

PENNSYLVANIA IMPORTANT MAMMAL AREA #31 Hopewell Big Woods
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COUNTY(IES) Berks, Chester

APPROX. SIZE 30,000 acres

OWNERSHIP Public (Federal, State, Local), Private

REASON FOR SELECTION

- Contains a rare, threatened, or unique habitat type important to mammals

DESCRIPTION

Hopewell Big Woods is located southeast of Reading and represents the largest contiguous block of deciduous forest in southeastern Pennsylvania. It includes SGL 43. In addition to deciduous forest, the habitat includes grasslands, swamps, streams, and marshes. Although not “old growth,” some tree stands are approximately 100 years old.

MAMMAL NOTES

The fact that the area supports black bear, is a likely expansion area for northern river otters, and sustains a diverse population of other mammals.

CONSERVATION NOTES

Birds of interest include Louisiana waterthrush, cerulean warbler, and bald eagle. Also home to an abundant, diverse community of forest interior species, it has been designated an IBA (Hay Creek/French Creek Piedmont Forest Block, #74). The area is one of two sites chosen by the Natural Lands Trust to implement the “Smart Conservation” model. The PA Audubon Society also has a Landscape Conservation Plan for the area. Major threats are commercial and residential encroachment, heavy recreational use, and exotic invasive plants.