

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

SITE NAME PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK	COUNTY ERIE	SITE # 1
APPROX. SIZE 3,200 ACRES	OWNERSHIP PUBLIC (DCNR)	LAT. 42°10' LONG. 80°04'

DESCRIPTION

Presque Isle State Park is a narrow spit of land jutting into Lake Erie and composed mainly of broad-leaved deciduous woodland and freshwater marshes. The peninsula has been formed by eons of long-shore drift. Mature forest of oak, maple and cherry dominates the old sand dune ridges. The newer ridges at the east end of the park are dominated by cottonwood and willow. Between the ridges there are extensive freshwater marshes dominated by Button-bush and Spatterdock. Abundant stands of bayberry are in the open areas. More than 500 species of flowering plants and ferns can be found in the state park (814-833-7424).

Directions: I-79 in Erie take Rt. 5 W (W 12th St.) to Peninsula Drive.

BIRDS - SUMMARY

As a migrant trap, Presque Isle is unparalleled in Pennsylvania. The Lake Erie shore acts as a leading line for migrants in both spring and fall, and the peninsula shelters waterfowl and other birds from winter storms. Approximately 325 species of birds have been recorded, making this one of the state's most diverse IBAs. A number of endangered and threatened species have nested historically (and relatively recently), including Common Tern, Sedge Wren, and Prothonotary Warbler.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS - BY CRITERIA

- 1a 1b Waterfowl: (FM, W, SM) up to 100,000; Shorebirds (SM, FM) up to 1,500 of 39 spp.; Wading birds
1c 1e (B) up to 100 per season; Gulls (W, SM, FM) up to 500,000; exceptional diversity (325 spp. total).
- 2 Black Tern (poss.B), Least Bittern (B), American Bittern (FM, SM - 60±, poss. B), Osprey (SM, FM).
- 3 Marsh Wren (B), Prothonotary Warbler (SM), Pied-billed Grebe (SM up to 600, FM, poss. B), American Coot (W, SM, FM).
- 4a 4b Lakeshore habitat; Sand dune ridges for Snow Bunting (W), Horned Lark.
- 5 Research by International Shorebird Survey for Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences; Long-term banding station in spring and fall with approx. 2,000 birds banded per year.

CONSERVATION / ADDITIONAL NOTES

Presque Isle is one of the most heavily used parks in the nation, with up to four million visitors a year, more than Yosemite. It is open for a variety of recreational uses, including boating, swimming, hunting, and hiking, as well as birding. Actual and potential disturbance to nesting and migratory birds from recreational impacts are the most serious threats to the site. Gull Point, 65 acres at the tip of the peninsula - one of the most important migratory staging sites and potential nesting site for beach nesters such a Common Tern and Piping Plover - has been closed to the public since 1994 from early spring through late fall, but there is pressure to open the area to boating and to expand hiking trails throughout the park. Beaver, deer, and predator populations require active management. Erosion and invasive plant species also threaten habitat quality. Presque Isle is a nationally recognized site in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

LOCAL CONTACTS

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SUBMITTED BY:

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