

Historical Highlights

State Symbols



Prepared and Updated by
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives Archives

Symbol

Legislation

State Seal



The state seal of Pennsylvania has two faces. The front, which is most recognizable, is comprised of images of a ship, plough, and wheat. The reverse depicts a woman (representing liberty) over a lion (representing tyranny) with the motto “Both Can’t Survive.”

The seal received legal recognition from the General Assembly in 1791 when it was designated the official State Seal.

State Coat of Arms



Pennsylvania began using a coat of arms on paper money in 1777. In 1778, Caleb Lowmes created a design including images of a ship, plough, sheaves of wheat, an eagle, two horses and the motto “Virtue, Liberty, and Independence.”

In 1875, after realizing a lack of uniformity in the seal’s usage, the legislature formed a commission that adopted an official version of the coat of arms that was nearly identical to Lowmes’ original design.

Symbol

Legislation

State Flag



The state flag, including the coat of arms, was authorized by the General Assembly in 1799. On June 13, 1907, Act 373 standardized the flag requiring the blue field to match the blue hue of the American flag.

The state flag of Pennsylvania consists of the state coat of arms on a blue field.

State Animal



Act 416 of October 2, 1959, officially designated the Whitetail Deer as Pennsylvania's animal, citing its abundance within the state and its pivotal role in the survival of the early settler and Native American populations.

<http://www.pennlive.com/pa-sportsman/2016/05/with-deer-disease-doubling-in.html>

The Whitetail Deer is the official state animal.

State Game Bird



Act 234 of June 22, 1931 officially designated the Ruffed Grouse as Pennsylvania's state game bird.

<https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/rufgro/introduction>

The Ruffed Grouse is the official state game bird.

Symbol
State Dog

Legislation



<http://mentalfloss.com/article/66590/10-mighty-facts-about-great-danes>

Act 178 of August 17, 1965, officially designated the Great Dane as Pennsylvania's state dog. The Great Dane is featured as the "Best Friend" of William Penn in a painting by Pennsylvania artist Violet Oakley, which is prominently displayed in the Governor's reception room in the State Capitol. The Act further praises the dog's size, strength, beauty, intelligence and courage, which exemplify some of Pennsylvania's best qualities as well.



<http://www.pennsylvaniaanimals.org/LatestNews.html>

The Great Dane is the official state dog.

State Fish



Act 61 of March 9, 1970, designated the Brook Trout as Pennsylvania's state fish. The Act notes the Brook Trout's beauty and wide dispersal throughout the state as reason for its selection.

<https://pennsylvaniaanimals.wikispaces.com/Brook+Trout>

The Brook Trout is the official state fish.

Symbol

Legislation

State Flower



Act 107 of May 5, 1933, declared the Mountain Laurel as Pennsylvania's state flower.

<https://statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-or-officially-designated-item/pennsylvania/state-flower/mountain-laurel>

The Mountain Laurel is the official state flower. The flower blooms in mid-June.

State Insect



Act 59 of April 10, 1974, officially designated the firefly as Pennsylvania's state insect.

<https://statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-or-officially-designated-item/pennsylvania/state-insect/firefly>

The firefly, specifically the *Photuris Pennsylvanica De Geer*, is the official state insect of Pennsylvania.

State Beverage



Act 98 of April 29, 1982, officially designated milk as Pennsylvania's state beverage.

<https://www.thedailymeal.com/drink/myths-about-milk-you-probably-thought-were-true>

Milk is the official state beverage of Pennsylvania.

Symbol

Legislation

State Tree



Act 233 of June 22, 1931, declared the Hemlock as Pennsylvania's state tree. The Act notes the tree's importance to pioneers who came to Pennsylvania, its industrial uses, and its importance to supporting wildlife within the forests. The Act also celebrated the tree's use during the holiday season.

<https://statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-official-item/pennsylvania/state-tree/eastern-hemlock>

The Hemlock, specifically the *Tsuga Canadensis Linnaeus*, is the state tree of Pennsylvania.

State Ship



Act 61 of April 29, 1988, declared the United States Brig Niagara as Pennsylvania's official flagship. The ship is the only remaining ship of its type from the War of 1812. The Act notes that the ship was to serve as a memorial to the Americans who built and sailed the ships that defeated the British forces at the Battle of Lake Erie on September 10, 1813.

<https://statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-or-officially-designated-item/pennsylvania/state-ship-aircraft/tall-ship-brig-niagara>

The United States Brig Niagara is the official flagship of Pennsylvania.

Symbol

Legislation

State plant



Act 150 of June 17, 1892, adopted the Penngift Crownvetch as Pennsylvania's beautification and conservation plant. The plant's name is comprised of "Penn" for Pennsylvania and "gift" for the farmer whose land the plant was discovered on in Pennsylvania. The plant has been extensively used by the Department of Transportation alongside Interstates throughout Pennsylvania, and has been successfully used to prevent erosion from farmlands.

<https://statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-official-item/pennsylvania/state-plant/penngift-crownvetch>

The Penngift Crownvetch is the official beautification and conservation plant of Pennsylvania.

State Fossil



Act 138 December 5, 1988, designated the Phacops rana as Pennsylvania's state fossil. Selected after many specimens were found throughout the state, the Phacops rana was a small sea creature whose name means "frog eyes" due to the large holes for eyes on the fossil.

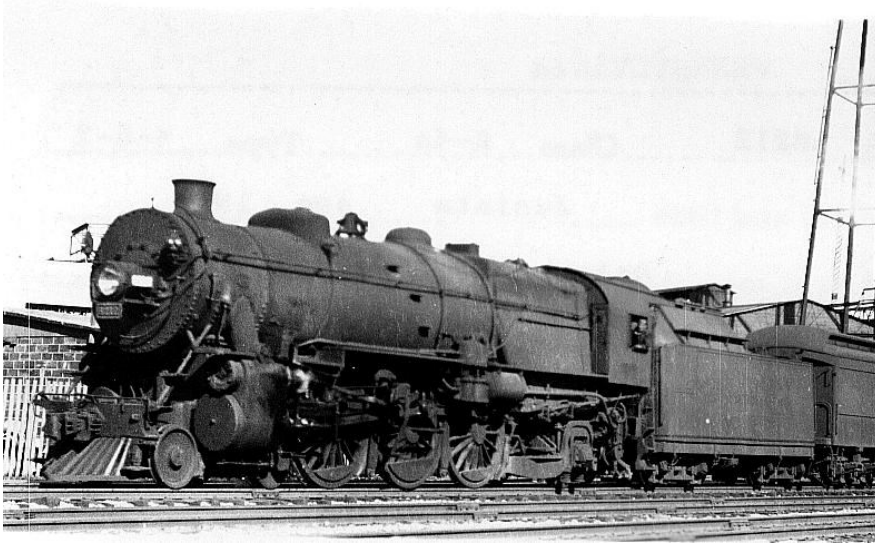
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phacops_rana#/media/File:Phacops_rana.jpg

The Phacops rana is the state fossil of Pennsylvania.

Symbol

Legislation

State Steam Locomotive



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/2/2e/PRR_K4s_8212.jpg

The K4s Steam Locomotive is the official steam locomotive of Pennsylvania.

Act 89 of December 18, 1987, designated the K4s Steam Locomotive as the official steam locomotive of Pennsylvania. Two surviving K4s locomotives are located in Altoona and Strasburg. This type of train served as the main power for Pennsylvania Railroad passenger trains for thirty years.

State Electric Locomotive



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania_Railroad_class_GG1

The Pennsylvania Railroad GG1 4859 Electric Locomotive is the official electric locomotive of Pennsylvania.

Act 89 of December 18, 1987, designated the Pennsylvania Railroad GG1 4859 Electric Locomotive as Pennsylvania's official electric locomotive. The locomotive was built in 1937 in Altoona, Pennsylvania. The high-speed engine powered passenger trains, troop trains in WWII, coal, and freight.

Symbol

Legislation

State Song

“Pennsylvania”

**Written and Composed by
Eddie Khoury and Ronnie Bonner**

Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania,
Mighty is your name,
Steeped in glory and tradition,
Object of acclaim,
Where brave men fought the foe of freedom,
Tyranny decried,
'Til the bell of independence filled the countryside.

Chorus

Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania,
May your future be filled with honor everlasting as
your history.

Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania,
Blessed by God's own hand,
Birthplace of a mighty nation,
Keystone of the land.

Where first our country's flag unfolded,
Freedom to proclaim,
May the voices of tomorrow glorify your name.

Chorus

Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania,
May your future be filled with honor everlasting as
your history.

Act 150 of November 29, 1990,
designated “Pennsylvania” lyrics
and music by Eddie Khoury and
Ronnie Bonner as Pennsylvania’s
official song.

State Amphibian



Act 3 of April 23, 2019
designated the Eastern
Hellbender is the official
amphibian of the Commonwealth
of Pennsylvania.

<https://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/what-is-a-hellbender-pennsylvanias-new-official-state-amphibian/Content?oid=14744038>

The Eastern Hellbender is the official
amphibian of Pennsylvania.

Symbol

Legislation

State Aircraft



Act 73 of June 26, 2014 designated the Piper J-3 Cub as the official State aircraft of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/piper-j-3-cub/nasm_A19771128000

The Piper J-3 Cub is the official State aircraft of Pennsylvania. The Piper J-3 Cub is a small, simple, light aircraft, recognizable by its famous yellow fuselage and black trim, that was built in the city of Lock Haven, Clinton County, between 1937 and 1947 by Piper Aircraft.

State Firearm



Act 73 of June 26, 2014 designated the Pennsylvania Long Rifle as official firearm of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_rifle#/media/File:John_Spitzer_-_Kentucky_Rifle_-_Walters_511434_-_Side_A.jpg

The Pennsylvania Long Rifle is the official state firearm of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Long Rifle, a unique firearm that was different in principle and outline from any other weapon in the world, was developed by skilled gunsmiths in the Moravian Communities of Christian's Spring, Northampton County, as well as artistic rifle maker Maryin Meylin, in Willow Street, Lancaster County.