

Minimum Patch Size Specifications for Ecological Community Occurrences (DRAFT 2006)

Ecological communities can be divided into three main pattern types:

- **Matrix communities** are widespread and cover large areas across the landscape.
- **Large patch communities** are less extensive and cover less of the landscape, but overall may still form large, uninterrupted patches.
- **Small patch communities** form small, discrete areas, usually associated with specific, specialised habitats, such as cliff faces or saline seepages

The recommended minimum patch sizes are (from NatureServe Draft Community/System EO Delineation Guidance August 2006):

- **Matrix communities** - 2 hectares
- **Large patch communities** - 0.4 hectares
- **Small patch communities** - 0.05 hectares
- **Linear communities** - 30 meters in length

Patches below the minimum size become difficult to judge in term of ecological type characteristics. In addition to the minimum patch size, a minimum aggregate size may be considered. This means that the minimum size requirement can be met either by a single patch or by an aggregation of spatially close patches, within a reasonable separation distance.

Recommended minimum aggregate sizes are:

- **Matrix communities** - 10 hectares
- **Large patch communities** - 5 hectares
- **Small patch communities** - 0.5 hectares
- **Linear communities** - 100 meters in length