



PENNSYLVANIA'S STATE SYMBOLS



Pennsylvania has many official “mascots.” Each of these symbols is connected to history, honors a native species, or recognizes a product of importance to Pennsylvania’s economy.

Read on to find out more about our state symbols.



State Flag

Pennsylvania’s most well recognized symbol is the state flag, which is blue and features the state coat of arms. The ship, plow and sheaves of wheat found in the coat of arms are drawn from the colonial-era crests of three Pennsylvania counties.

The first state flag bearing the coat of arms was authorized by the General Assembly in 1799. During the Civil War, many Pennsylvania regiments carried flags modeled after the United States flag, but substituted Pennsylvania’s coat of arms for the field of stars.

On June 13, 1907, the General Assembly passed a law standardizing the flag and requiring that the blue field match the blue of Old Glory.

Today, the Pennsylvania flag is flown from all state buildings and can be seen at many other public places throughout the Commonwealth.



The State Seal

The state seal is stamped on official Commonwealth documents to certify their authenticity.

When Pennsylvania was still a province of England, its seals were those of William Penn and his descendants. By 1778, a seal similar to the modern one was in use.

The obverse face, or front, features a shield emblazoned with a sailing ship, plow and sheaves of wheat. Surrounding the shield are a stalk of Indian corn, an olive branch and the inscription “Seal of the State of Pennsylvania.”

The reverse features a woman, representing liberty, who is trampling upon a lion, which represents tyranny. The design is encircled by the words “Both Can’t Survive.”

The Coat of Arms

Pennsylvania’s coat of arms first appeared on paper money issued in 1777; a revised design today adorns the state flag.

The original coat of arms was designed by Caleb Lowmes of Philadelphia, but the Legislature changed it several times before settling on the current design, which is similar to Lowmes’. This design features a shield supported by two horses. On the shield are the emblems of the state seal – a ship, plow, sheaves of wheat, an olive branch and cornstalk. At the bottom is the motto “Virtue, Liberty and Independence.”



State Song

The official state song of the Commonwealth, “Pennsylvania,” by Eddie Khoury and Ronnie Bonner, was adopted by the General Assembly in 1990.

PENNSYLVANIA

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.

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.

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



1

1 State Animal

WHITETAIL DEER – Pennsylvania settlers used this plentiful deer as a source of food and clothing. Whitetail, which can still be found throughout Pennsylvania, can run 40 mph in short bursts, maintain speeds of 25 mph for longer periods, and jump obstacles up to nine feet high.



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2 State Tree

HEMLOCK – Many Pennsylvania pioneers used hemlocks to build sturdy cabins. The thick foliage of hemlock trees also provides shelter for birds and other animals and keeps forests cool in summer. Hemlocks block snowfall, too, making it easier for deer to move about during harsh winters.



2

3 State Fish

BROOK TROUT – Pennsylvania's 4,000 miles of cold-water streams provide the perfect habitat for this fish, the only trout native to the Commonwealth. Brook trout are also called speckled trout, squaretails or just "brookies" by anglers.



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4 State Beautification Plant

PENNGIFT CROWNVELTCH – Penngift Crownvetch is often planted along highways to prevent erosion, but the plant's eye-catching purple-pink flowers also serve to beautify the landscape for passing motorists.



3

5 State Ship

UNITED STATES BRIG NIAGARA – During the War of 1812, the U.S. Brig Niagara served as the flagship of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry and played a decisive role in the defeat of a British squadron at the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813.



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6 State Insect

FIREFLY – Often called "lightning bugs," these insects brighten the Commonwealth's summer nights. In 1974, the General Assembly selected the firefly as the state insect. However, in 1988, another law was passed to specify a particular species: *Poturis Pennsylvania De Geer*.



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7 State Flower

MOUNTAIN LAUREL – These flowers delighted the wife of one of Pennsylvania's past governors, who then declared it as the state flower. When the mountain laurel – or *Kalmia latifolia* – is in full bloom in mid-June, Pennsylvania's woodlands are filled with its distinctive pink flowers.



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8 State Bird

RUFFED GROUSE – Sometimes called the partridge, this plump, red-brown bird with feathery legs was once a main source of food for Pennsylvania settlers. The ruffed grouse, which thrives on snowy winters and cold conditions, owes its name to the long, shiny neck feathers that are most prominent on the male.



5

9 State Fossil

PHACOPS RANA – A member of the trilobite family, Phacops rana's fossils are usually found in Pennsylvania's Devonian-age rocks, meaning rocks that are between 405 and 365 million years old. Phacops Rana means "frog eyes" because large eye holes can be seen on the fossil.



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10 State Dog

GREAT DANE – In the Commonwealth's early days, Great Danes were used as hunting and working dogs. Generally standing about 30 inches tall at the shoulder, they are considered the "Apollo" of dogs, combining strength and intelligence.



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11 State Beverage

MILK – This symbol honors one of the state's leading farm products. The average dairy cow produces 62 glasses of milk each day, helping to keep milk a top state commodity. In fact, milk accounts for about 40 percent of our agricultural output, making the Commonwealth the nation's fourth largest milk producer.



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12 State Locomotive

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD K4S – The state steam locomotive, the Pennsylvania Railroad K4s, pulled passenger cars, while the electric locomotive, the Pennsylvania Railroad GG1 Locomotive Number 4859, also pulled freight and World War II troop trains.