

### 3.3.8 Critical Environmental Areas and Significant Habitats

#### 3.3.8.1 Affected Environment

**Critical Environmental Areas:** Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) are specific local or state agency designated geographic areas that have an exceptional or unique character with respect to one or more of the following attributes:

- A benefit or threat to human health;
- A natural setting (e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, forest and vegetation, open space and areas of important aesthetic or scenic quality);
- Agricultural, social, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational values; or
- An inherent ecological, geological or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any change.

CEAs are designated within the jurisdictional boundaries of a local or state agency and can encompass any geographical area that the agency owns, manages, or regulates. No critical environmental areas are presently designated in Jefferson County.

**Significant Habitats:** Several significant habitats, as identified by the NYSDEC and the USFWS, are located in the Project vicinity and include AWMA, the St. Lawrence Wetland and Grassland Management District, and seven Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats (see Exhibit 3.3.1). These habitats are further described below.

The AWMA is located in Jefferson County, in the Towns of Lyme and Cape Vincent. An approximately 2-mile portion of the proposed overhead transmission line will be located on a former railroad bed bordering the extreme western edge of the AWMA. The 2,037-acre

