

Important Bird Areas

A Global Initiative To Conserve Birds And Their Habitats

By cooperating with local communities, scientists, governments, First Nations, corporations, land owners and nature groups, we are building healthier bird communities and more sustainable environments for future generations.



What We've Achieved

Conserve: to keep something from harm, loss, or decay; to save, protect, safeguard.

Important Bird Areas Program as part of *BirdLife International's* global IBA initiative. Since then, we've identified nearly 600 IBAs across Canada's diverse landscapes. Acting with regional conservation partners, we've built an exhaustive IBA database, finalized almost 100 site conservation plans, helped communities implement more than 150 local projects, and initiated a volunteer network of IBA Caretakers. Working in harmony with bird conservation efforts from local to international levels, Canada's IBA Program has become a cornerstone in science-based, site-specific conservation for birds and biodiversity.

Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada have been conserving birds for over 50 years. In 1996 we launched Canada's

What We Stand to Lose

Waste: a failure to use something wisely or to good effect; to squander, fritter, dissipate.

However, an IBA designation does not confer legal status and does not necessarily lead to protection of a site. More work is required to conserve the IBA network. The wealth of Canada's natural heritage is at risk—from endangered species to entire ecosystems in upheaval. Globally, one in eight bird species is threatened with extinction and even common species are in decline. Birds in Canada's IBAs are threatened by habitat loss, predation, pollution, invasive species, even unwitting disturbance by humans, our pets and livestock—threats that can be devastating.

We've built Canada's IBA network based on knowledge, activism, cooperation and a deep respect for bird life.

Canada is one of more than 100 nations building the global IBA network which, when complete, will encompass approximately seven percent of

Where We Go from Here

Invigorate: to fill something with energy or life; to revitalize, strengthen, stimulate.

the world's land surface and additional areas at sea. This is a rare opportunity for harmonized international environmental protection. In conserving IBAs, we can safeguard the world's most significant sites for birds—conserving not only important bird populations but bird habitats and other biodiversity. We will achieve this through cost-effective local stewardship combined with broader protection strategies. The IBA initiative can mobilize a network of communities to save strategic habitat for birds and, in the process, we can help conserve entire ecosystems.

Important Bird Areas in Canada

Our Vision: Through Canada's Important Bird Areas initiative the nation's most important sites for birds will be conserved.



Important Bird Areas contain threatened species, endemic species, species representative of a biome, or highly exceptional concentrations of birds. As a network, IBAs are strategic building blocks for global conservation planning. For birds, they are literally the most important places on earth.



The Canadian IBA Agenda

www.ibacanada.ca

Provide Good Science

The success of the IBA Program depends on the scientific integrity of our data. With our partners, we're developing protocols to track bird populations, respond to threats and assess our conservation success. We'll validate IBA data at all levels of input to ensure accuracy and cross-country consistency in site assessments and monitoring systems. We will use rigorous scientific standards to evaluate and prioritize existing and potential IBAs, in both terrestrial and marine environments.

Develop Strong Partnerships

IBAs should be "top-of-mind" when decision makers develop plans that could impact these important sites. We'll work with all levels of government, including First Nations, to incorporate IBAs in land-use planning policies, and we'll engage corporations and private landowners to include IBAs in their decision-making, too. Through public awareness campaigns, innovative partnerships with industry, and strengthened bonds with our non-government partners, we'll enhance the profile of the entire IBA network and achieve greater protection for these priority sites.

Conserve IBAs on the Ground

Each IBA has unique needs for its long-term conservation. With our partners, we will plan and implement on-site conservation actions at all high-priority IBAs across Canada. These efforts, varying from site to site, will include: restoration of degraded habitats; site monitoring; community awareness-building; alternative income projects; collaborative management and sustainable use practices; national campaigns against major threats; land purchases; enhanced management and enforcement in IBAs within protected areas; and the establishment of new protected areas encompassing IBAs.

Enable a Network of IBA Caretakers

IBA Caretakers volunteer their time and expertise to safeguard local birds and their habitats. They are the eyes, ears, feet and hands on the ground at IBAs. Caretakers monitor bird populations, report on threats, and build IBA awareness in their communities. With our regional partners, we will expand our network of Caretakers to cover most IBAs in Canada, and we'll equip our volunteers with the tools they require to be effective observers, advocates and citizen scientists.

Safeguard Migratory Flyways

About 90 percent of Canada's birds migrate within and beyond our borders. We work to protect them throughout their range. As Supporting Partners of BirdLife International, we help conserve migratory flyways throughout the Americas, working alongside our southern partners and providing financial resources and scientific expertise to advance our shared conservation goals.



Protect Birds Beyond IBAs

IBAs help protect key sites for birds, but landscape-level conservation schemes also play an essential role in safeguarding bird habitat. This is especially true in large, dynamic ecosystems like the boreal forest, which are highly important for birds, but where site-based conservation approaches are not practical or efficient. Wherever possible, IBA partners will coordinate our efforts with those of complementary conservation initiatives including Partners in Flight, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and recovery strategies for species at risk.

Participate: to take part in something; to involve yourself; join; contribute.

Canada's IBA Program plays a critical role in national bird conservation, protecting local sites while contributing to global priorities. Major national support of Canada's IBA Program has come from TransCanada Corporation, Government of Canada and Wildlife Habitat Canada. We are grateful for this support and other sponsors at the national and provincial levels.



Volunteers from the Canadian IBA Caretaker Network monitor birds, assess habitats, and conduct conservation activities within IBAs.