

Governor Pataki Announces Bird Conservation Area at Sterling Forest

By Jillian Butler



EXECUTIVE OFFICE

(left to right) Congressmen Benjamin Gilman, NYS Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro, Senator Frank Lautenberg, Assemblyman Alex Gromack and Governor George E. Pataki participate in the Sterling Forest groundbreaking ceremony.

ON OCTOBER 26, 2001 Governor George E. Pataki joined former U.S. Senator Lautenberg of New Jersey to announce the designation of 16,833 acres of the Sterling Forest State Park as a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) and to break ground for its new visitor center named after Senator Lautenberg.

The park is part of 1.1 million acres of continuous habitat that stretches from the Hudson River to the Delaware River and stands out among the surrounding landscape because of its exceptional natural habitat. The Sterling Forest BCA provides critical habitat for a great diversity of migrating and state-listed bird species (See story below.)

The Frank R. Lautenberg Visitor Center will provide visitors with the opportunity to learn more about the unique natural features found at Sterling Forest State Park. The facility will offer interpretive activities and



EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Governor George E. Pataki joined the former U.S. Senator Lautenberg of New Jersey and other government officials to announce the designation of 16,833-acres of the Sterling Forest State Park as a Bird Conservation Area (BCA.)

programming as well as an exhibit gallery, auditorium, bookstore, park administration offices, police and ranger room, and a first aid station.

Senator Lautenberg contributed \$1.75 million towards the construction of the facility and additional funds for the project are coming from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, State Parks, and private donations.

"Sterling Forest State Park's incredible forests, miles of scenic trails and unique wildlife habitats represent the

best of New York State's natural treasures," said Governor Pataki. "The new Lautenberg Visitor Center will provide one-of-a-kind opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages to explore the wonders of nature right here in the Hudson Valley."

Number of State Bird Conservation Areas (BCAs) Rises to Sixteen!

By Jillian Butler

THIS FALL FOUR NEW Bird Conservation Areas (BCAs) were designated in New York, bringing the state's total to sixteen. Governor George E. Pataki announced the designation of 16,833 acres of the Sterling Forest State Park on October 26, 2001 (see this page for the story on dedication and visitor center), and the designation of Harbor Herons, Perch River, and the Adirondack High Peaks on November 16, 2001.

Sterling Forest

Sterling Forest, which is located in Orange County, borders Greenwood Lake on the west and Sterling Lake on the east. The area's elevation ranges from 800-1200' and is primarily deciduous and mixed forest. The site supports a healthy representation of hardwood community forest breeders including state listed species such as the Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Whip-poor-will, Golden-winged Warbler, and Cerulean Warbler. The area is one of the few locations where Golden-winged Warblers and Blue-winged Warblers have been able to coexist for an extended period of time. In most places Golden-winged Warblers are undergoing rapid declines in numbers and are being replaced by Blue-winged

4 Warblers. Research concerning how the two species are coexist-

ing at Sterling Forest could be critical to preventing the loss of Golden-winged Warblers as a breeding species in the state and the region.

Harbor Herons

The Harbor Herons BCA, located in Richmond County on Staten Island, consists of the Goethals Bridge Pond and the adjoining wetlands along Old Place Creek. The 111-acre parcel is part of Audubon's Harbor Herons Complex Important Bird Area, which provides the breeding habitat for nine species of colonial wading birds. A 1995 survey documented that this area supported 57% of the state's Cattle Egrets, 21% of the state's Great Egrets, 57% of the state's Black-crowned Night Herons, 35% of the state's Glossy Ibis, as well as smaller numbers of Little

The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) is a species that breeds at Perch River.

Blue Herons, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Great Black-backed Gulls, Herring Gulls, and Double-crested Cormorants. The viability of the rookeries depends upon the availability of quality foraging areas such as those found at the Goethals Bridge Pond.

Perch River

The Perch River BCA is a 7,682-acre parcel located in Jefferson County that consists of high quality wetlands bordered by deciduous forest, shrub land, and open agriculture fields. The area supports an exceptional wetland bird community with a diverse array of wetland-associated and grassland birds. State-listed species include breeding

American Bitterns, Least Bitterns, Ospreys, Bald Eagles, Black Terns (20-30 pairs), Sedge Wrens, and Henslow's Sparrow.

Adirondack High Peaks

The Adirondack High Peaks BCA is approximately 69,000 acres located in Essex, Franklin, and Hamilton Counties. The area is comprised of sub-alpine forests above 2,800 feet in the Adirondack High Peaks Wilderness Area. This BCA consists of dense, sub-alpine coniferous forests that provide critical habitats and nesting areas for the state-listed Bicknell's Thrush as well as Blackpoll Warblers and Swainson's Thrush.

RAY MARTORELL/MARY TREMAINE
CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY



WILSON BLOOMER
CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY

Two adult Golden-winged Warblers (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) feeding young at a nest. Sterling forest is one of the few locations where Golden-winged Warblers and Blue-winged Warblers have coexisted.