



The Alleghenies
Tourism Council
(ATC)
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**News
Release**

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BIRDING OPPORTUNITIES SOAR IN [THE ALLEGHENIES](#)
Top Five Birding Tips

ALTOONA, PA – [The Alleghenies](#) is a hotspot of avian activity, offering birding opportunities for all experience levels. From common varieties such as the White-breasted Nuthatch and the American Goldfinch, to rare species such as the Kentucky Warbler and the Black-crowned Night-Heron, the diverse landscape of this Southcentral Pennsylvania region provides birders with a wide array of birds to view.

The Alleghenies presents tools and resources to help birders discover the more than 30 bird-watching locations throughout the region that contain more than 275 species of birds. *The Alleghenies* website, www.TheAlleghenies.com, provides detailed descriptions of the birding areas, as well as useful interactive search tools to uncover hotspots by region and bird species. Visitors to the website will also find links to local Audubon societies and guide maps. *The Alleghenies* birding brochure contains a Life Wish List designating the species that are located at each bird-watching destination. To request a copy of the brochure, please call (800) 458-3433.

Birding continues to grow in popularity, according to the 2008 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report, published by the Outdoor Industry Association, more than 23 million Americans ages 6 and older participated in wildlife viewing in 2007.

“*The Alleghenies* is in a great position to capitalize on this growing trend, in particular with the wealth of birding resources the region has to offer,” said Terry Wentz, president of Waxwing Associates and retired Pennsylvania State Park Manager. “From the largest birds of prey to the smallest song birds, it is an excellent way to get in touch with nature and explore the region’s diverse topography from mountains to rushing streams and sparkling lakes.”

“Birding in *The Alleghenies* is an eye-opening experience for those new to the sport and continues unlocking new treasures for even the most experienced birders,” said Doug Wentzel, program director and staff naturalist at Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center. “Birding can be a social event or a chance for reflection. You can watch for your own enjoyment, or add your sightings to statewide or national census efforts. Whatever the case, you always have a great reason to enjoy the outdoors in *The Alleghenies*.”

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Whether a seasoned birder or experiencing birding for the first time, *The Alleghenies* offers these five tips:

1. **Essential Equipment**

There are a few items that can help make a birding outing an enjoyable one, including good maps; a notebook and pencil for jotting down field marks, sightings, and habitat notes; a field guide; binoculars designed for bird watching; a checklist and camera to keep track of sightings. Also, be prepared for inclement weather with layered clothing, food and water.

2. **Getting Started**

For those new to birding, a great way to pick up this new activity is by starting with a birdfeeder in your backyard. Enjoy the birds you see and hear around your neighborhood to begin to become acquainted with the various characteristics of birds.

3. **Engage**

Join guided walks organized by a local birding club, such as [Juniata Valley Audubon Society](#), [Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society](#), or [State College Bird Club](#) so you can meet and learn from other birders.

4. **Proximity**

The quality of bird watching in the forested areas of *The Alleghenies* is unique because of the close proximity to population centers. With more than 275 species of birds, the region will provide an entirely new experience from your backyard birding. The region is a two-hour drive from Pittsburgh, three hours from Washington, DC, four hours from Philadelphia and five hours from New York City

5. **Seasonality**

There is no one birding season in *The Alleghenies*. You can observe throughout the year, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Though spring is filled with action, the month of May is the peak of spring migration and provides some of the most interesting bird activity of the year. Look for the land bird migration of warblers, vireos, thrushes, and flycatchers to name a few during this time of year.

Upcoming Birding Events in The Alleghenies

Bald Eagle Birding Festival

Bald Eagle State Park

April 18, 2009 (2:00 – 8:00 p.m.)

The Bald Eagle Birding Festival hosts a variety of bird related activities, including live birds of prey shows, bird walks and kids crafts.

The Birding Cup

Shaver's Creek Environmental Center

May 1–2, 2009 (7:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)

The Birding Cup, Shaver's Creek's annual fund-raising tournament, is a contest among teams of birders to identify the most number of bird species in a 24-hour period in *The Alleghenies*.

Birds, Bats and Wildflowers

Juniata Valley Audubon Society (JVAS)

June 6, 2009 (8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.)

Birds, Bats and Wildflowers provides information and fun as members of JVAS lead walks and conduct programs at the prime time for observation on site at Canoe Creek State Park, home to more than 150 species of birds, wildflowers, and the largest nursery colony of little brown bats in Pennsylvania.

The Alleghenies Tourism Council is a partnership of organizations interested in further developing the tourism industry and economic development opportunities in an eight county region in Southcentral Pennsylvania. The Council works under the umbrella of the Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission, a non-profit economic development agency. For more information on *The Alleghenies*, call (800) 458-3433 or visit www.TheAlleghenies.com.

Shaver's Creek Environmental Center at Penn State has for more than 30 years helped people and communities learn to live sustainably and in harmony with our natural environment that supports all living things. For more information on the center or becoming a member, contact Shaver's Creek at (814) 863-2000, email ShaversCreek@outreach.psu.edu or go online to www.shaverscreek.org.

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