

Point Au Roche State Park



*Located on the northwestern shore of Lake Champlain, near Plattsburgh—size: 825 acres
A great watchable wildlife site*



Bill Banaszewski

snow geese

For about two weeks in the spring and fall, birders from near and far flock here to see the thousands of migrating snow geese. Point Au Roche, with several peninsulas, bays and nearby cornfields, is a significant stopover on the Atlantic flyway for migratory waterfowl. The landscape is mostly undeveloped, with an interesting mix of upland forests, scrub, fields and nearshore marshes on Lake Champlain. This variable landscape provides habitat for a diversity of wildlife. In addition, Point Au Roche's alluvial lake-plain soils and shoreline shale outcrops provide unique microhabitats for rare plants.

Wildlife to Watch

Unlike snow geese that stop only during migration, resident Canada geese nest here. Other waterfowl regularly seen are mallards, black ducks, wood ducks, blue-winged teal and mergansers. Killdeer search for worms and insects in plowed fields, while herring gulls are seen gliding near the water, sitting quietly on the beach, or squabbling over scraps of food. Egrets and herons hunt for small fish and invertebrates along marsh edges.



DEC photo

beaver

Canada geese



Susan Shafer

Abundant fish, frogs and small mammals attract ospreys and hawks which hunt during the day. At dusk you may catch sight of or hear barred, great horned, or screech-owls as they begin their nocturnal search for food.

Skittish white-tailed deer are the most frequently seen large mammal at Point Au Roche, emerging from the woods to feed

in fields and wetlands at dawn and dusk. Wary red and gray fox also appear at these times. Beavers, muskrats, mink and the occasional otter may be observed in their natural wetland habitats. Many of these wild animals have become somewhat used to the presence of people at Point Au Roche, making it easier to watch and enjoy them.

white-tailed deer



Susan Shafer



Site Features

Notes: Open year-round. Staff offer a variety of public programs. The large day-use area has a protected sandy beach and picnic facilities with restrooms and parking. Canoeing, kayaking, power-boating and fishing are popular activities and the park offers 60 designated mooring sites in Deep Bay. A vehicle-use fee is charged for access to the beach from June to Labor Day. In winter, the park provides excellent access points for ice fishing.

Trails: The park's nearly 14 miles of nature, hiking and biking trails wind through all of Point Au Roche's interesting wildlife habitats. The trails are available for use all year for school programs, nature hikes and cross-country skiing.

Accessibility: This site has some accessible features, including picnic areas and recreation programs.

Directions: Northway/I-87 exit 40; right onto NY 456/Spellman Rd.; first right onto US-9 south; left at County Rd. 22/Point Au Roche Rd.; right onto Camp Red Cloud Rd.

Contact: 518-563-0369, www.nysparks.com/parks/30/details.aspx. For more Watchable Wildlife sites in NY, visit www.NewYorkWatchableWildlife.org



female wood duck



Jeff Nadler