



Photo by  
Krista Englund



Photo by  
Ted Cheskey

Connecting  
Birds and People:  
IBAs are an important  
tool for engaging people in  
awareness and protection of  
their local bird populations.

# The Canadian Important Bird Areas Caretaker Manual



# Welcome!

Congratulations on joining Canada's growing Important Bird Areas (IBA) Caretaker Network! Becoming a Caretaker is a rewarding experience and an effective way to make a positive impact on this planet. In so doing, you are now part of BirdLife International's global network of people and organizations engaged in protecting birds and nature in over 120 countries. As a Caretaker, you are the eyes, ears, and hands on the ground at Important Bird Areas across Canada.

By working with local communities, scientists, governments and nature groups, you are building healthier bird communities and more sustainable environments for future generations. Regional IBA Coordinators are in place to make your experience as a Caretaker as meaningful and enjoyable as possible. The IBA Canada Partners are truly appreciative of your commitment!



*Volunteers working on an IBA, photo from the Nature Canada library*



*Phil and Kay Willson at Blaine Lake IBA, photo by Shelly Fisher*



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*Mountain Bluebird,  
photo by Dave Polster*



*Great Blue Heron, photo by Kay Steer*



*Atlantic Puffins, photo from  
the Nature Canada library*



# Important Bird Areas Caretaker Manual

This manual is a guide for you, the Caretaker, in your role within the Canadian Important Bird Areas Program. It describes the range of activities in which you can participate, all contributing to conservation of these extremely important sites for birds in Canada. The manual also provides some background information on the IBA Program and directs you to resources designed to help you succeed in your efforts to monitor and conserve IBAs. If you have access to the internet, you will find the IBA Canada website [www.ibacanada.ca](http://www.ibacanada.ca), and the IBA Caretakers Network

Portal (ask your Regional IBA Coordinator for access), extremely valuable for accessing resources and support materials and connecting with other Caretakers. With or without internet access, your Regional IBA Coordinator can help guide you in learning where to access these resources.

This manual was produced collaboratively by members of the IBA Canada Committee. Your comments and feedback are appreciated.



Great Egret, photo by Amelia Gaulin



Bicknell's Thrush, photo by T. Brant Ryder/Vermont Center for Ecostudies

## Introduction to the Important Bird Areas Program



The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program is a worldwide effort to maintain and improve the conservation of the world's birds by protecting important bird habitats and integrating bird conservation with sustaining people's livelihoods. The site-based approach to conservation afforded by IBAs is an important complement to other tools and policies intended to conserve bird populations. The majority of Canada's IBAs are discrete sites at which significant numbers of birds regularly breed, congregate, or pass through on migration. IBAs have

also been identified because they support significant numbers of threatened birds, or birds restricted by range or by habitat.

The IBA Program was initiated in the 1980s by BirdLife International ([www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org)), a global alliance of non-government, grassroots, and membership-based groups in 170 countries and territories, all dedicated to the conservation of wild birds and their habitats. Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada (BSC)



represent BirdLife in Canada and share in the development and delivery of the national IBA Program, with BSC leading on data management, mapping, and site nominations, and Nature Canada leading on conservation, outreach, and partnerships. In 2009, a Master Plan was developed for the Canadian IBA Program to chart a course to advance IBAs in Canada's conservation culture and amplify their importance in decisions around land, water, and resource-use and planning. A summary of the Master Plan, available on Nature Canada's website (<http://www.naturecanada.ca/reports.asp#bird>), places much of the information in this manual into broader contexts.

The goal of Canada's IBA Program is to identify, monitor, and conserve a network of sites that provide essential

habitat for significant bird populations. IBA designation is non-regulatory. Almost 70% of our approximately 600 IBAs exhibit little to no overlap with protected areas, leaving them vulnerable to development and other disturbances. Where IBAs do overlap with officially protected areas, roughly half of the overlap is in areas where protection is rigorous, such as National Parks and Conservation Reserves. The remainder of the overlap occurs in protected areas that allow a wider range of human activities, from hunting and fishing to logging and mining. The National and Regional IBA Program partners use a suite of different tools and approaches to enhance protection and conservation of Canada's IBAs including community conservation planning and stewardship.

## How do sites become IBAs?

A site is recognized as an IBA only if it meets IBA selection criteria. As well, an IBA must be amenable to conservation action and management. The IBA criteria are internationally, continentally and nationally agreed upon, standardized, quantitative and scientifically defensible. Ideally, each IBA should be large enough to support self-sustaining populations of as many possible key bird species for which it was identified, or, in the case of migrants, fulfil their requirements for the duration of their presence. By definition, an IBA is an international and national priority for conservation action.

The selection of IBAs has been a particularly effective way of identifying conservation priorities. IBAs are key sites for conservation — small enough to be conserved in their entirety and often already part of a protected-area network. They do one (or more) of three things:

- Hold significant numbers of one or more threatened species
- Are one of a set of sites that together hold a suite of restricted-range species or biome-restricted species
- Hold significant numbers of birds

Over 11,000 IBAs have been identified world-wide covering over one million hectares. In Canada, nearly 600 sites were identified in the late 1990s (Figure 1). Most Canadian IBAs fall into the last category — (hold significant numbers of birds).

As bird populations and habitat conditions can change over time, the status of an IBA could also change. It is possible that some IBAs may no longer meet the



*Tadoussac Important Bird Area,  
photo by Ted Cheskey*



threshold criteria in the future, which could lead to removing their IBA status. Some new sites may also emerge as meeting the threshold criteria leading to their recognition as new IBAs.

Interested in learning more about why your IBA was designated? Visit [www.ibacanada.ca](http://www.ibacanada.ca) and click on “Explore IBAs” to search the IBA Site Directory for your IBA.

Site maps, regional maps, and other maps that enable IBAs to be visualized over satellite images are publicly available to download from the IBA website ([www.ibacanada.ca/explore\\_how.jsp](http://www.ibacanada.ca/explore_how.jsp)). Instructions about how to use Google Earth and KML files and how to use free GIS software etc. were developed by BSC and are available on the Caretakers Portal (see Appendix 5) or from BSC.

## IBA Canada website, [www.ibacanada.ca](http://www.ibacanada.ca)

The Canadian Important Bird Areas website ([www.ibacanada.ca](http://www.ibacanada.ca)) contains a wealth of information, including IBA summaries, maps, and seasonal bar charts; information and news; and national monitoring forms

and guidance. The National IBA Program is a bilingual program, and all key resources will be available in English and French.

**Figure 1. Sites in Canada that are currently recognized as Important Bird Areas**



# IBA Caretakers in Canada

BC Nature initiated a Provincial IBA Caretaker Network in 2007, based on similar networks in Europe. The basic concept was to engage volunteers with an interest in birds or the conservation of a particular area to become 'caretakers' for the province's IBAs.



*Friends of Semiahmoo Bay,  
photo by Marg Cutlibert*

The job description was simple — visit the site when the 'trigger' bird population(s) are present, and report back to the Regional IBA Coordinator on habitat conditions, bird population observations, any signs

of threats to the birds or habitat, and information on any conservation efforts taking place. This information would be used by the Regional IBA Coordinator to update the published information on the IBA website.

In cases where no bird monitoring program exists, Caretakers are encouraged to monitor the 'trigger' bird species i.e. the species that promoted IBA designation in the first place.

In 2009, Nature Canada received significant funding from TransCanada Corporation that allowed for the development of a national IBA Caretaker Network. Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada invested in updating the website and developing various technical tools for a reinvigorated IBA Program in which Caretakers play a key role.

Five provinces came on-board in the first year: British Columbia, Quebec, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. In 2010, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador joined the partnership with New Brunswick joining in 2011 with Manitoba set to join in 2012.

See Appendix 2 for contact information for each partner or visit [www.ibacanada.ca](http://www.ibacanada.ca).

## What is an IBA Caretaker?

IBA Caretakers are individuals or groups of people who voluntarily commit to caring for one or more IBAs in Canada. This commitment is made typically as a formal agreement between you (the Caretaker), and the Regional Partner.

In general, Caretakers keep track of and report on changes to bird populations and habitats (including potential threats) within IBAs. Information gathered by

Caretakers helps Regional and National IBA Canada Partners engage in effective bird conservation efforts by keeping information up-to-date and responding to threats to habitats and species. Caretakers may also choose to engage in other important conservation activities for the IBA such as stewardship, outreach, conservation planning and helping assess broader site biodiversity. Caretakers may be members of a nature club/conservation organization, be officially



associated with IBAs as part of their employment (e.g. parks staff), or have no particular affiliation. Ideally, a Caretaker will be familiar with, and be situated close to the IBA, and possess the means to visit the IBA with some frequency. For some remote IBAs, visitation might be limited to once per year or as opportunities arise. It is helpful if Caretakers are able to commit to participating in the Program for at least three years. Caretakers are recruited by and report to the Regional Coordinator for the IBA Canada Partner, except where a province/territory lacks a Partner. The exact nature of the reporting and the agreement between the Caretaker and the Regional Partner will likely vary. The Regional Coordinator is the link from

the Caretaker to the IBA Program in Canada and BirdLife International.

Finally, a tool exists exclusively for Caretakers: The Canadian IBA Caretaker Network Portal. ([www.canadiannaturenetwork.ca/workgroups/iba-caretakers-network](http://www.canadiannaturenetwork.ca/workgroups/iba-caretakers-network)) This is a password-protected web-space for Caretakers to share information, access resources, and participate in moderated discussions on topics of common interest. For more information, refer to Appendix 5.

To access the Portal, register yourself online at [www.canadiannaturenetwork.ca](http://www.canadiannaturenetwork.ca), then contact your Regional IBA Coordinator for next steps.



Harlequin Duck,  
photo by Larry Kirtley



Northern Gannets, photo from  
the Nature Canada library



# Caretaker Activities

The activities that you as a Caretaker choose to participate in will vary based on the IBA and on your own interests and skills. All activities assume that you are familiar with the IBA and that you visit it annually or more frequently. No matter what your involvement is, all Caretakers are expected to report to their Regional IBA Coordinators on at least an annual basis. See Appendix 3 for guidance on how and what to report. Also please use Appendix 1 to keep track of your time and effort as a Caretaker.

Below is a description of some meaningful ways in which you can get involved as an IBA Caretaker:

- **Update IBA Information.** Ongoing monitoring and assessment is integral to determining if bird populations or habitat conditions are changing. Efforts to track these changes in Canadian IBAs need to be consistent with BirdLife International's protocols. BirdLife's IBA program was recently adopted by the United Nations as a key indicator from which to measure global progress towards targets set by global conventions and agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Millennium Development Goals. This involves assessing site conditions and bird populations, and submitting your observations to the IBA Coordinator — normally in an Annual Report. This information will be used to update site summaries published on the IBA Canada web database. **National Guidance and Reporting forms** are available in the Technical folder of National Resources, in the Useful Resources Section of the IBA Caretakers Network Portal, <http://canadiannaturenetwork.ca/workgroups/iba-caretakers-network/useful-resources> or from your Regional IBA Coordinator who will provide instructions to help you with the assessment. You are encouraged to use the form "IBA Comprehensive Review" to collect information

for your site assessment. Collecting this information may require multiple visits and may not be possible to complete within one calendar year.

- **Conduct Bird Monitoring.** In many IBAs, some form of bird monitoring is already taking place through Bird Studies Canada's citizen science program or local naturalist-coordinated programs. The IBA Program seeks to build on these efforts, and not duplicate them. With the help of your Regional IBA Coordinator, make yourself aware of any existing monitoring efforts and then check whether the monitoring adequately covers the IBA 'trigger' populations i.e. species that prompted IBA designation. If you have an interest in monitoring birds in the IBA, please work with your Regional IBA Coordinator and BSC to develop and implement the most appropriate bird monitoring program. Bird observations should be entered into [www.eBird.ca](http://www.eBird.ca) wherever possible. Please see Appendix 6 for more information on eBird.
- **Conduct Outreach.** Consider building interest and support for the IBA in the local community through your own education efforts. Examples



*IBA program manager and guide from Fort Albany First Nation at Albany River Estuary IBA, photo by Peter Rosenbluth*



of types of activities you may consider include participating in meetings, workshops, local events, organizing or leading outings to IBAs, reaching out to local schools, developing a web page on the IBA, and engaging local decision-makers by sharing information about IBAs and their value to birds and Canadians. Regional and National Partners have engagement tools such as a message bank, a Power Point Slide Presentation, a newsletter template, IBA brochures and other materials, all of which are available through your Regional IBA Coordinator and in the Communications folder of the Useful Resources section on the IBA Caretakers Network Portal. See Appendix 4 for more details. The Regional and National Partners are also interested in hearing of your experiences as a Caretaker and sharing them with the Canadian public. Talk with your Regional Coordinator about how to share your story!

- **Be an IBA Advocate.** When a potential conservation threat arises in an IBA, we encourage you to take appropriate action to address the threat, depending on your interest and capacity. At a minimum, we hope that you would inform your Regional IBA Coordinator of the threat, or in the absence of a Regional IBA Coordinator, the Manager of Bird Conservation Programs at Nature Canada. As a Caretaker, you provide a very important local perspective, and possess local knowledge that is critical to understanding an issue and determining the most effective and appropriate response. Regional IBA Coordinators are available to help and can provide advice on an appropriate course of action, or provide contact information for government agencies that may have a regulatory role.
- **Be an IBA Steward.** Stewardship activities come closest to the meaning of “caring for” something, in this case habitats that are important for birds. In an IBA this could include undertaking habitat

restoration by removing garbage or invasive species or planting vegetation to improve degraded habitat, installing signage or information panels, or managing the movement of visitors in the IBA to minimize negative effects and maximize positive experiences. Regional IBA Coordinators are on hand to assist by providing information and materials where possible, or by helping to identify funding sources for such activities.

- **Conservation Planning.** Conservation planning in IBAs is by guided by the National Partners through the IBA Conservation Planning Manual, which will be available on the IBA Caretakers Network Portal under the Technical Section of National Resources in the Useful Resources Section. This manual describes the planning process and provides a template for planners to work with as well as appearance standards for the plan itself. The development of a conservation plan is overseen by the Regional Partner with the participation of local land owners, First Nations and other indigenous peoples, stakeholders, and land managers. Conservation plans establish goals and objectives, and are important tools for leveraging support for the IBA. About 90 plans were written between 2000 and 2002. Find out if a plan exists in your IBA and talk with your Regional IBA Coordinator about whether it has been implemented or whether it needs revision. In the absence of a plan, you may



*Boats are often the only way to visit many IBAs. Albany River IBA, photo by Peter Rosenbluth*



consider initiating one with the collaboration of your Regional IBA Coordinator.

In some cases, an individual Caretaker will have the capacity, interest, and ability to conduct all of these

activities. Other Caretakers may prefer to focus on one or two activities, and work with their Regional IBA Coordinator to engage others with the capacity to undertake other duties. Whatever you decide to do in this capacity, your efforts are valuable and appreciated

## Site visits and safety

Since visiting an IBA is essential to being a Caretaker, safety during site visits is a top priority. Please take great care when visiting the IBA — your personal safety and protecting birds and habitats is of utmost importance. IBAs can be remote and challenging to access. If possible, bring a friend along on your site visit. Remember to inform someone that you are conducting a site visit, including your expected return time. Always wear appropriate clothing for the weather and other environmental conditions such as biting insects or ticks. The IBA Canada Partners cannot accept responsibility or liability for accidents during a site visit.

Please be aware of issues related to trespass; some IBAs have restricted access to protect wildlife and many are situated on private property or within First Nations or Indigenous Peoples territories. You should plan your visits well in advance and always contact the appropriate management body or landowner to obtain permission to gain access. Be prepared to share information and observations with the land owner if requested. Where permission to enter was not sought in advance, it is best to make observations from a public access point such as a road side pull-off. IBA Coordinators may be able to facilitate access for monitoring if needed.



*Red Knots, photo from the Nature Canada Library*



*Caretakers visiting Sept-Îles IBA, Quebec, photo by Ted Cheskey*



# Closing Remarks

If it seems like you are taking on a lot, please be assured that we want you to feel comfortable in your role as an IBA Caretaker. Discuss any concerns with your Regional IBA Coordinator, and get involved at a level that suits you. Over the longer term, we hope to focus on helping to build the capacity of individuals and groups that serve as Caretakers. Check out [www.birdlife.org/community/](http://www.birdlife.org/community/) to get a feel for the

wider global network that you are a part of, and draw inspiration from the actions of Site Support Groups and Caretakers all around the world!

Thank you for your interest in becoming an IBA Caretaker. With your help and dedication, the IBA Program and important populations of birds in Canada will be safeguarded.

# Acknowledgements

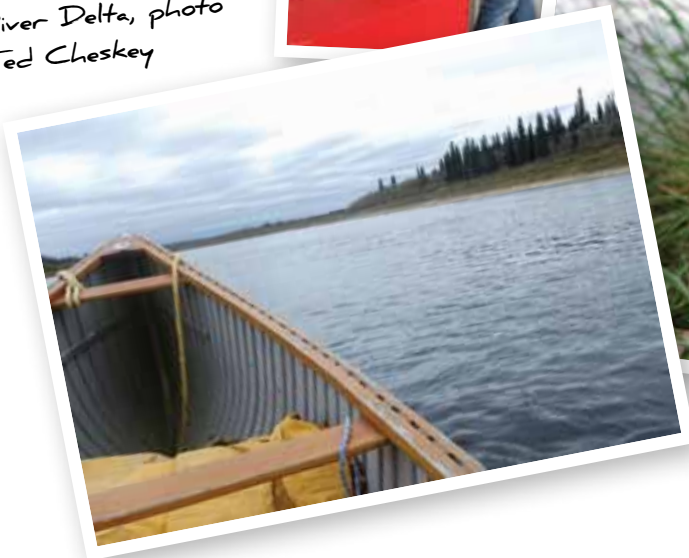
This manual is the result of collaboration between IBA Canada Partners. Special thanks to BC Regional Partners for the initial version of the manual. Revisions to the electronic version will occur as additional Caretaker

resources are developed. Publication of this manual by Nature Canada was made possible through the support of TransCanada Corporation, national sponsor of the IBA Caretaker Network in Canada.



*Caretakers' help and dedication safeguard Canadian bird populations*

*En route to the Albany River Delta, photo by Ted Cheskey*



*Burrowing Owl, photo from the Nature Canada library*





# Appendix 2. IBA Canada Partners Contact Information 2011

## National Partners

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### Nature Canada

75 Albert Street, Suite 300  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7  
Phone: 613 562 3447  
[www.naturecanada.ca](http://www.naturecanada.ca)

### Bird Studies Canada

Box 160, 115 Front Street  
Port Rowan, ON, N0E 1M0  
519 586 3531  
[www.birdscanada.org](http://www.birdscanada.org)

## Regional Partners

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### ALBERTA

#### Nature Alberta

11759 Groat Road  
Edmonton, AB, T5M 3K6  
Phone: 780-427-8124  
[www.naturealberta.ca](http://www.naturealberta.ca)

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

#### BC Nature

c/o Parks Heritage Centre  
1620 Mount Seymour Road  
North Vancouver, BC V7G 2R9  
Phone: (604) 985-3057  
[www.bcnature.ca](http://www.bcnature.ca)

#### BSC British Columbia

[bcprograms@birdscanada.org](mailto:bcprograms@birdscanada.org)

### LABRADOR

#### Intervale

PO Box 172  
Doyles, NL A0N 1J0  
Phone: 514-378-8256  
[www.intervale.ca](http://www.intervale.ca)

### MANITOBA

#### Manitoba Naturalists' Society

Suite 401, 63 Albert Street  
Winnipeg, MB R3B 1G4  
Phone: (204) 943-9029  
[www.naturemanitoba.ca](http://www.naturemanitoba.ca)

#### Bird Studies Canada Manitoba

[mbatlas@birdscanada.org](mailto:mbatlas@birdscanada.org)

### NEW BRUNSWICK

#### Nature New Brunswick

924 Prospect St, Suite 110  
Fredericton, NB, E3B 2T9  
Phone: (506) 459-4209  
[www.naturenb.ca](http://www.naturenb.ca)

### NEWFOUNDLAND

#### Nature Newfoundland and Labrador

58 Hugh's Pond Road  
Portugal Cover, St. Phillips, NL  
A1M 2C6  
[www.nhs.nf.ca](http://www.nhs.nf.ca)

### NOVA SCOTIA

#### BSC Atlantic Region

45 Alderney Dr., 16th flr  
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 2N6  
[www.bsc-eoc.org](http://www.bsc-eoc.org)

### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

#### Island Nature Trust

P.O. Box 265  
Charlottetown, PEI C1A 7K4  
Phone: 902.892.7513  
[www.islandnaturetrust.ca](http://www.islandnaturetrust.ca)

### QUEBEC

#### Nature Quebec

Bureau 207 870, avenue De  
Salaberry Québec (Québec)  
G1R 2T9  
Tél. : (418) 648-2104  
[www.naturequebec.org/pages/accueil.asp](http://www.naturequebec.org/pages/accueil.asp)

### SASKATCHEWAN

#### Nature Saskatchewan

Room 206, 1860 Lorne St.  
Regina, SK. S4P 2L7  
Phone: (306) 780.9273  
[www.naturesask.ca](http://www.naturesask.ca)



## Appendix 3. Annual Reporting & Maintaining Regular Communication

Caretakers have a very important role to play in the IBA Program in Canada. Regular communication between Caretakers and Regional IBA Coordinators is key to ensuring a vibrant, cohesive, and effective program. Regional IBA Coordinators will be in touch with Caretakers as regularly as possible, and will, at a minimum, receive annual reports from Caretakers, i.e. after the season of use by the IBA “trigger” populations, or by January 31 of the following year. Annual reports should include a summary of:

1. When and where site visits were conducted
2. Observations regarding the state (birds, habitat), pressures (threats), and responses (conservation activities) within the IBA. The national IBA report form and guidance should be used and referenced respectively to help update site information. A national assessment program is being developed to help Caretakers consistently document state, pressures and responses

In addition to providing information on state, pressures, and responses, Caretakers are encouraged to include the following information in their annual report:

3. How much time was spent conducting IBA activities? (See Appendix 1) This information helps to demonstrate the in-kind contributions to the program that funding levers. It also helps raise additional funds and showcase Caretaker efforts.

4. What do you envisage for the future of your IBA? What conservation/outreach activities do you think are needed? What do you need to achieve these goals? Please talk to your Regional IBA Coordinator and/or post on the Portal if you are looking for input from other Caretakers.
5. If there is a Conservation Plan for your IBA, please read it and comment on whether the plan’s goals and objectives are being implemented, or if they are still relevant. If you see yourself as having a role to play in implementing some aspect of the plan, please note this to the Coordinator. If there is no Conservation plan in place, please consider working with your Regional IBA Coordinator, to develop a plan in coordination with the National Partners.

Annual Report Forms or templates may be available in some regions e.g. BC, Quebec. Alternatively, data forms completed during site visits can be submitted directly to Regional IBA Coordinators, or an update can simply be provided over the phone. While submitting an Annual Report is the minimum recommendation for communication, more frequent contact is encouraged as needed.



## Appendix 4. Outreach

A variety of materials, templates, and examples have been created to help you raise awareness about Important Bird Areas, including:

1. A national *IBA PowerPoint presentation*, which is available in the Useful Resources section of the IBA Caretaker Network Portal. This presentation explains the international, national, and regional aspects of the IBA Program. It can be customized by Regional IBA Coordinators or Caretakers for their specific IBAs and target audiences.
2. An Outreach Kit, also available from the Portal, which includes:
  - a. Public speaking tips and key messages to incorporate in outreach activities
  - b. Instructions on how to write a letter to the editor or a how to do a press release
  - c. Information on where and how to find information on participating at outreach events
  - d. PDF version of IBA Master Plan Summary
3. An IBA Recognition Standard, which can be used by individuals and program partners to develop

outreach materials for specific IBAs that use approved and consistent logos and messages about the IBA Program.

4. IBA identification signs (availability depends on limited stock, ordered through Regional IBA Coordinator). These are generic IBA 12” by 18” steel signs with a space for a decal with the name of the IBA if desired.
5. Brochures or other materials describing Regional IBA Programs may be available from your Regional IBA Coordinator.
6. Templates for newsletters, which are available in the National Resources section of the IBA Caretaker Network Portal.
7. Some IBA Caretakers are even making short Youtube videos of their IBAs to tell their story.

Please do not hesitate to contact your Coordinator to discuss outreach ideas. The Coordinator may be able to help you develop outreach materials and may even be able to visit your IBA.



## Appendix 5. The IBA Caretaker's Network Portal: Supporting Caretakers to Stay Connected

[www.canadiannaturenetwork.ca/workgroups/iba-caretakers-network](http://www.canadiannaturenetwork.ca/workgroups/iba-caretakers-network)

A key advantage of becoming a Caretaker for a nation-wide conservation program is the potential to gain support from, and provide assistance to, the large number of individuals involved in the program across the country. A web-based communications tool called the IBA Caretaker's Network Portal is available to facilitate sharing of resources, knowledge, and experiences between individuals in different regions across Canada.

### The Portal has three main uses:

- To provide useful resources to assist Caretakers in fulfilling their roles (e.g. national reporting forms, maps, guidance, and presentations etc.), though many of these are available on the National website
- To enable Caretakers to find and learn about other Caretakers
- To help Caretakers learn through shared experiences by engaging in discussions where different topics and ideas are shared

To access the Portal, Caretakers must first register on the Canadian Nature Network at:

[www.canadiannaturenetwork.ca/join\\_form](http://www.canadiannaturenetwork.ca/join_form). Instructions are available on the Portal to create simple profiles for each IBA and Caretaker. This includes basic information such as location and contact information. If Caretakers require assistance to develop their profile, Regional IBA Coordinators are trained to provide basic assistance. Once signed up, Caretakers can meet other Caretakers and learn about IBAs across Canada, providing enhanced networking capacity. An interactive map displaying the location of IBAs with Caretakers in Canada makes this possible with a single click.

Caretakers can also access useful resources on the Portal, including training manuals and field forms, media and outreach resources, guidance on how to conduct site visits, and case studies from IBA Programs in other countries. With the Portal's discussion feature, Caretakers can learn from their fellow Caretakers across Canada as well as share their own expertise and views.

Should you have any questions about the Portal, please contact your Regional IBA Coordinator. If the question cannot be answered, contact the Manager of Bird Conservation Programs at Nature Canada at 613-562-3447.

**canadian nature network**  
*Le Réseau canadien de la nature*



## Appendix 6. eBird

You are encouraged to enter your bird observations using *eBird*. It is an online checklist program that is free, easy to use and forms a very valuable database. The information is available for a number of purposes, from creating seasonal checklists for a site, plotting the distribution of a species in space and time, or simply keeping track of personal records. A very thorough and comprehensive presentation on using eBird is posted in the Technical folder in the Useful Resources Section of the IBA Caretaker Network Portal and the eBird website offers tutorials and guidance. If you are a birder, we encourage you to review this presentation and visit [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org).

Launched in 2002 by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, and led in Canada by BSC, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales. eBird documents the presence or absence of species, as well as bird abundance through checklist data. A simple and intuitive web-interface engages thousands of participants to submit their observations or view results via interactive queries into the eBird database. eBird encourages users to participate by providing Internet tools that maintain their personal bird records and enable them to visualize data with interactive maps, graphs, and charts. All these features are available in English, French and Spanish. You simply enter when, where, and how you went birding, then complete a checklist of all the birds observed during the

outing. eBird provides options for data gathering including point counts, transects, and area searches. Automated data quality filters developed by regional bird experts review all submissions before they enter the database. Local experts review unusual records that are flagged by the filters.

Using eBird to submit data for IBAs is evolving. The eBird link in the Site Summaries on the Site Directory of [www.ibacanada.ca](http://www.ibacanada.ca) leads to the eBird website. Once in eBird, either select a predetermined hotspot within the IBA (IBA boundaries are not yet shown on the eBird maps, so you will have to be familiar with the boundaries), or, if an existing hotspot does not correspond with your birding location, create a new location. Once you have your location or locations established, they will always be there for you when you are submitting new observations. If you label them as Hotspots, they will also be available for others to use when submitting records. Bird records entered via eBird are automatically linked to IBAs and are included in the seasonal bar graphs and annual frequency graphs shown on the IBA Canada website. Records associated with IBAs are also available to download from the Nature Counts web Portal [www.naturecounts.ca](http://www.naturecounts.ca). Please bear in mind that data transfer from eBird to IBA Canada is not instantaneous. eBird generates millions of checklists every year, and these are transferred to BSC every few months, at which time data become available to the IBA suite of tools.

