

Photo by: P. Mark LeFebvre



# BIRDING

Butler County is accessible by I-79, I-80 and the PA Turnpike. You might spot Osprey, Bald Eagles or a Cerulean Warbler.

## PORTERSVILLE

### MORaine STATE PARK (1)

225 Pleasant Valley Rd.  
Portersville, PA 16051  
724-368-8811  
[www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/MoraineStatePark](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/MoraineStatePark)

#### Noted for: Eagle, Osprey & Waterfowl

Moraine State Park is a great place to spot our feathered friends. Loons, warblers, Bald Eagles, herons and Osprey are among the many species that can be found throughout the park's nearly 16,000 acres. The waterfowl observation deck is a nice sheltered area to watch bird life. Many Neotropical migrants can also be found throughout the park.

Lake Arthur provides over 42 miles of scenic shoreline. Its tributaries include Muddy Run, Big Run, Swamp Run, Bear Run and over 75 intermittent streams. Ranging from an average depth of 11 feet to about 36 feet deep near the dam, the shallow waters of Lake Arthur are home to a variety of warm-water fish. Frogs, newts, turtles and water snakes prowl the edges of the lake. The tall Great Blue Heron, the Short Green Heron, and the Belted Kingfisher prey on minnows and fish fry. In the early spring, Common Loons stop at the lake on their migration north. Lake Arthur is a key migratory stop over for water birds, including Tundra Swans in March-April and October-November.

Osprey may be seen flying over Lake Arthur. Once extirpated from western Pennsylvania, these "fish hawks" have been reintroduced to Moraine through a hacking program begun in 1993. The first Osprey pair to nest along Lake Arthur as a result of the reintroduction effort raised three young in 1996. Bald Eagles have also been spotted nesting in the park. A waterfowl observation deck is along old Route 422, accessible from Route 528.

Three Moraine State Park sites are certified Bartramian Audubon Society sanctuaries: Park Office Area, Slippery Rock Creek Property, and Native Plant and Butterfly Trail. Birders should check these sites for avian rarities any season of the year.

A variety of boats are available for rent by the hour or day at the Crescent Bay Marina on the lake's south shore. They have man-powered boats such as canoes and kayaks as well as motor and pontoon boats. Or take a ride on Preston's Pearl, a 50-passenger double-decker pontoon boat. Learn about the area's natural history and osprey reintroduction, while appreciating the unique scenery and wildlife on a trip around Lake Arthur. Boat tours operate on a regular schedule throughout the summer.

Moraine Preservation Fund (MPF) is a non-profit, volunteer organization that supports Moraine State Park. MPF has helped to develop important wildlife restoration projects like Project BATit, the Osprey and Barn Owl Reintroduction Programs, along with the creation of a Native Plant & Butterfly Trail near the Giftshop.



Photo by: K. Shuler

AN OSPREY FISHING AT MORaine STATE PARK



PRESTON'S PEARL FEATURES REGULAR TRIPS AROUND LAKE ARTHUR THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER.

## SLIPPERY ROCK

### JENNINGS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER (2)

2951 Prospect Rd.

Slippery Rock, PA 16057

724-794-6011

[www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/)

[JenningsEnvironmentalEducationCenter](http://JenningsEnvironmentalEducationCenter)

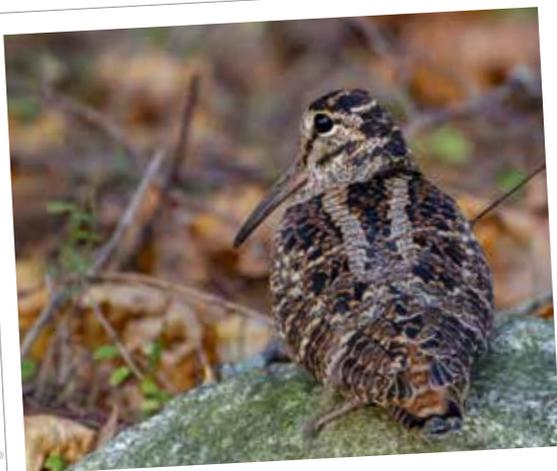
#### **Noted for:** *Woodcock Spring Mating Ritual*

Jennings Environmental Education Center is located 12 miles north of Butler, PA. It is one of several state parks specifically dedicated to provide environmental education and interpretation to the community. A variety of programs are available for children, teachers, and the general public that increase knowledge and awareness of the beauty and importance of our natural resources. By taking some time to explore Jennings through its trail network or community programs, visitors can enjoy the outdoors while learning the skills needed to be good stewards of Pennsylvania's outstanding natural resources.

Jennings provides a unique combination of prairie and forest, which offers a wide array of resource and education opportunities. One of the park's main features, the 20-acre prairie ecosystem, is home to distinctive prairie plants and the endangered massasauga rattlesnake. The most noteworthy and spectacular prairie flower is the blazing star. Jennings was the first reserve established in Pennsylvania to protect an individual plant species and remains the only protected prairie in the Commonwealth.

An abundance of bird species can be found among the prairie and woodlands at Jennings Environmental Education Center. Goldfinches, Song and Field Sparrows, swallows, bluebirds, flycatchers and Woodcocks are among the many birds that can be spotted throughout the center's 300 acres. Visit Jennings' prairie area on spring evenings at dusk, to witness the Woodcock's amazing courtship ritual! The oak-hickory-cherry forest surrounding the prairie features a high density of breeding Carolina Wren; Blue-Winged Warblers are found on the brushy edges of the prairie.

Jennings Environmental Education Center has been a certified Bartramian Audubon Society Wildlife Sanctuary since 1999 and is noted especially for its breeding population of Cerulean Warbler. Together, Jennings and Moraine cover 17,025 acres that have been designated Important Bird Area #12 by the National Audubon Society and monitored by volunteers of the Bartramian Audubon Society.



WOODCOCK



Photo by: Dan Gomola

HOODED WARBLER

### OLD STONE HOUSE SANCTUARY (3)

2865 William Flynn Hwy.

Slippery Rock, PA 16057

724-738-4964

[www.oldstonehousepa.org](http://www.oldstonehousepa.org)

#### **Noted for:** *Variety of Warblers*

The Old Stone House is owned and managed by Slippery Rock University and widely known for its historic heritage. However, it is listed here because of its 73.65 acres of mature deciduous forest of oaks, hickories and wild black cherry. The forest canopy microhabitat supports a Neotropical warbler of special concern – the Cerulean Warbler. The bird has a breeding stronghold here with adjoining Jennings Environmental Education Center. In fact, the site is an excellent example of a climatic climax forest that possesses the same tree species at the canopy, understory, shrub, and forest floor levels, making it an extraordinary setting for many Neotropical birds, such as Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Baltimore Oriole. The forest is also permanent home for the Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Great Horned Owl, and five species of woodpeckers: Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, Pileated and Northern Flicker. The site also attracts spring and autumn avian migrants.

The Old Stone House Forest acts as an important ecological buffer protecting the rare native plant and animal life in the prairie section of Jennings Environmental Education Center. It is likewise the eastern parcel of a continuous protected 'green corridor' that stretches several miles from the Old Stone House to Lake Arthur in Moraine State Park. The North Country National Scenic Trail passes through the site and is recommended for those birders who want to get good views of avian Neotropical breeders listed above.

The Old Stone House Forest is certified Bartramian Audubon Society Wildlife Sanctuary #44 and the eighth BAS sanctuary in the Slippery Rock University system.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Jennings Environmental Education Center has a gift shop! Stop by the next time you visit and check out their nature-themed offerings. Items of interest include field guides, local artist's photos, honey and more!



BELTED KINGFISHER

## SLIPPERY ROCK CONT. 'D

### WOLF CREEK NARROWS NATURAL AREA (4)

266 Miller Rd.  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057  
[www.waterlandlife.org/land-conservation/explore-our-properties/wolf-creek-narrows-natural-area](http://www.waterlandlife.org/land-conservation/explore-our-properties/wolf-creek-narrows-natural-area)

#### **Noted for: Creekside & Eastern Woodland Species**

Wolf Creek Narrows is owned by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. There is a one-mile loop trail that follows Wolf Creek until the valley narrows. Then the trail ascends the slopes to the uplands where a profusion of white trillium can be found, usually during the first weeks of May. Spring wildflowers are a highlight of the natural area. During the last weeks of April and extending into late May, a succession of native species flower on the floodplain, steep slopes, and upland of the area.

Significant natural habitats on the current Wolf Creek floodplain include skunk cabbage emergent wetlands, remnant oxbow ponds, and vernal pools that resulted from flooding and a change in Wolf Creek's channel. These wetlands add to the rich biodiversity of the site by providing micro-habitats for many native plants and animals that require a source of standing water.

Birds include belted kingfisher, Louisiana waterthrush, wood thrush, and the occasional osprey or bald eagle. An easy out and back trail starts at the small parking lot on the southwest side of the bridge crossing Wolf Creek.

### MILLER WOODS NATURE PRESERVE (5)

266 Miller Rd.  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057  
724-794-2434  
[www.slipperyrock.com/miller-woods-nature-preserve](http://www.slipperyrock.com/miller-woods-nature-preserve)

#### **Noted for: Old Deciduous & Riparian Forests**

Miller Woods is widely known for its beautiful wildflower display of Virginia bluebells and other wildflowers in April and May. A great number of avian Neotropical breeders also occur here, including Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Indigo Bunting. Another Neotropical species – the Yellow-throated Warbler – nests only in old sycamore trees that are common riparian members along Wolf Creek.

The warbler particularly likes building its nest in limbs hanging over the creek while the Wood Duck, American Merganser, Barred Owl, and Great-crested Flycatcher prefer old sycamore cavities.

Other common avian breeders that search for nesting sites near water include the Belted Kingfisher, Northern Waterthrush, and Louisiana Waterthrush. The former waterthrush inhabits standing backwater locales while the latter waterthrush prefers fast-moving waters. Stay alert and scan the sky for the Osprey and Bald Eagle that nest in proximity to Wolf Creek. In fact, check atop the microwave communication tower just one mile west of the creek for an active Osprey nest May 1 to August 15.

Miller Woods is certified Bartramian Audubon Society Wildlife Sanctuary #34 and the seventh BAS sanctuary owned and managed by the university.

### ROBERT MACOSKEY CENTER: SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY (6)

247 Harmony Rd.  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057  
724-738-4050  
[www.sru.edu/offices/macoskey-center](http://www.sru.edu/offices/macoskey-center)

#### **Noted for: Habitat and Wildlife Diversity**

Slippery Rock University, is not only home for thousands of students but also surprisingly a place for special natural habitats like old deciduous forest, wetlands, mixed forests, fields in succession, and myriads of wildlife. For this reason, the university has recognized the immeasurable value in preserving these natural heritage landmarks by establishing six certified Bartramian Audubon Society sanctuaries comprising 151.20 acres on its main campus. That figure represents approximately one-fourth of the school's landscape.

Of these varied properties, the Robert Macoskey Center is especially noteworthy for a former Neotropical avian species – the Upland Sandpiper – that required a variety of agricultural habitats in proximity to each other for completing its breeding cycle and met on this site. These habitat requirements included plowed/cultivated, fallow high grass fields, short-grass-pasture of grazing cows and horses, that assured nesting and brooding coverage in summer. The site is an excellent study of natural processes operating in an 'old field' succession system and constitutes one of a few remaining breeding locales in Butler County for the rare Red-headed Woodpecker. Center trails are well marked and easy to stroll. As many as 50+ avian species can be recorded in an early morning spring sojourn. The three mimic thrushes: Brown Thrasher, Gray Catbird and Northern Mockingbird breed on the site as do such other species as Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, Purple Finch, House Finch, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Towhee, Field, Chipping and Song Sparrows. A pair of Red-tailed Hawk and Great Horned Owl have been permanent residents for decades.

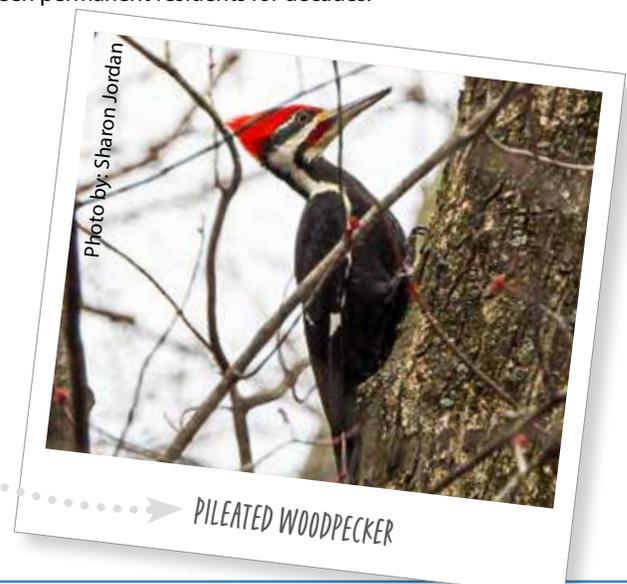


Photo by: Sharon Jordan

PILEATED WOODPECKER

## WEST SUNBURY

### STATE GAMELANDS 95 (SGL 95) - "THE GLADES" (7)

Swope Rd.

West Sunbury, PA 16061

[www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/glades-sgl-95](http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/glades-sgl-95)

#### **Noted for:** Bald Eagle & Osprey

The Glades is located in north-central Butler County. It is owned and managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

The most notable feature of The Glades is Glade Dam Lake, a 2.5-mile shallow lake dammed at the north end. This lake is responsible for establishing a conducive habitat for the appearance and nesting of the Osprey and Bald Eagle, both threatened species in Pennsylvania.

The Glades also contain various types of marshes and swamps, lakes and ponds, wet and dry meadows, as well as field and forest habitats. American Bittern, Least Bittern, Sedge Wren and Upland Sandpiper, once common here, are still present. Many breeding wetland species and sensitive forest species can also be found here.

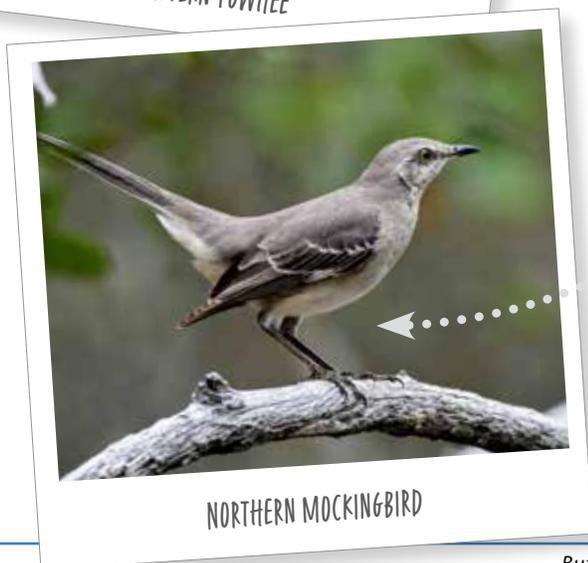
Unusual species for this part of Butler County include Sandhill Crane (spring), American Pipit (spring), Northern Shrike (winter), Northern Mockingbird (resident), Rusty Blackbird (spring and autumn) and the rare Brewer's Blackbird (autumn).

This state property has been designated Important Bird Area #11 by the National Audubon Society and monitored by volunteers of the Bartramian Audubon Society.

*NOTE: Some of the dirt roads in SGL 95 are not maintained.*



EASTERN TOWHEE



NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

## SARVER

### TODD NATURE RESERVE (8)

367 Kepple Rd.

Sarver, PA 16055

412-963-6100

[www.aswp.org/pages/todd](http://www.aswp.org/pages/todd)

#### **Noted for:** Buffalo Creek Valley Important Bird Area

Todd Nature Reserve, Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania's (ASWP) first reserve, is part of Pennsylvania Audubon's Buffalo Valley Important Bird Area program, as well as the Buffalo Creek Watershed Conservation Plan.

In 1942, W.E. Clyde Todd, noted ornithologist and curator of birds at Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, donated to ASWP the first parcel of land that was to become Todd Sanctuary, now known as Todd Nature Reserve. As a teenager in the 1880's, young Clyde discovered a Magnolia Warbler nesting on the land owned by his grandparents. At the time, the discovery was notable; it was thought the area was too far south for Magnolias to nest. His quest to report his discovery launched his distinguished career in ornithology.

The Buffalo Creek Valley Important Bird Area contains some of the best bird habitat and most interesting scenery in the area. The deep "canyon" of Little Buffalo and Buffalo Creeks are largely wooded and contain extensive tracts of hemlock, moist deciduous forest and large stands of American Sycamore. The area is characterized as a "mixing zone" between southern (Yellow-throated Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Yellow-throated Vireo) and northern (Magnolia Warbler, Brown Creeper, Purple Finch) species.

Explore Todd Nature Reserve's five miles of hiking trails, abundant with the natural beauty of the forest, streams and a pond. The rugged landscape and rustic trails provide a welcome retreat from the highly manicured suburban world. Todd's management philosophy promotes education, nature study and passive recreation at Todd Nature Reserve while protecting its natural areas by minimizing development.

Free, weekly naturalist-led Birds and More walk take place every Friday.

### BUFFALO CREEK NATURE PARK & BABCOCK NATURE CENTER (9)

154 Monroe Rd.

Sarver, PA 16055

724-295-3589

[www.aswp.org/pages/buffalo-creek-nature-park](http://www.aswp.org/pages/buffalo-creek-nature-park)

#### **Noted for:** Buffalo Creek Valley Important Bird Area

Buffalo Creek Nature Park, ASWP's newest location (opened June 2021), is located between Little Buffalo Creek and the Butler-Freepport Trail. Free, weekly naturalist-led Birds and More walk take place every Tuesday.

Buffalo Creek Nature Park is a joint venture between ASWP and Buffalo Township, with major funding provided by Babcock Charitable Trust, Richard King Mellon Foundation, PA Department of Community & Economic Development, PA Department of Nature Resources, Grable Foundation, and ASWP members and friends from across the region.

#### **Check out the Audubon Nature Store at Buffalo Creek Nature Park!**

After exploring the park and nature center, browse a variety of feeders, guides and other nature-themed items.

## SARVER CONT.'D

### THE BUTLER-FREEPORT COMMUNITY TRAIL (10)

171-173 Monroe Rd.  
Sarver, PA 16055  
www.butlerfreeporttrail.org

#### **Noted for: Cerulean Warbler**

The Butler-Freeport Community Trail is the corridor of the remarkably diverse Buffalo Creek Watershed in the southeast quadrant of Butler County. Starting in Laneville, the trail has Buffalo Creek as its companion for over three miles through the forest of the Buffalo Creek Gorge. The Buffalo Creek Gorge is the spectacular view which can be seen from the bridge on Route 28, a mile north of the Sarver-Freeport exit. The trail then picks up Little Buffalo Creek as its companion for another eight miles, crossing the creek seven times. Many of the smaller tributaries are reminiscent of mountain brooks, offering natural cooling on a hot day and the thrill of rushing, tumbling water in all seasons. Gradually as the trail meanders northward toward Butler, it travels from the woods of the gorge to a broader forest valley with the trail securely passing between cliffs on one side and the Little Buffalo Creek on the other to more open woods to farmland and village communities before again plunging into forest as it leaves Little Buffalo Creek near its headwaters.

The trail provides the most wide ranging access to the Buffalo Creek Valley Important Bird Area as designated by the National Audubon Society. The Cerulean Warbler is known to make its home along the trail, south of the Monroe Road trailhead. One of the trail volunteers met a man who had traveled from New Mexico to see the Cerulean Warbler. He was not disappointed. A variety of birds can be seen along the trail including herons, kingfishers, Scarlet Tanagers and Indigo Buntings to name a few.

## BUTLER

### SUCCOP NATURE PARK (11)

185 W. Airport Rd.  
Butler, PA 16002  
724-586-2591  
www.aswp.org/pages/succop

#### **Noted for: Waterfowl**

While the name Succop Nature Park is relatively new (formerly known as Succop Conservancy until 2014) the 50 acres of woodlands on which ASWP's newest property sits has a long history in the Butler community.

The park was established for the purpose of providing an environmental and cultural education center for the community. The property also contains two ponds, walking trails, gardens and open natural spaces that can be used for a variety of outdoor activities. Both areas offer a peaceful, comfortable atmosphere where one may view the various water birds that visit the ponds (ducks, heron, kingfisher).

Succop Nature Park holds a free, naturalist led 'Birds and More' walk through the reserve every Thursday morning (year-round) at 9 am.

#### **Check out the Audubon Nature Store at Succop Nature Park!**

Located on the property inside of the T.W. Phillips Barn. The store specializes in providing merchandise related to all things nature. Rounding out the inventory is an extensive line of bird feeders, which pairs perfectly with their proprietary blend of birdseeds. All purchases support our goal to *connect the people of southwestern Pennsylvania to birds and nature.*

### BUTLER COUNTY COURTHOUSE DOWNTOWN BUTLER (12)

124 W. Diamond St.  
Butler, PA 16001

#### **Noted for: Nighthawk**

For urban bird watching, visit downtown Butler on a summer night for great views of Nighthawks flying around the illuminated courthouse on Main Street (Route 8).



#### **The Birdwatchers Store**

630 New Castle Rd.  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057  
724-794-2473  
www.thebirdwatchersstore.com

For all your birding needs, check out the Birdwatchers Store located in Slippery Rock! The favorite destination of wild bird enthusiasts of all ages. They carry feeders, seed, houses, poles, gifts and more! View birds at their outside feeders and ask about their birding tours.



#### **Moraine Preservation Fund,**

##### **The Owllet Gift Shop**

118 North Shore Dr.  
Portersville, PA 16051  
724-368-9185  
www.morainepreservationfund.org

The Owllet Gift Shop has a unique collection of nature gifts and collectables. Find items such as local honey, maple syrup, hand crafted bird houses, a vast assortment of t-shirts, hats and sweatshirts.

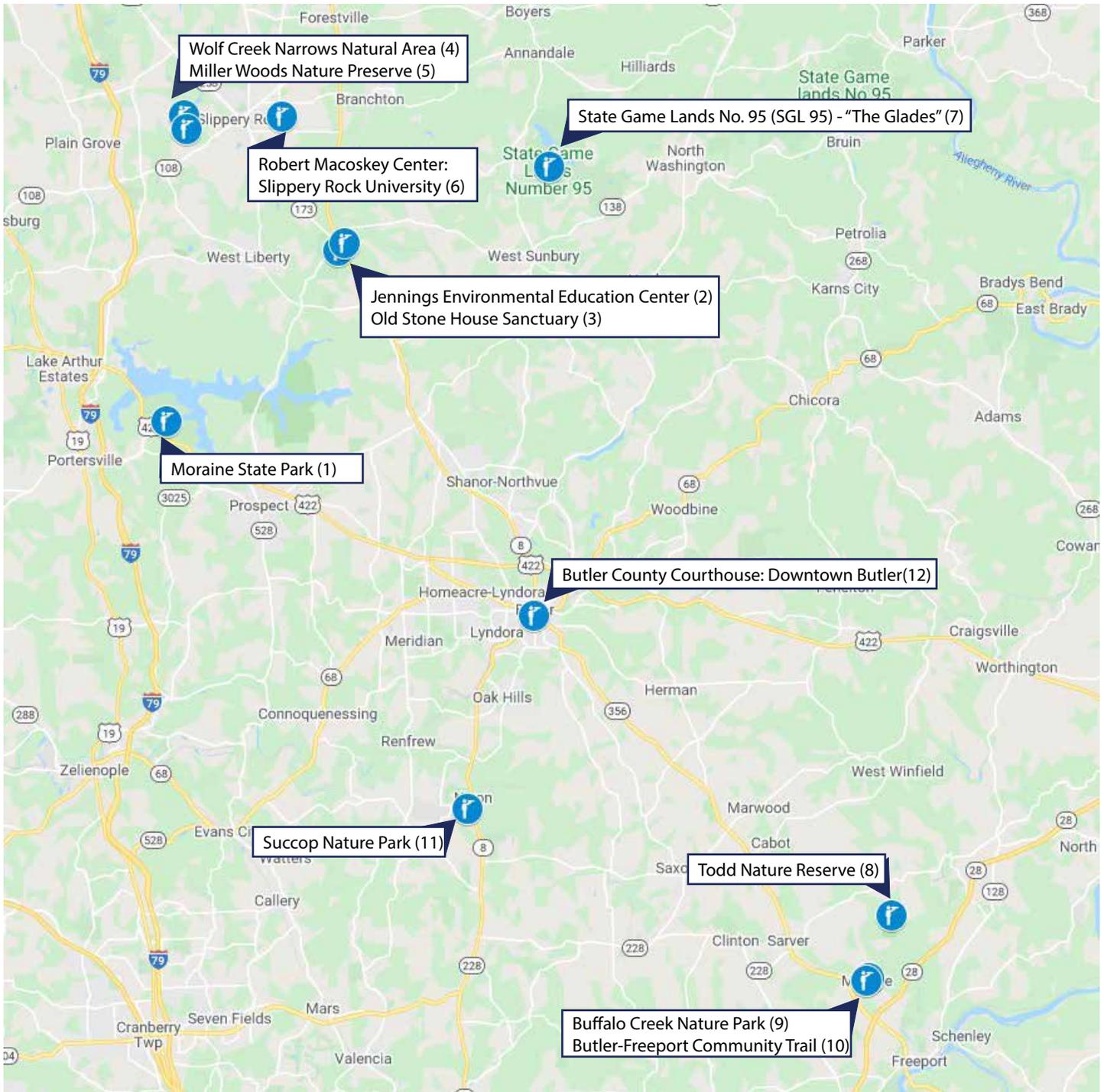


#### **Wildbird Recovery, Inc.**

120 Forsythe Rd.  
Valencia, PA 16059  
724-898-1788  
www.wildbirdrecovery.org

Wildbird Recovery is a nonprofit dedicated to the conservation of wildlife and natural resources. We provide licensed wildlife rehabilitation services and educational programming.

# MAP OF NOTABLE BIRDING AREAS IN BUTLER COUNTY, PA



A ROBIN BUILDS A NEST

Photo by: Dean Salisbury