

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

SITE NAME	TIONESTA SCENIC AND RESEARCH NATURAL AREA	COUNTY	MCKEAN, WARREN	SITE #	16		
APPROX. SIZE	4,131 ACRES	OWNERSHIP	PUBLIC (USFS-ANF)	LAT.	41°36'	LONG.	79°56'

DESCRIPTION

A section of the Allegheny National Forest, this site contains the largest tract of ancient (old-growth) forest in Pennsylvania and the largest between the Adirondacks and Great Smoky Mountains. Dominant species are Eastern Hemlock and American Beech, some more than 400 years old; also various birch, oak, maple, ash, and Black Cherry. Standing dead trees comprise 4% or more of the forest. A tornado blowdown in 1985 cleared approx. 1,000 acres. There is some oil and gas development. The Scenic Area is open to the public and the Research Area is used for forest ecology research. Drainages include Cherry Run and Fork Run, both branches of Tionesta Creek. Fishers and Northern Water Shrew occur here, and possibly several species of tree bats.

BIRDS - SUMMARY

Breeding bird surveys over the last 5+ years show this to be one of the most important "source" areas in the state for breeding songbirds. Old-growth dependent species are abundant. This area supports the state's largest breeding population of Swainson's Thrush. It is one of the few confirmed breeding locations in Pennsylvania for Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Blackburnian Warbler breeding density is approx. 40 times greater than in second-growth forests. Exceptionally high overall diversity, with over 30 species of regularly breeding forest birds and more than 200 total recorded species throughout the national forest.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS - BY CRITERIA

- 1e Exceptional diversity of breeding forest birds and high diversity in migration seasons.
- 2 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (B - 1+ pair), Olive-sided Flycatcher (occ. summer)
- 3 Swainson's Thrush (B - 50+ pair), Northern Goshawk (B - 2-4 pair)
- 4a 4b Large old-growth beech-hemlock forest; exceptionally high densities of Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue Warblers.
- 5 Long-term research and monitoring by U.S. Forest Service (Allegheny N.F), Studies by S. Pimm, J.C. Haney, C.P. Schaadt, D. DeCalesta, B. Nelson and others.

CONSERVATION / ADDITIONAL NOTES

The Scenic and Natural areas are protected by the Allegheny National Forest, but disease and lack of forest regeneration places the long-term health of this forest at considerable risk. Overbrowsing by White-tailed Deer is primarily responsible for forest regeneration problems, and native pests such as Elm Spanworm can noticeably thin the forest canopy. The largest area of old-growth forest in Pennsylvania, Tionesta provides a hint of the vast stretches of forest that early settlers found across the northern section of Penn's Woods. The tornado blowdown area provides an extensive tangle of regenerating forest unique in that the timber was not salvaged. The tangle of fallen logs is nearly impenetrable and has created a series of small wetlands along Cherry Run.

LOCAL CONTACTS

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