

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

SITE NAME SHEETS ISLAND ARCHIPELAGO

COUNTY DAUPHIN

SITE # 46

APPROX. SIZE 2,700+ ACRES **OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC (DCNR)

LAT. 40°17' **LONG.** 76°54'

DESCRIPTION

Sheets Island Archipelago is a series of low islands in the Susquehanna River just outside the city of Harrisburg. It harbors large concentrations of migrating birds and is the site of the state's largest egret colonies. The dominant vegetation on the islands is Poison Ivy, River Birch, Silver Maple, Sycamore, and Tulip Poplar (on some islands). Aster-like Boltonia, Flat-leaved Pondweed, Umbrella Magnolia, Blue-eyed Grass, and Umbrella Flatsedge are all rare or threatened species that are found on the islands. In addition to rare plant species, the Archipelago is home to the River Otter, Frosted Elfin, Midget Snaketail Dragonfly, and Spring Blue Damer.

Directions: On the Susquehanna River, parallel to State Highway Routes 11 & 15, South of I-81.

BIRDS - SUMMARY

Wade Island has the state's largest colony of Black-crowned Night-Herons and is the only known breeding site for Great Egret. The shallow, productive Susquehanna River is a major migration corridor for waterbirds (notably gulls and ducks), osprey and swallows. Ruddy Duck and Green-winged Teal are found. The area harbors large concentrations of migrating birds and is the breeding grounds for several threatened avian species.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS - BY CRITERIA

- 1a 1b Common Loon (B, SM,W - 135±), Bufflehead (SM, W - 500±), Bonaparte's Gull (SM - 500±),
1c 1e Ring-billed Gull (FM, SM, W -2500±) Wading birds:Great Egret (B -80±pr), Green-backed Heron (B)
- 2 Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (B - 4±pair), Great Egret (B - 140±pair), Black Tern (SM - 4±).
- 3 Black-crowned Night-Heron (B - 180±pair)
- 4a River island habitat
- 5 PSO - Special Areas Project.

CONSERVATION / ADDITIONAL NOTES

The proposed Dock Street Dam would inundate some of these islands and sufficiently alter the hydrology of Wade Island to place the heron colony in jeopardy. Possible development of canoe trail could impact sensitive areas.

Most islands are under state ownership and Wade Island is posted during breeding season to minimize disturbance of colonies and destruction of foraging habitat.

LOCAL CONTACTS

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SUBMITTED BY:

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