



Eagle-Watching in Pennsylvania

Promised Land State Park, Pike County



John S. Register

A Promised Land State Park Snapshot

Facilities: Restrooms, campgrounds, cabins, boat rental.

Driving Directions: From Interstate 84, take Exit 26 and follow Route 390 south for 4.6 miles to the park office.

Viewing Directions: During spring, an active nest is watchable from the wildlife observation station on Lower Lake, Bear Wallow Road.

Property Hours: Sunrise to sunset.

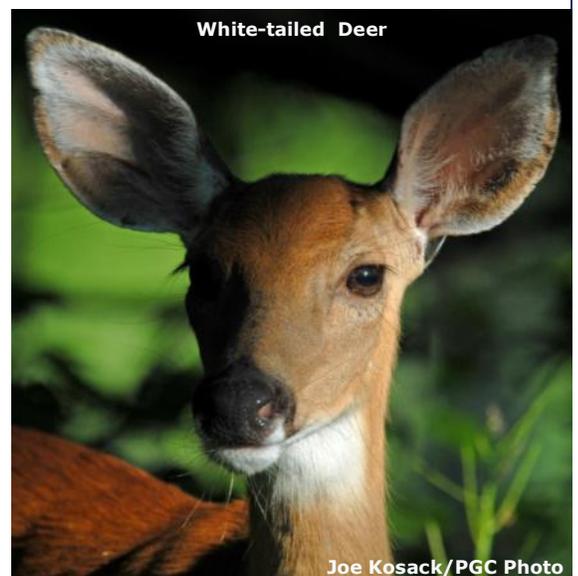
Best Eagle Viewing Season: Early spring through early summer.

Activities at the site: Hiking, environmental education programming; birding, camping, kayaking, hunting, fishing.

Other Wildlife: Many forest mammals, birds of prey, northern songbirds, waterfowl, spring wildflowers and a pleasing variety of plants and animals associated with boreal conifer swamp habitat.

Where to go, what to look for

An active bald eagle nest sits in a large tree at the edge of Lower Lake. This nest is visible from the wildlife observation station, which is accessible from Bear Wallow Road, the same road leading to Bear Wallow Boat Launch. The nest is active by early spring, when the lake's surface is no longer frozen. The eagle nest is directly across the lake from the established wildlife observation station.



White-tailed Deer

Joe Kosack/PGC Photo



Hal Korber/PGC Photo

Before leaf-out in May, the nest can be seen easily; binoculars or a spotting scope offer a better view. After leaf-out, the nest is difficult to see. In locating the nest, use the turtle-basking platform in the lake as a guide, then look between the second and third buoys and about halfway up the trees. The white heads of the eagles should be noticeable. Once the young eagles fledge, they remain near the nest, perched and waiting to be feed, or learning to fly and land.

During the nesting season, volunteers monitor the nest daily from the observation station. Information on the nesting eagles is posted on park bulletin boards and at the station. The park also conducts interpretive programs on bald eagles. Go to [DCNR's Calendar of Events](#) to learn more about programs available at Promised Land State park.

Few of Pennsylvania's other eagle nests are at terrain elevations higher than this nest, so eggs in the Promised Land State Park nest often do not hatch until late April. The nest is watchable until late May when tree leaves conceal it.

However, it is common to see the adult birds in the general vicinity through summer. Once the young eagles fledge, they, too, remain near the nest, perching and waiting to be fed, and later learning to forage on their own. They also practice flying with many test flights and landings occurring in the branches of trees and on the shoreline of the immediate nesting area.

The eagles regularly fly back and forth from lower lake to the upper lake, Promised Land



John S. Register

Red-breasted Nuthatch



Jake Dingel/PGC Photo

Lake. The birds are often seen at the larger, Promised Land Lake, especially near Conservation Island. Eagles utilize prominent tree limbs and old stumps for perching around this lake. A kayak or canoe provides an excellent chance of encountering an eagle at Promised Land Lake.

Hermit Thrush



Jake Dingel/PGC Photo

These two man-made lakes are surrounded by forested wetland, marsh and uplands of northern hardwood forestland. In addition, the Bruce Lake Natural Area contains extensive balsam swamps and three natural lakes. Together, the park and natural area are designated as an [Important Bird Area](#) for the diversity of habitat found throughout the area and as an example of a northern forest and wetland in the Pocono region. About 200 bird species have been documented at the site and 129 birds species are listed as breeding and nesting here.

This park and the nearby Bruce Lake Natural Area are easy places to experience some of the northern or boreal forest birds. So, the area is a special place for suburbanites to get a taste of Canada in Pennsylvania. Some of the boreal songbirds found in the forests here include the red-breasted nuthatch, brown creeper, white-throated sparrow, northern waterthrush, blue-headed vireo, purple finch, dark-eyed junco, and a variety of warblers, such as the black-throated green, blackburnian, magnolia, Canada, yellow-rumped, Nashville, black-throated blue and chestnut-sided. A pair of

Wood Ducks



merlins have nested in the park.

This kind of forest is a magnet for woodpeckers of all sizes. Pileated woodpeckers and yellow-bellied sapsuckers are found throughout the big woods. The eastern wood-pewee and least flycatcher are found in the woods and the alder flycatcher is found in many shrubby wet areas. The songs of the hermit thrush and veery are often heard, as well as the wood thrush, generally found at lower elevations. Gray catbirds and eastern towhees are abundant and curious inhabitants of the brush. Colorful songbirds like American redstart, scarlet tanager and Baltimore oriole are easily found here. Tree and barn swallows take advantage of all of the lakefront and wet areas to forage on flying insects. The uncommonly seen olive-sided flycatcher also migrates through the park and is sometimes heard during summer. It formerly nested in the region, but has not been documented nesting in the state since the 1930s. This also is the kind of place to look for migrating rusty blackbirds that often forage in shallow waters and bogs and along lake edges.

Ospreys can be seen at Promised Land fishing where the eagles will allow them. Canada geese, wood ducks and mallards nest at the park and natural area and many diving and puddle ducks pass through during spring and fall migrations. The broad-winged hawk, barred owl and saw-whet owl inhabit the mixed and conifer woods around the swamps. The blueberry patches are great places to find birds gobbling up berries after nesting season and in migration. Wild fruits are very important for migrating songbirds passing through the state in fall months.

For additional information, contact:

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of State Parks, Promised Land State Park, 100 Lower Lake Road, Greentown, PA 18426. Telephone: 570-676-3428.

By Kathy Korber and Doug Gross
Pennsylvania Game Commission
Connecting you with wildlife!

8/1/11