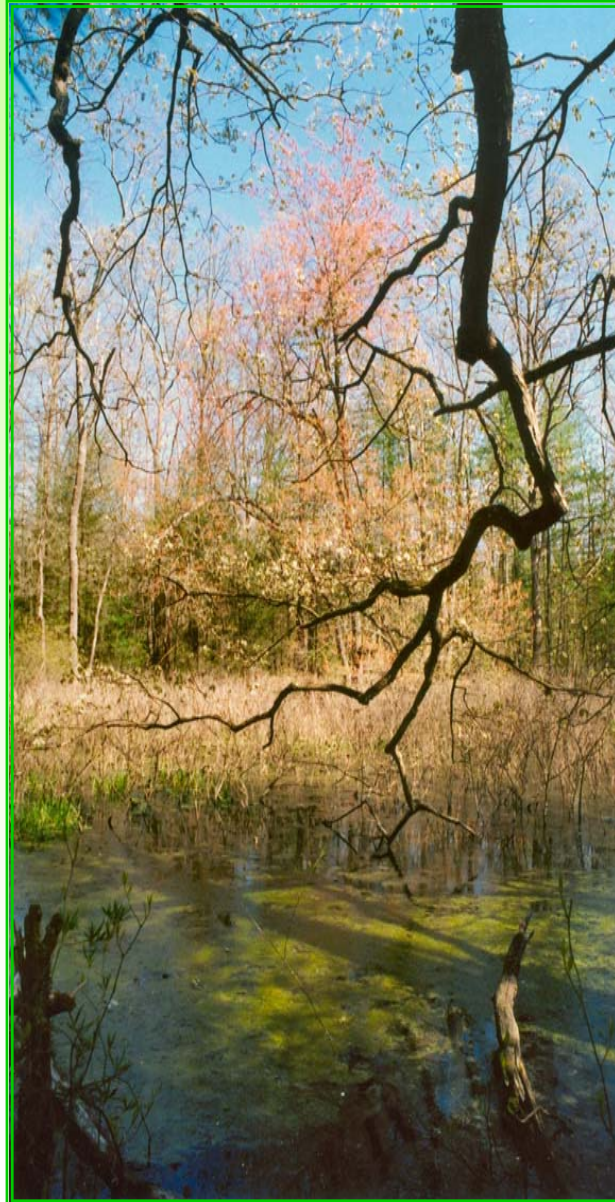


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THE PENNSYLVANIA SEASONAL POOLS REGISTRY



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THE SEASONAL POOLS REGISTRY

Do you look forward to the signs of a new season? Do you anticipate the spring rains that melt winter snows or the green blush of new vegetation?

Do you listen for the soft hoots of tundra swans heading north, or the noisy chirps of spring peepers? These are some of the signs that a seasonal pool near you is coming to life.



Gray Tree Frog

The Pennsylvania Seasonal Pools Registry is a citizen-based effort to document locations of temporary or seasonal wetlands and the species associated with them.



Seasonal pool in the spring, Centre County



American Toad

The registry is an important step towards understanding Pennsylvania's ephemeral wetland habitats. The information will be available to researchers who study seasonal pools and to landowners and agencies who manage them.

We are relying on volunteer participants to submit information about where seasonal pools are located and what animals are utilizing them.

This project is an opportunity for all citizens of Pennsylvania to contribute towards the conservation of a unique natural habitat. You do not have to have a scientific background in order to participate. Anyone with an interest in seasonal pools is welcome to become involved.



Spotted Salamander

WHAT ARE SEASONAL POOLS?

Seasonal pools, which are also referred to as vernal pools, are a unique type of wetland habitat. They are typically small, shallow, ephemeral water bodies, and have no permanent inlet or outlet.

They are filled each spring by rain and snow melt, then dry up for a period of time during the summer. The dry phase of a seasonal pool is important because it prevents year-round water dependent animals such as fish from living in these pools. Fish, when present, pose a threat because they are predators on the eggs and larvae of other aquatic species.



Seasonal pool, Franklin County

These qualities of seasonal pools distinguish them from other types of wetlands. They are essential because they support a number of species that require temporary wetland habitats for survival.

INDICATOR SPECIES

Animals that require seasonal pool habitats to complete some phase of their life cycle are indicator species.



Marbled Salamander

Three species of mole salamanders encountered in seasonal pools are the marbled salamander, the spotted salamander, and the Jefferson salamander. They are all considered indicator species. Other seasonal pool indicators are the wood frog and the eastern spadefoot (a burrowing frog).



Springtime Fairy Shrimp

In addition to the amphibians, small crustaceans known as fairy shrimp are another indicator species. One common species in Pennsylvania is the Springtime Fairy Shrimp.

OTHER SEASONAL POOL LIFE

Other animals use seasonal pools, but they also make use of permanent wetland habitats. They are referred to as seasonal pool facultative species. The red-spotted newt, northern spring peeper, American toad, wood turtle and spotted turtle are facultative species because they use both seasonal and permanent bodies of water. Many species of dragonflies and damselflies as well other aquatic invertebrates are facultative species.



Spring Peeper

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

Because they are dry part of the year, seasonal pools are often overlooked. This has resulted in the loss of many nationwide. Forestry practices and human development surrounding the pools can infringe on this critical habitat. Runoff from nearby roads can adversely affect water quality. Roads often become obstacles for species migrating to the pools from the habitat they occupy during the nonbreeding season. The majority of seasonal pool amphibians return each year to breed in their natal ponds. This site fidelity by individual amphibians is an important consideration for species conservation.

PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

The Seasonal Pools Registry for Pennsylvania is a project of the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP)

Find out more about the PNHP at:

<http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/>.



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VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

<http://www.paconserve.org/rc/sp/>

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