

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

SITE NAME GREATER TUSSEY MOUNTAIN	COUNTY CENTRE, HUNTINGDON, BLAIR, AND BEDFORD	SITE # 81
APPROX. SIZE 124,117.89 ACRES	OWNERSHIP PUBLIC (DCNR AND PGC) AND PRIVATE	LAT. 40° 42' LONG. 77° 42'

DESCRIPTION

GreaterTussey Mountain encompasses all of Tussey Mountain, one of the many ridges of the Valley and Ridge Province of Pennsylvania. It extends northward from the Maryland/Pennsylvania border to Centre County Pennsylvania ending just southeast of Boalsburg PA. The majority of the ridge from the MD/PA border is oriented from SSW to NNE until it reaches the Juniata River in Huntingdon County where the ridge bends towards a more northeasterly direction. A large portion of the ridge habitat is composed of deciduous forest. Other habitat types include mix deciduous and evergreen forests, as well as transitional areas (varying stages of succession), open meadows, barrens, wetlands, and numerous small streams, several creeks, and a short segment of the Juniata River. A small portion of the landscape (less than 1%) includes suburban and urban environs.

DIRECTIONS TO THE HAWKWATCH: From State College Take Route 26 south and continue along Route 26 to the top of Tussey Mountain. Park in the large parking area on the right side of the road near Jo Hays Vista. From Huntingdon take route 26 north continue along route 26 to the top of Tussey Mountain and park in the large parking area on the left near Jo Hays Vista. Then walk about 2/3 mile on the Mid-State Trail along the ridgetop until you reach the powerline.

BIRDS – SUMMARY

Data collected since the mid 1990s, at the Tussey Mountain Hawkwatch, demonstrates the importance of Tussey Mountain as a spring migration site for diurnal raptors. Annual spring counts have yielded up to 6500 raptors representing 16 different species (including vultures). Most notable of these is the high number of Golden Eagles that pass through the site (approximately 150 annually). The habitats of Greater Tussey Mountain support a rich and diverse assemblage of breeding birds including numerous forest interior species like Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, Black-throated Green Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, American Redstart, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Hooded Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS – BY CRITERIA

- 1e Spring migration site for 16 species of diurnal raptors including a high concentration of Golden Eagles.

 - 4b Exceptional representative of interior forest habitat within the Valley and Ridge Physiographic Province

 - 5 Ongoing avian monitoring including season long spring raptor migration count (annually since 2001) and three breeding bird survey (BBS) routes; two of which are almost entirely along the ridge (established in 1988 and 1993) while the third one (since 1987) crosses the ridge.
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CONSERVATION / ADDITIONAL NOTES

Fifty-five percent of Greater Tussey Mountain is publicly owned including Rothrock and Buchannan State Forests, PGC Gamelands 73, 97, and 118, Sweetroot and Little Juniata Natural areas, and Martin Hill Wild Area. Since much of Tussey Mountain is in public ownership substantial habitat fragmentation in the future is unlikely. The hawkwatch is located in Rothrock State Forest, about 7 miles southwest of State College, Pennsylvania where future plans include the construction of an observation platform. Additionally the Mid-State Trail (MST) extends from the Juniata River and continues northeast until it ends in the Seven Mountains region. A large portion of the MST traverses the ridgeline of Tussey Mountain. Consequently, anyone who hikes along it is rewarded with great views of the surrounding landscape as well as numerous opportunities for wildlife observation.

LOCAL CONTACTS

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SUBMITTED BY

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