

# Interior Forest Habitat



Peter Taylor/Watershed Consulting

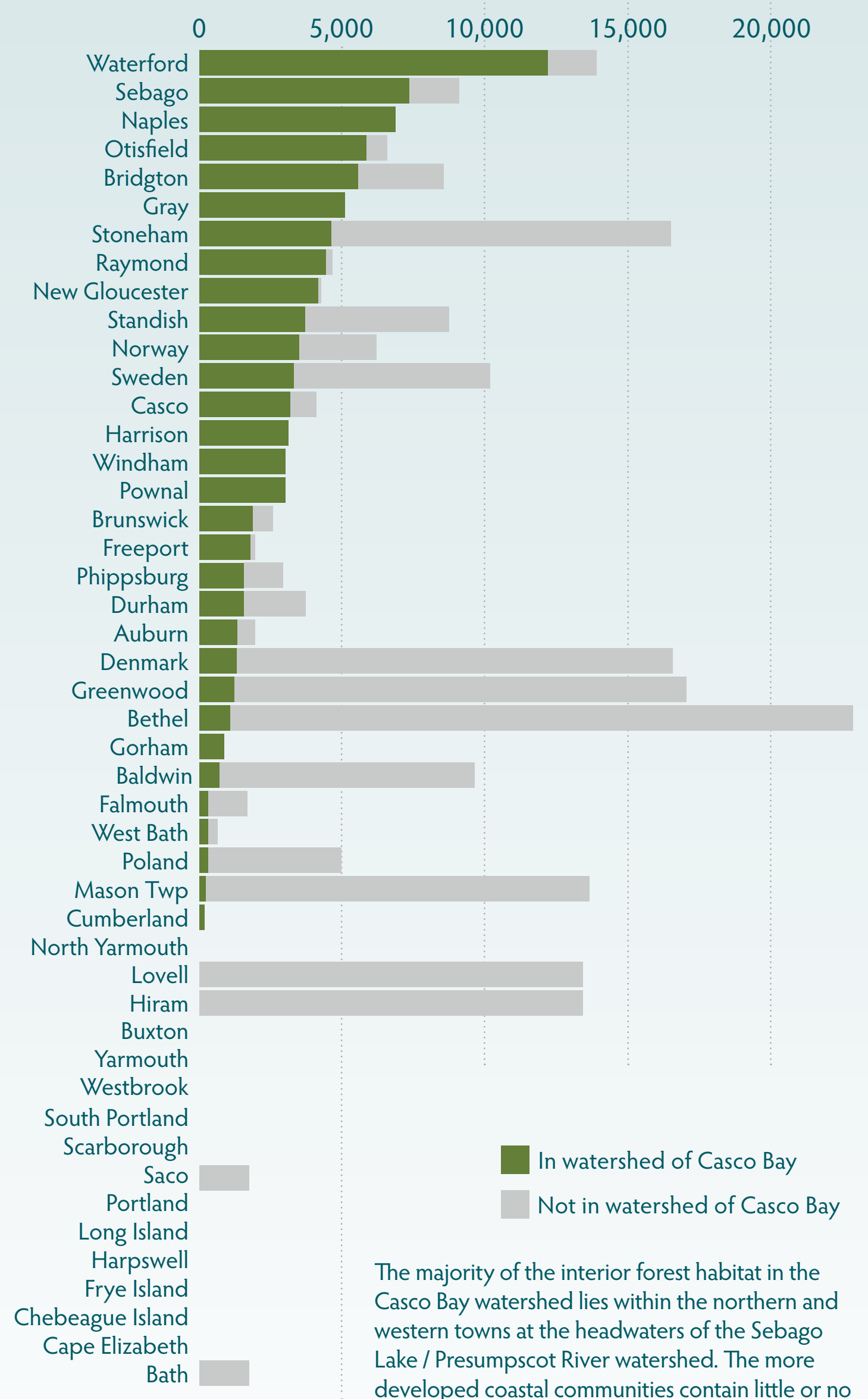
Forests provide essential habitat to many of Maine's native birds, fish, and mammals. Certain species, including large herbivores and predators such as fishers, hawks and owls, roam over large areas of forest and thus cannot survive in the small forests found in suburban areas. Many species of migrant songbirds, including many warblers, are forest specialists, nesting successfully only in large blocks of forest.

While to most humans there may appear to be little difference between the edge and the interior of a forest, there can be profound differences from the perspective of the animals and plants that live there.

Even in a largely forested watershed such as Casco Bay, suitable habitat for forest specialists may be uncommon. Their ideal habitat occurs only in large areas of forest that are compact in shape and are located far from most human activity.

- Almost 69 percent (676.0 square miles) of the 986 square mile Casco Bay watershed is forested (Maine Office of GIS 2004).
- In contrast, only 172.6 square miles (17.5 percent) of the watershed consists of interior forest habitat, the majority of which is located in the upper portions of the watershed.
- Interior forest is far less abundant in the more highly developed coastal communities, where suburban lands, abundant roads, powerlines, and other linear infrastructure cut the forest into smaller areas that provide little true interior forest habitat.

## Interior Forest Habitat in Casco Bay Townships



Legend:   
■ In watershed of Casco Bay   
■ Not in watershed of Casco Bay

The majority of the interior forest habitat in the Casco Bay watershed lies within the northern and western towns at the headwaters of the Sebago Lake / Presumpscot River watershed. The more developed coastal communities contain little or no interior forest habitat.



Left to right: Scarlet tanager, wood thrush (with young cowbird, a nest parasite), lynx, and brook trout are among the species in Maine that need interior forest habitat.

**Forest Habitat**

- Interior forest block
- Other forested area