

Cypress Swamp

This freshwater habitat is dominated by bald cypress and tupelo gum trees. Many shrubs and other species of trees also grow in the swamp, including buttonbush and black willow. Many animals, including alligators, Louisiana black bear, beavers, raccoons, great blue herons, alligator snapping turtles, and bald eagles, call the swamp their home. Cypress swamps are flooded year-round and only dry out during severe droughts.

The Pontchartrain Basin contains large areas of cypress swamp especially on the western side around Lake Maurepas. However, this habitat was greatly altered by the logging industry that removed virtually every good sized, healthy cypress between the late 19th century and the early 20th century, and the area is still deteriorating. Without the freshwater overflow from the Mississippi River that once brought nutrients and sediment each year, the cypress swamps continue to subside so that in some places cypress growth is limited, and logged areas have not fully recovered. Other threats to cypress swamps include development and construction.