

Birds of Pennsylvania Island

Names, photographs, and vocalizations for bird species that have been seen on or around Pennsylvania Island may be found at the eBird website using your computer, smart pad, or smart phone. This document describes how to easily access that information and identify species you see.

1. What birds might be seen on or around Pennsylvania Island?

Lists of bird species that have been seen on or around Pennsylvania Island are kept up-to-date at the eBird website. About 100 species have been seen by Club members and visitors, but there are perhaps 200 more species breeding in or migrating through Massasauga Provincial Park that have not yet been seen around Pennsylvania Island. Below are links to webpages with lists of species relevant to Pennsylvania Island. At any of these webpages, you can click on “Printable Checklist” to get a hardcopy list of all the birds reported at that location. You can also click on the name of any bird listed to see its picture and hear its vocalizations.

1. **Around the Pennsylvania Club clubhouse.** About 100 bird species have been seen around the clubhouse or on the trails originating from the clubhouse. A list of these species is available at https://ebird.org/hotspot/L299810?yr=all&m=&rank=lrec&hs_sortBy=taxon_order&hs_o=asc To see bird pictures taken on Pennsylvania Island by Club members and visitors, click on the tab, “Illustrated Checklist” and then click on “Species w/ photos.”
2. **In the Pennsylvania Club fishing area.** About 100 bird species have also been seen from boats while fishing. Some but not all of these species have also been seen on Pennsylvania Island as well.
3. **In Parry Sound County.** About 300 bird species have been seen in Parry Sound County. Many of these birds are likely to breed in or migrate through Massasauga Provincial Park but have not yet been seen around Pennsylvania Island. <https://ebird.org/region/CA-ON-PS?yr=all>

To view species lists for nearby areas, go to <https://ebird.org/explore> and enter the name of a county adjacent to Perry Sound such Muskoka, Simcoe, or Sudbury. Many birds sighted in these areas are also likely to breed in or migrate through Massasauga Provincial Park but have not yet been seen around Pennsylvania Island.

2. How can I identify a bird I am looking at?

If you have a smart phone and are using it online, Cornell’s free “Merlin Bird ID” app provides an excellent procedure for identifying birds. The app is free to download and use, but **KNOW THE COST OF BEING ONLINE AT PENNSYLVANIA ISLAND BEFORE DOING THIS. CONNECTION CHARGES CAN BE EXCESSIVE!** (Just ask Billy.)

1. Open the Merlin app.
2. Click on “Start Bird ID.”
3. Answer the five questions asked, clicking on “next” after each:
 - a. Where did you see the bird? (e.g., enter “Pennsylvania Island” and click on the suggestion offered, “The Archipelago, ON.”)
 - b. When did you see the bird?
 - c. What size was the bird (e.g., sparrow-sized, robin-sized, crow-sized, etc.)

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- d. What were the main colors (select up to 3 colors)
 - e. Was the bird...? (e.g., swimming or wading, on the ground, soaring or flying, etc.)
4. Review the pictures that the Merlin app offers for possibilities.

3. When is a good time to be birding on Pennsylvania Island?

A few bird species remain around Pennsylvania Island year around. Others reside in the area only during the breeding season, from spring to autumn. Others only pass through during the spring and autumn migrations.

Birds that breed around Pennsylvania Island typically begin arriving in late April and early May. Many birds that breed further north are migrating through The Massasauga at this time as well. Leaves are not yet on the deciduous trees, making it easier spot and identify birds. Birds are also more territorial and feisty at this time, and are more easily “called in” with recordings for a better look at them.

4. How can I find all the places a specific bird species has been seen?

eBird maps places all over the world that a particular bird species has been seen and reported since 1900. For example, to start get a map for Barn Swallow sightings in Parry Sound County, go to <https://ebird.org/map/barswa?bmo=1&emo=12&byr=1900&eyr=2019&env.minX=-80.73&env.minY=45.093&env.maxX=-78.928&env.maxY=46.242&gp=true> and zoom in until location “teardrops” are visible. Click on a teardrop at a location to see checklists for sightings. Note that Barn Swallows have been seen at our “hot spot” on Pennsylvania Island. Zoom out (and back in again) to see other places in the world Barn Swallows have been seen. Note that they are commonly seen in Chile, where the swallows nesting in the boathouse at camp may very well spend the winter.

For other species, enter a different name in the “Species” box. For example, entering American Black Duck will show all locations where this species has been reported to eBird. Note that this species has also been seen at our “hot spot” on Pennsylvania Island as well as at the Iron City Fishing Club south of us.

5. How can I find birding “hotspots”?

eBird maps indicate all the “hotspot” locations from which birders frequently report sightings. Pennsylvania Island is one such hotspot. To start with hotspots for Parry Sound County, go to <https://ebird.org/hotspots?env.minX=-80.729996&env.minY=45.093016&env.maxX=-78.928172&env.maxY=46.241817&yr=all&m> = and zoom in until location “teardrops” are visible.

Click on a teardrop to see checklists and details for sightings at each hotspot. Zoom out (and back in again) to see other of the world’s hotspots.

6. How can I begin reporting sightings to eBird for scientific research and conservation efforts?

Cornell has made it incredibly easy to identify birds, record sightings, and report them to eBird using smart phones while at home, at camp or off fishing. It is also easy to post your photographs of birds you see.

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Create an eBird Account

1. To set up your eBird account, go to <https://ebird.org/about> , click on “Get Started” halfway down the webpage and again on the next webpage. Enter your name, email address, username, and create a password. (You can do this on a computer, smart pad, or smart phone.)
2. To create your first checklist, use the map tool to locate where you made the sightings and give the place a name (e.g., “My Backyard”).
3. For this and subsequent checklists, enter the time your observations began, other information as prompted, and the bird or birds you identified. For details if needed, see eBird “Help” page at <https://help.ebird.org/customer/en/portal/articles/973977-ebird-quick-start-guide> . (If clicking on this link doesn’t load a webpage, cut and paste it into your browser.)

Rather than write down what you saw and enter the data later, it is much easier to use the mobile app on your smart phone to enter data on the go. See a bird, land your fish, and then record the sighting with a couple of finger taps.

Setup the eBird Mobile App

4. To set up data entry on your smart phone, download the “eBird” app from the Apple Store or Google Play.
5. Click on “Start New Checklist,” chose the location at which you will be making observations, enter your starting time, and begin adding birds. Click on the check mark at the bottom to toggle between viewing all likely birds at the location or just the ones you have entered so far. For details if needed, see eBird “Help” page at <https://help.ebird.org/customer/en/portal/articles/2411868-getting-started-with-ebird-mobile> .

Unless you’ve got an inexpensive cellular data package for your electronic devices in Canada (or have just won the lottery), it would be wise set up a reference checklist before crossing the boarder. You will need one on your smart phone to use the eBird mobile app while in camp. Rather than pay excessive cellular data charges to do it there, you can set one up at home by making a dummy checklist for Pennsylvania Island.

Load a Reference Checklist for Pennsylvania Island While Still Stateside

6. Open the eBird app on your phone and click on “Start.” Select “Chose a Location From Map” and zoom closely in on Pennsylvania Island until you can view the Pennsylvania Club clubhouse on the south end of the island. Hold your finger on the clubhouse for a few seconds and a, when you lift it, a teardrop for a “Selected Location” will appear.
7. Tap on “Next” (upper right of screen) and a checklist specific to the Georgian Bay area will be downloaded to your phone. Click on “Start New Checklist” but, rather than enter sightings, click immediately on “Review & Submit.” When prompted, click on “Stop track” and then on “Submit.” Click on “Incidental” and then again on “Submit.”

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8. Review your “Submitted” checklists to confirm you have one for “CA-ON-Georgian Bay” that you can use for starting checklists while you are offline in Canada. Then, when you are choosing a location for creating a checklist off line while up at camp, select “Choose a Recent Location” and then select “CA-ON-Georgian Bay.”

Contact Club member Len Bryant or his brother, Bob, for additional help if needed. It is likely to be much easier for one of them to walk you through the simple steps over the phone rather than for you to struggle with detailed instructions. They can also help with setting up your smart phone for “calling in” birds using recorded bird sounds.

7. What other interesting bird stuff is online?

- Video of a Green Heron fishing with bread. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wt8a53QW1b4>
- Iron City Fishing Club eBird checklist with the first “camp record” of a Green Heron sighting. <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S19521002>
- Dynamic map for North American Migration of Wood Ducks and 120 other species. <https://ebird.org/science/status-and-trends/wooduc/abundance-map-weekly>
- Pictures of birds taken on Pennsylvania Island by Club members and visitors. <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L299810/media?yr=all&m=> (Click on the “Species w/ photos” tab.) Photos include:
 - The Prairie Warbler on the clubhouse porch that spent 10 minutes attacking its own reflection in 2008.
 - The Barn Swallows that nested in the boathouse at camp in 2008.
 - The Rose-breasted Grosbeak residing near PA Club Trail Marker #1 in 2019.
 - The American Woodcock that entertained us with its aerial mating dance in 2019.