
Upland Deciduous Forest	479	118,349	19
Dry Conifer Forest	196	48,531	8
Subalpine Forest	985	243,543	39
Mesic Deciduous Shrubland	50	12,476	2
Southern Xeric Shrubland and Steppe	269	66,451	11
Dry Grassland	5	1146	<1
Subalpine Grassland	86	21,345	3
Alpine	25	6102	1
Open Water	42	10,481	2
Southern Wetland	8	2087	<1

Riparian Woodland	170	41,913	7
Total	2524	623,776	100

Priority Habitats and Associated Vertebrate Species in the Yellowstone Highlands

Arableland

Fishes
Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout *Oncorhynchus clarkii bouvieri*

Birds
Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator*
Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*
Greater Sage–Grouse *Centrocercus urophasianus*
Sharp–tailed Grouse *Tympanuchus phasianellus*
Red–necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*
Black–crowned Night–Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Long–billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*

Mammals
Wyoming Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus elegans*

Upland Deciduous Forest

Fishes
Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout *Oncorhynchus clarkii bouvieri*

Amphibians
Northern Leopard Frog *Rana pipiens*

Birds
Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus*
Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*
Yellow–billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*
Boreal Owl *Aegolius funereus*
American Three–toed Woodpecker *Picoides dorsalis*

Mammals
Townsend's Big–eared Bat *Corynorhinus townsendii*
Grizzly or Brown Bear *Ursus arctos*
Fisher *Martes pennanti*
Wolverine *Gulo gulo*

Dry Conifer Forest

Birds

Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus*
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*
Boreal Owl *Aegolius funereus*

Mammals

Townsend's Big–eared Bat *Corynorhinus townsendii*
Grizzly or Brown Bear *Ursus arctos*
Fisher *Martes pennanti*
Wolverine *Gulo gulo*
Canada Lynx *Lynx canadensis*
Mountain Goat *Oreamnos americanus*

Subalpine Forest

Fishes

Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout *Oncorhynchus clarkii bouvieri*

Amphibians

Northern Leopard Frog *Rana pipiens*

Birds

Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus*
Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*
Boreal Owl *Aegolius funereus*
American Three–toed Woodpecker *Picoides dorsalis*

Mammals

Dwarf Shrew *Sorex nanus*
Townsend's Big–eared Bat *Corynorhinus townsendii*
Grizzly or Brown Bear *Ursus arctos*
Fisher *Martes pennanti*
Wolverine *Gulo gulo*
Canada Lynx *Lynx canadensis*
Mountain Goat *Oreamnos americanus*

Riparian Woodland

Amphibians

Northern Leopard Frog *Rana pipiens*

Birds

Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator*
Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*
Sharp–tailed Grouse *Tympanuchus phasianellus*
Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*
Black–crowned Night–Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
California Gull *Larus californicus*
Yellow–billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

Mammals
Dwarf Shrew *Sorex nanus*
Canada Lynx *Lynx canadensis*