

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

SITE NAME COOK FOREST STATE PARK	COUNTY CLARION, FOREST, JEFFERSON	SITE # 19
APPROX. SIZE 6,668 ACRES	OWNERSHIP PUBLIC (DCNR)	LAT. 41°21' LONG. 79°09'

DESCRIPTION

Directly south of the Allegheny National Forest, this state park situated on the Clarion River contains at least four sizable stands of virgin old-growth forest, although second-growth mixed and riparian forests are now dominant. The park is situated on the Allegheny Plateau where the Clarion River has cut into the gently dipping strata of the Pittsburgh Low Plateau section. Steep, forested tributary valleys descend to the river from the top of the plateau. One of the largest old-growth hemlock-beech-white pine groves, Forest Cathedral, is a Registered National Natural Landmark. Cook Forest is one of the most heavily visited of all the state parks, second only to Presque Isle.

Directions: From I-80 near Brookville, drive north on SR 36 approx. 15 miles.

BIRDS - SUMMARY

An important site for large stands of old-growth hemlock-beech-white pine, resulting in exceptional densities and diverse representation of breeding bird species that favor interior-forest old growth, including Northern Goshawk (2+ pairs) and various warblers. Good conifer habitat with breeding Red-Breasted Nuthatch (2+ pairs) and Golden-crowned Kinglet (2+ pairs). The conifers are highly productive in winter for Evening Grosbeaks, White-winged and Red Crossbills (highest recorded numbers in state) and other winter finches in invasion years.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS - BY CRITERIA

- 3 Northern Goshawk (B - 2+ pair), Red Crossbill (SC, W - 100+).
 - 4a 4b Large old-growth forest: Blackburnian Warbler (100+ pair), Black-throated Green Warbler (75+ pair), Magnolia Warbler (50+ pair), etc. Large cone production for winter finches.
 - 5 Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology - Special Areas Project site, Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
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CONSERVATION / ADDITIONAL NOTES

Runaway development on the periphery of the park is a concern. A proposed tourist lodge generated considerable local controversy but was rejected by the state. Booming commercial canoeing recreation poses a potential threat to the riparian habitat. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has actively pursued conservation of the Clarion River corridor. Bicycles, ATVs, and snowmobiles are regulated to some trails, or banned. Public education programs are ongoing. Natural pests (e.g. Elm Spanworm) are a potential threat to forest health.

LOCAL CONTACTS

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SUBMITTED BY:

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