

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

SITE NAME MORAINES STATE PARK & JENNINGS EEC

COUNTY BUTLER

SITE # 12

APPROX. SIZE 16,400 ACRES

OWNERSHIP PUBLIC (DCNR)

LAT. 40°57' **LONG.** 80°05'

DESCRIPTION

The centerpiece of the 16,000-acre Moraine State Park is the 3,225-acre Lake Arthur, a manmade lake formed by the damming of Muddy Creek. The lake is surrounded by wetlands, deciduous forest, shrublands, and fields. The park and lake are heavily used for recreation, including boating, camping, hiking, hunting, and wildlife observation. Moraine State Park was created by the reclamation of coal mines and oil and gas wells. The park was formally dedicated in 1970. Jennings Environmental Education Center (300 acres) borders the park to the northeast and is administered separately. It has riparian and deciduous woods as well as an unusual relic prairie.

Directions: To reach Moraine SP: I-79 to U.S. Rte. 422, east on Rte 422 to park entrance on left. To reach Jennings EEC: Continue on Rte 422 to State Rte. 528, go north to entrance on right.

BIRDS - SUMMARY

Lake Arthur is a key migratory stopover for waterfowl in interior northwestern Pennsylvania. Its size ensures that the lake freezes later and thaws earlier than many surrounding lakes. Thirty-one species of waterfowl have been recorded, and rarities are frequently noted here. Following a reintroduction effort, two pairs of Osprey are nesting around the lake. Woodlands support approx. 19 breeding species of warblers and vireos. A Barn Owl reintroduction program is ongoing.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS - BY CRITERIA

- 1a 1e Waterfowl: (FM - 5,000+, SM - 2,000+), Over 31 species : Ruddy Duck (FM - 2,500), Am. Coot (FM - 2,500), Ring-necked Duck (FM - 500), Lesser Scaup (SM - 1,000), Redhead (300).
- 2 Osprey (B - 2+ pairs), Sedge Wren (B - occasional)
- 3 Pied-billed Grebe (B), Virginia Rail (B), American Coot (B), Northern Saw-whet Owl (W), Long-eared Owl (W), Common Snipe (SM, FM, W - 20±).
- 5 Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology - Special Areas Project with Bartramian Audubon Society.

CONSERVATION / ADDITIONAL NOTES

The park is subject to heavy recreational use, especially in the summer. The greatest threat is recreational overuse and resulting disturbance to breeding and migratory birds. Powered watercraft are permitted on Lake Arthur, but restricted to 10 horsepower limit. Development pressure surrounding the park is intense, and could increase recreational impacts. Future plans to expand recreational facilities could potentially conflict with conservation goals. There are some concerns with pollution from local sources. Many of the tributary streams flowing into Muddy Creek were badly polluted in the past with acid mine drainage. Some wetlands have been lost as the lake level has been raised, and former grasslands have been allowed to succeed into second-growth. The eastern portion of the park is protected as the Preston Conservation Area. The Moraine Preservation Fund supports conservation efforts in the park.

LOCAL CONTACTS

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SUBMITTED BY:

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