

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

SITE NAME MARSH CREEK WETLANDS - "THE MUCK"

COUNTY TIOGA

SITE # 27

APPROX. SIZE 1,000 ACRES

OWNERSHIP PUBLIC(PGC) & PRIVATE

LAT. 41°45' **LONG.** 77°20'

DESCRIPTION

Marsh Creek is a leading tributary of the Pine Creek drainage system of the Susquehanna River's West Branch. A remarkably low gradient of less than 7 feet per mile accounts for the sluggish flow of Marsh Creek. The wetlands of the creek valley are a product of thousands of years of environmental change. Most of these wetlands started as open lakes or ponds. According to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, there are five basic classes of wetland present in the valley: forested, scrub/shrub, emergent marsh, aquatic bed, and unconsolidated bottom. The site includes SGL 313.

Directions: From Wellsboro, follow Rt. 6 N to junction with Rt. 287.

BIRDS - SUMMARY

Although most of the original pristine wetlands have been lost, the marshes present today continue to provide critical habitat for thousands of migrating and nesting birds each year. Species such as the Bald Eagle and Osprey, which had been reduced in number or extirpated in Pennsylvania, have been successfully reestablished here.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS - BY CRITERIA

- 2 Great Blue Heron colony (B - 30+ pair), Osprey (B - 1 pair), Bald Eagle (B - 1 pair), American Bittern (B - 1 pair), Least Bittern (B - 1 pair).
- 3 Pied-billed Grebe (B - 1 pair), Marsh Wren (B - 12 pair), Common Snipe (B - 12 pair).
- 4a Unusual wetland habitat. Alder Flycatcher (B - 6+ pair), Green-winged Teal (B - 12+ pair), Northern Harrier (W), Virginia Rail (B - 3 pair), Sora (B - 3 pair), American Coot (B).
- 5 Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology - Special Areas Project.

CONSERVATION / ADDITIONAL NOTES

This area is threatened by draining, filling, improper management, subdivision, and encroaching development. The Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy is spearheading an effort to preserve the Marsh Creek watershed. It is hoped that the participation of local landowners will lead to conservation and fee-title transfers. The preservation effort of the Marsh Creek watershed involves the education of landowners, public officials and citizens in Tioga County about the ecological and financial benefits of the conservation of the Marsh Creek watershed area. The area is listed as a high priority for conservation by the US Fish & Wildlife Service "National Wetlands Priority Plan."

LOCAL CONTACTS

Stephanie Radulski, (717) 323-6222

PA Game Commission NC Region, (717) 398-4744

SUBMITTED BY:

Stephanie Radulski