

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT MAMMAL AREA #20 Central Mountains

COUNTY(IES) Centre, Juniata, Mifflin, Snyder, Union

APPROX. SIZE 343,558 acres

OWNERSHIP Public (State, Local), Private

REASON FOR SELECTION

- Includes a habitat type that supports significant aggregations of mammals during one or more seasons
- Sustains a confirmed viable local population of a Species of Greatest Conservation Need and the species or subspecies regularly occurs at the site during one or more seasons

DESCRIPTION

This site includes a large area in central PA, including a series of ridges between Nittany Mt. to the north and part of Shade Mt. to the south. Habitats vary from mature forests to old fields, and include seeps and wetlands of various types. Sections contain large expanses of unfragmented forest habitat, as well as virgin old growth (white pine, eastern hemlock, pitch pine). Located within the area are seven caves of great significance to mammals.

MAMMAL NOTES

The caves included in this IMA are three in Mifflin County (Aitkens, Seawra, and Milroy) and four in Centre County (Alexander, Woodward, and Sharer). Inhabiting some or all of these caves are Allegheny woodrats and three species of hibernating colonial bats (eastern small-footed myotis, northern myotis, Indiana myotis).

CONSERVATION NOTES

The area encompassed by this IMA is under continual assault from development in the valleys, as well as from road construction through higher elevations (e.g. I-99 corridor). Portions of the area are State Forest Lands (Bald Eagle, Tuscarora, Rothrock). Of the cave sites, some are protected (e.g. Aitken Cave, Sharer Cave), while others are commercially operated. Two IBAs, Bald Eagle Ridge (IBA #32) and Tall Timbers, Snyder-Middleswarth Natural Areas (IBA #38)

are located within this IMA, specifically for their importance to migrating raptors and to forest interior species. White Nose Syndrome threatens resident bat populations.