

## Upland Forest and Rocky Slopes

**Habitat Description:** Consisting predominantly of oaks, maples, and hemlocks, the upland forests of the Lehigh Gap are home to many species.

**Look for:** woodpeckers, Accipiter hawks, Wild Turkeys, Ruffed Grouse, Ovenbirds, Black-and-white Warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Baltimore Orioles, Common Nighthawks, Whip-poor-wills

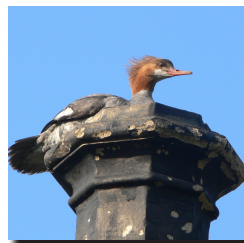


Scarlet Tanager

## Lehigh River and Riparian Zone

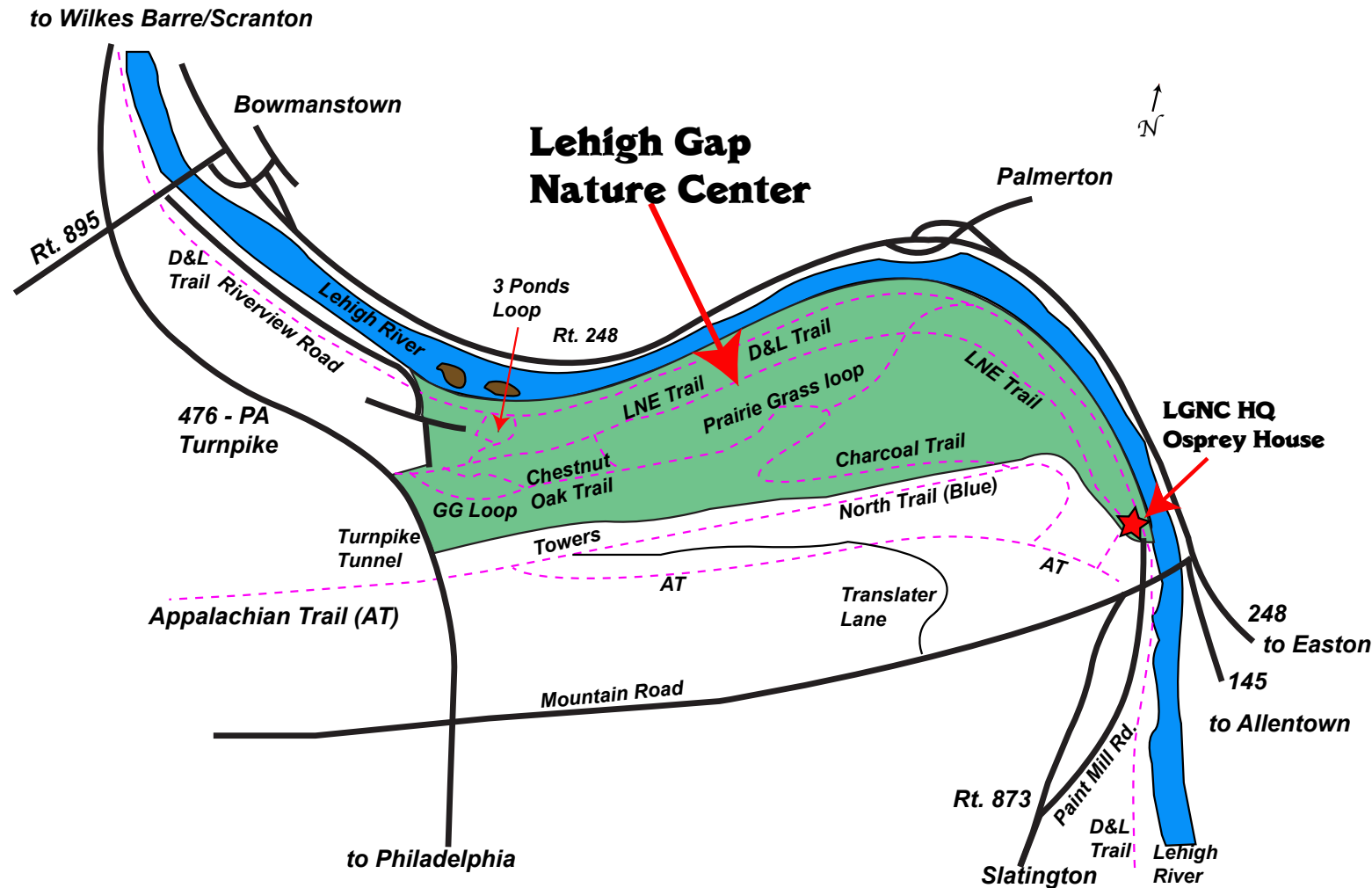
**Habitat Description:** Once lifeless, the Lehigh River now flows with high quality 'bird food' like elodea, mayflies, and trout. The Lehigh also has a healthy riparian zone (*the area of vegetation that lines the river*) where many song birds tend to forage and breed.

**Look for:** Common Mergansers, Ospreys, Bald Eagles, Spotted Sandpipers, swallows, herons, Red-eyed Vireos, Yellow Warblers, orioles, Ring-billed and Herring gulls, American Redstarts



Common Merganser

**Habitats** From upland savannas to bottomland wetlands, the 756-acre Lehigh Gap Wildlife Refuge encompasses a rich diversity of habitats along the Kittatinny Ridge and Lehigh River. Equally diverse are the songbirds, raptors, and other avian species that depend on these habitats as wintering grounds, breeding grounds, and migratory stopover points. Embark on a birding adventure along any section of the Lehigh Gap Nature Center's 13-mile trail system traversing the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems of the Lehigh Gap!



**Kittatinny Ridge – Migration Corridor** Late summer and autumn visitors to the Lehigh Gap Wildlife Refuge are well positioned to experience the marvel of raptor (bird of prey) and songbird migration. The Kittatinny Ridge (known locally as the "Blue Mountain") is an important migration corridor – an avian highway – along which thousands of birds annually fly toward their wintering grounds. The southernmost major Appalachian ridge in Pennsylvania, the Kittatinny serves as a 'road map' and generates winds that help migratory birds navigate southwestward.



D. Levandusky

## Ponds & Wetlands

**Habitat Description:** The spring-fed Kittatinny Ponds are surrounded by early-successional, deciduous forest. Wetlands line the floodplain of the Lehigh River.

**Look for:** Green Herons, Belted Kingfishers, Red-winged Blackbirds, Wood Ducks, swallows, Chimney Swifts, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, vireos, warblers, orioles



D. Levandusky

Belted Kingfisher



## Grassland, Savanna, and Scrub

**Habitat Description:** LGNC's revegetation efforts, combined with Pennsylvania's largest natural savanna (located along the North Trail), comprise an extensive grassland habitat on the slope of the Kittatinny Ridge.

**Look for:** American Kestrels, Field Sparrows, Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Common Yellowthroats, Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, sparrows, Prairie Warblers, Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles



A. Morris/VIREO

American Kestrel



## Bird Conservation at LGNC

The Lehigh Gap Wildlife Refuge features a network of nest boxes designed to attract certain target species of conservation concern. Visitors most often notice Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows inhabiting the many boxes alongside the Prairie Warbler, D&L, and LNE trails. Another prominent nest box is the large tower near the Osprey House. Housing Chimney Swifts, this tower provides vital nesting and roosting habitat for a species in decline due to deforestation and chimney capping.



American Kestrels and Wood Ducks, and Common Mergansers have also nested in specially-constructed boxes mounted across the Refuge.



## Birds Through Time in the Lehigh Gap

- **1829:** World-renowned ornithologist John James Audubon passed through the Lehigh Gap to study birds along the northern reaches of the Lehigh River.
- **1885:** Pennsylvania's Scalp Act of 1885 was passed, placing a bounty on hawks and owls (then considered 'vermin').
- **1900-1903:** Ornithologist James Rehn identified 50 species of breeding birds throughout the once American chestnut-dominant landscape around the Lehigh Gap.
- **1918:** The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 established sweeping legal protection for migratory birds (excluding raptors), banning the pursuit, hunt, take, capture, kill, or sale of any listed species.
- **1950:** The Lehigh Gap was barren following decades of acid rain and heavy metal deposition, and the Lehigh River ran black with coal silt and sewage. Bird diversity was low.
- **1961:** Donald S. Heintzelman began counting migrating raptors at Bake Oven Knob, an effort carried on every year since by Wildlife Information Center and its successor, LGNC.
- **1972:** The spraying of DDT was banned nationwide, and raptor protections were officially enacted through an amendment to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.
- **2002:** LGNC was established and began restoring 350 barren acres of the Kittatinny Ridge. This area will be managed as a grassland for the foreseeable future.
- **2017:** A record 411 Bald Eagles were counted at the Bake Oven Knob Hawk Watch. Considered rare by Rehn, Eastern Bluebirds now breed in abundance at LGNC.

## Avian Diversity at LGNC

To date, 178 bird species have been documented in the Lehigh Gap. Notable species seen since 1900 include Long-tailed Duck, Great Black-backed Gull, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Swainson's Hawk, White-winged Crossbill, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Blue Grosbeak.

### Spotlight Species

Prairie Warbler



Osprey



Blue Grosbeak

Interested in learning more about birds? Want to be a 'community ornithologist'? Check [lgnc.org](http://lgnc.org) for upcoming birding opportunities at LGNC!

Lehigh Gap Nature Center  
P.O. Box 198, 8844 Paint Mill Road  
Slatington, PA 18080  
For more information:  
Call: (610) 760-8889  
Email: [mail@lgnc.org](mailto:mail@lgnc.org)  
Visit: [www.lgnc.org](http://www.lgnc.org)

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Lehigh Gap Nature Center

# Birding Guide



## Birds of the Lehigh Gap



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Rotary Club of Slatington

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