

## PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

---

<b>SITE NAME</b> FRANKSTOWN BRANCH -- JUNIATA RIVER	<b>COUNTY</b> BLAIR / HUNTINGDON	<b>SITE #</b> 75
<b>APPROX. SIZE</b> 5,000 ACRES	<b>OWNERSHIP</b> PRIVATE/STATE (SGL#118)	<b>LAT.</b> 40°31.5' <b>LONG.</b> 78°10'

---

### DESCRIPTION

The site is an outstanding example of a Ridge and Valley riparian forest. The combination of steep, wooded slopes, floodplain forests, and high soil moisture produces a diverse, healthy lowland riparian ecosystem. The site includes an 11-mile stretch of the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River between Water Street and Williamsburg. A Rails-to-Trails, known as the "Lower Trail" follows the riverbank the entire way. To the west the site boundary is a low ridge. To the east, the site boundary is the high ridgeline of Tussey Mountain, up to 1500 feet above the river. Along the northern boundary of the site the river valley is quite narrow, with little human disturbance other than the trail. To the south, the river meanders through mostly forested riparian habitat that contains some agriculture and sparse human settlements. The site contains historic remains of early transportation and industry.

**DIRECTIONS:** *To the Lower Trail Head, take Rt. #22 north from Huntingdon to Alexandria Road (SR 4014) to parking lot 0.2 mile beyond intersection. Or, continue west on Rt. #22 for 6.5 miles, turn left on SR 2015 towards Williamsburg, and turn left on First Street.*

---

### BIRDS – SUMMARY

This site hosts an impressive concentration of breeding riparian species. Breeding bird counts of up to 200 per hour have been tallied during walking tours along the Lower Trail. Species present at exceptional breeding concentrations include E. Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, Yellow Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, American Redstart, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Baltimore Oriole. Other breeding birds include Wood Duck, Least Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Winter Wren, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, and Orchard Oriole. In addition to breeding birds, the number of Neotropical migrants during the early portion of spring migration is typically much higher at this site than in surrounding areas, due to early leaf-out along the river. This site hosts one of Pennsylvania's most important Cerulean Warbler breeding areas, with estimates of 50-60 breeding pairs along this 11-mile corridor.

### REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS – BY CRITERIA

- 1e Exceptional concentration of riparian species breeding, and high diversity and abundance of birds in migration. Surveys in 1998 and 2000 found 36 and 43 territorial male Cerulean Warblers, respectively.
  - 4b Exceptionally diverse Ridge and Valley forest ecosystem, including mature riparian, steep slope, and ridgetop.
- 

### CONSERVATION / ADDITIONAL NOTES

This site was identified as an Important Bird Area by the Ornithological Technical Committee in October 2001. Land use includes agriculture, residential development, recreation and wildlife conservation. Habitat destruction from residential development is a threat to some portions of this site. The Juniata Valley Audubon Society has officially "adopted" this site for the purpose of stewardship and bird monitoring (see contact information below).

---

### LOCAL CONTACTS:

Juniata Valley Audubon Society, Dave Kyler (814) 643-6030 ([Davidkyler@pennswoods.net](mailto:Davidkyler@pennswoods.net))

### SUBMITTED BY:

Nick Bolgiano (814) 234-2746 ([nbolgiano@minitab.com](mailto:nbolgiano@minitab.com))

