

# Mongaup Valley Wildlife Management Area

*Located in southeastern New York, about 75 miles northwest of New York City*

*A premier watchable wildlife site*



Susan L. Shafer

Thomas D. Lindsay

Our national symbol, the bald eagle, is the star of this more than 10,000-acre wilderness nestled in the shadow of the Catskill Mountains, little more than an hour north of New York City. Mongaup has been designated a Bird Conservation Area by New York State because of its variety of habitats important to a diversity of bird species. The majority of the area is forested upland with a mixture of conifers and deciduous trees preferred by forest

birds. Rare floodplain forest, perched bog, and pitch-pine and oak-hickory woodland habitats are also found at Mongaup, attracting wetland birds and species that prefer sedge meadows.

In addition to eagles, several species of migrating raptors, owls, songbirds and waterfowl have been observed in this landscape of forested rolling hills, deeply dissected by streams and rivers.

Waterbodies and wetlands add to the diversity of Mongaup's landscape and wildlife. Steep, rocky slopes surround three reservoirs interconnected by the Mongaup River, which flows into the Delaware River at the area's southernmost border. Water habitats contain as many as 42 different species of fish, as well as sustaining a variety of mammals, reptiles and amphibians.



Thomas D. Lindsay



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## Wildlife to Watch

Mongaup hosts one of the largest bald eagle wintering sites in the state, and also supports several active eagle nests in the spring. Though bald eagles have been removed from the endangered species list, they are still considered a threatened species in New York, making Mongaup a particularly important breeding area for these iconic birds.

Other raptors you may see here include goshawks, turkey vultures, and red-tailed, red-shouldered and sparrow hawks. Most of these raptors are migratory, and best seen in the warmer months. As the sun sets, listen and look for great horned, barn, barred and screech-owls as they emerge to hunt for small mammals in forests and meadows.

Mongaup's large tracts of tall, deciduous, broad-leafed trees attract many warbler species. In particular, cerulean warblers, a "species of special concern" because

development has reduced its habitat elsewhere, can be seen here.

In spring, listen for ruffed grouse drumming in the understory, as they rapidly beat their wings to attract mates. Male American woodcock perform elaborate mating rituals near wetlands, flying high above and spiraling back down to impress females.

Mongaup is large and varied enough to support several kinds of mammals, including white-tailed deer, black bears, porcupines, gray and red foxes, raccoons, otters, beavers, mink and coyotes.



Wayne W. Jones

Visitors should be wary around rocky slopes as Mongaup harbors eastern timber rattlesnakes, a threatened species and one of New York's three species of venomous reptiles. Eastern hognose snakes, wood turtles, eastern box turtles, and marbled and Jefferson salamanders—all species of special concern—can be found here as well.



## Site Features

**Site Notes:** Several parking areas and boat launches are provided. In winter, access is restricted to protect the wintering bald eagles from human disturbance. However, two specially constructed viewing blinds (located on County Rte. 43 and on Plank Road) enable visitors to watch the eagles. Hunting, trapping and fishing are allowed in season by permit.

**Trails:** Numerous trails are available for hiking, biking (where appropriate), snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Please be aware that the area is rocky and rugged, with few amenities along the trails, but many of the views are spectacular and worth the effort.

**Accessibility:** Located on County Route 43 approximately 12 miles from Monticello.

**Directions:** The WMA is located in the towns of Bethel, Lumberland, Forestburgh, and Highland in Sullivan County, and in the town of Deer Park in Orange County. From the New York State Thruway (I-87), take the Harriman Exit 16. Go west on Route 17 to Exit 105 and take Route 42 South through Monticello. Approximately 10 miles from Monticello, take a right turn onto County Route 43 and go 2 miles.

**Nearby:** The Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, forming the border between New York and Pennsylvania and managed by the National Park Service, is within a short drive of Mongaup Valley.

**Contact:** 845-256-3098;  
[www.dec.ny.gov/  
 outdoor/68639.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/68639.html)

