

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

SITE NAME CONNEAUT MARSH - GENEVA MARSH

COUNTY CRAWFORD

SITE # 7

APPROX. SIZE 5,000 ACRES

OWNERSHIP PUBLIC (PGC)

LAT. 41°33' **LONG.** 80°11'

DESCRIPTION

The Conneaut Lake Outlet runs southeast from Conneaut Lake about 13 miles before emptying into French Creek. It forms Conneaut Marsh (also known as Geneva Marsh) and includes all of SGL 213. Approximately 1/3 of the site consists of Pennsylvania's largest remaining emergent marsh (cattails, etc.), 1/4 is forested wetland, 1/5 is scrub-shrub swamp, and the remainder includes areas of deciduous, coniferous, and mixed forests of various ages, as well as herbaceous, mixed, and shrub-brush rangelands. Conneaut Lake Outlet was originally formed by glacial outwash. The marsh holds evidence of former high levels of Lake Erie, such as bedded sand, silt, clay, and gravel. A number of rare plant and animal species occur at the site, including Spatterdock Darner (a dragonfly).

Directions: Take I-79 S near Meadville to Exit 35 at Geneva.

BIRDS - SUMMARY

The size and diversity of wetland types here make this one of the most important sites in the state for wetland species. Numerous threatened and endangered species, and probably some of the state's largest breeding populations of wetland birds occur. Swampy forest edges and streambanks support Prothonotary Warbler. Open pools host large numbers of migrant waterfowl, and marsh edges see concentrations of migratory shorebirds in the spring.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS - BY CRITERIA

- 1a 1b Waterfowl: (SM, FM - 10,000±), incl. Ring-necked Duck (2,000+), Wood Duck (1200), American Black Duck (2,000+), Am. Wigeon (2,000+), Hooded Merganser (2700+); shorebirds (SM - 300+).
- 2 Bald Eagle (B - 2±pr; W - 8+), Black Tern (SM - 6±), Common Tern (SM - 1±), American Bittern (B - 3±pr), Least Bittern (B - 4±), Great Egret (FM).
- 3 Common Snipe (B - 1±pr, SM, FM - 20±), Prothonotary Warbler (B - 5+pr, SM), Pied-billed Grebe (B, 10±pr), American Coot (B - 1+pr), Marsh Wren (B-400-500 pr), Common Nighthawk (B - 1+pr).
- 4b Exceptional in size and diversity of wetland types: scrub-shrub, emergent, and forested.

CONSERVATION / ADDITIONAL NOTES

All of Geneva Marsh is in State Game Lands 213. Although most of the area is relatively secure from serious threats, recreational use does have the potential to disturb nesting eagles and marsh birds. Eagle nest areas in the marsh are classified as propagation areas with no public access from March through July. Residential and commercial development on the Conneaut Lake has the potential to impact water quality. The hydrology of this wetland complex is now primarily controlled by two low-level dams. Channels provide limited access to the area, but many are choked with dense vegetation. Overall, this site is difficult to access, which probably helps to protect it, but as a result, it is not well studied.

LOCAL CONTACTS

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SUBMITTED BY:

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