

Delaware, Small Wonder

Facts about the first state!

HOW BIG IS DELAWARE?

2,044 square miles

Most of Delaware is on the Atlantic Coastal plain. The northern part of the state is on the Piedmont plateau, a hilly area between the Appalachian Mountains and the Atlantic coastal plain. The dividing line runs east-west between the cities of Wilmington and Newark.

Delaware is 96 miles long and 39 miles at its widest.

ELEVATION:

HIGHEST: 442 feet above sea level (Ebright Road, north Wilmington)

LOWEST: Sea level

STATEHOOD: Delaware declared its independence from Great Britain on June 15, 1776. It thereby also became independent of Pennsylvania with which it had been connected since 1682. It is known as the "First State" because on December 7, 1787, it became the first to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

STATE CAPITAL: Dover

DELAWARE HAS 3 COUNTIES:

New Castle (northern Delaware)

Kent (center of Delaware, 11 miles south of Dover)

Sussex (downstate, the largest county, measuring 950 square miles)

HOW DID DELAWARE GET ITS NAME?

In 1610 explorer Samuel Argall named the Delaware River and Bay for the governor of Virginia, Thomas West, Lord De La Warr. The state of Delaware takes its name from the river and bay.

DELAWARE'S GOVERNMENT: Delaware's government consists of the General Assembly, made up of a Senate and House of Representatives, the Governor, and the judiciary.

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DELAWARE'S FLAG: Delaware adopted the current state flag on July 24, 1913. The state seal is enclosed in a buff diamond on a colonial blue background. Below the diamond is printed "December 7, 1787," the date that Delaware ratified the U.S. Constitution and became the first state.

BIRD: *Blue Hen* (named February 1939 after the "Fighting Blue Hens" the mascot of Delaware Revolutionary War soldiers)

BUTTERFLY: *Tiger Swallowtail* (*Pterourus glaucus*) Adopted June 10, 1999

FLOWER: *Peach Blossom*

Adopted on May 9, 1895, after farmers and schoolchildren petitioned the General Assembly. Beginning in the early 1800s, Delaware became a leading producer of peaches until a blight called "the yellows" destroyed the orchards in the late 1800s.

FOSSIL: *Belemnitella americana* (ancestors of the modern squid).

HERB: *Sweet Golden Rod* (*Solidago odora*)

Adopted June 24, 1996 and indigenous to Delaware; found throughout the state along coastal areas and by marshes.

INSECT: *Ladybug*

Adopted April 25, 1974, after state schoolchildren petitioned the General Assembly.

TREE: *Holly American holly* (*Ilex opaca* Aiton)

Adopted by Act of the General Assembly and Governor on May 1, 1939. During the late nineteenth century until the 1930s, Sussex County became the leading supplier of holly, used for Christmas decorations and wreaths.

FISH: *Weakfish* (*Cynoscion* genus)

Also known as the sea trout, yellow fin trout, squeteague and tide runner, the weak fish was adopted by the state legislature as state fish in 1981, in recognition of sport fishing's recreational and economic standing in the state of Delaware.

BEVERAGE: *Milk*, adopted 1983

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COLORS: Colonial buff and blue

SHELL: Shell of the channeled whelk, officially declared May 2014.

STATE SONG: "Our Delaware"

Written by George B. Hynson (words) and William M.S. Brown (music), published 1906. It became the state song in 1925 by an act of the General Assembly. Donn Devine wrote the last verse in a 1960 competition authorized by the by the General Assembly to add a fourth statewide verse to the ones for each county.

MOTTO: "Liberty and Independence"

NICKNAMES

First State: first to ratify the Constitution.

Diamond State: Legend has it that Thomas Jefferson called Delaware a "jewel" among the states because of its strategic location along the East Coast.

Blue Hen State: One form of entertainment during the Revolutionary War for Delaware soldiers was cock fighting. It was so popular that Delaware Soldiers brought their own Blue Hens with them during their stay in the army. The Blue Hen was noted for its fighting ability, and because of their bravery, the men of Captain Jonathan Caldwell's company was soon compared to this breed.

Small Wonder

Home of Tax-Free Shopping

Peach State: the first state to produce peaches commercially

Corporate Capital

Chemical Capital

WEATHER: Delawareans (and our visitors!) enjoy all four seasons

DELAWAREANS

The first known inhabitants of Delaware were two tribes of Native Americans: the Lenni Lenape and the Nanticoke.

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