



Nature Manitoba
401-63 Albert Street
Winnipeg, MB R3B 1G4

Date

Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Caretaker for _____ Important Bird Area (IBA). As an IBA Caretaker, you are part of an international network of volunteers who share in your dedication to the long-term conservation of sites that have critical importance to the world's bird species. Through this program, your individual efforts will be strengthened by the coordinated efforts of other Caretakers across Manitoba, Canada, and the world.

This welcome package is intended to introduce you to the Manitoba IBA Caretaker Program. This document includes:

- background information on the Important Bird Areas program;
- a description of your role as a volunteer IBA Caretaker;
- a Volunteer Agreement and Liability Waiver (please sign and return by mail);
- guidelines for IBA communications.

Enclosed you will also find the following resources:

- a map showing the location and boundaries of your IBA;
- a map showing census routes for your IBA
- the 'site summary' for your IBA;
- the Manitoba IBA monitoring form and eBird for MB IBA info sheet;
- the Manitoba IBA annual report form;
- a form to track your volunteer hours.

Additional resources for Caretakers are available on the Manitoba Important Bird Areas website at importantbirdareasmb.ca under the "Volunteer" menu, including a webinar on eBird for IBA Caretakers, "how-to" guides for bird counting and a bird checklist for Manitoba.

I would appreciate hearing back from you 3 to 4 times per year regarding the status of your IBA (i.e. at the end of spring, summer and fall monitoring periods and by January 30 with your year-end report). Please use the enclosed form to complete your IBA's annual report.

Thank you again for volunteering to be a Caretaker for _____ IBA. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you have or for support on monitoring or other projects at your IBA.

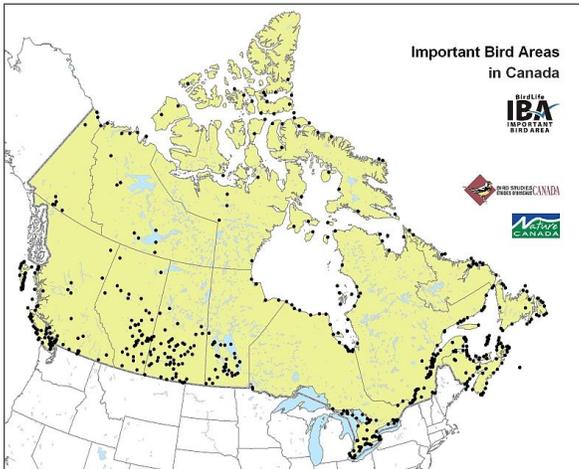
Sincerely,

Tim Poole
Manitoba Important Bird Areas Coordinator

iba@naturemanitoba.ca

phone/fax: 204-943-9029

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) 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, or which support significant numbers of threatened birds or range-restricted birds.

The IBA Program was initiated in the 1980s by BirdLife International, a global alliance of non-government, grassroots, and membership-based groups in 170 countries and territories. The Canadian co-partners in BirdLife International are Bird Studies Canada and Nature Canada, represented in Manitoba by Nature Manitoba.

Over 11,000 IBAs have been identified world-wide covering over one million hectares, with nearly 600 sites in Canada.

How do sites become IBAs?

The IBA criteria are internationally, continentally and nationally agreed upon and are 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. IBAs are key sites for conservation — 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

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 threshold criteria in the future, which would lead to a re-assessment (but not necessarily a removal) of their IBA status. New sites may also emerge as meeting the threshold criteria leading to their recognition as new IBAs.



Our Vision: Diverse and sustainable bird populations valued by Manitobans

Our Mission: Connecting people and nature to protect essential bird habitat in Manitoba

Manitoba is home to 38 Important Bird Areas that cover more than 15,680 km². From the shores of Hudson Bay to the mixed-grass prairie in the southwest corner of the province, each IBA has its own significance to birds and biodiversity. Favorite birding destinations like Delta Marsh, Oak Hammock Marsh, Churchill and Whitewater Lake have IBA status.

Many of Manitoba's IBAs lack any formal protection, making the active involvement of local communities, landowners, individuals and organizations critical to ensure the conservation of these special places for birds and biodiversity.

The IBA Caretaker Program

The IBA Caretaker program is a volunteer-based, citizen-science bird and habitat monitoring program for designated Important Bird Areas in Manitoba and across Canada. This program offers everyone - from amateur naturalists to professional biologists - a unique and rewarding opportunity to contribute locally to a global bird conservation effort!

Manitoba IBA Site Caretaker – Volunteer Job Description

Site Caretakers are the eyes, ears and hands on the ground whose top priorities are conducting bird counts and monitoring habitat at their local IBA. This is a site-specific role best suited to a volunteer or group of volunteers who live in close proximity to the IBA and can visit the IBA with some frequency.

Tasks Involved

1) Bird Monitoring

- observe bird populations at your IBA using a standardized protocol for the IBA Program (and/or participate in an existing bird monitoring program already taking place in the IBA through Bird Studies Canada or local naturalist coordinated programs)
- work with the IBA Coordinator and Bird Studies Canada Program Manager to determine and map a bird census route in your IBA

2) Habitat Monitoring

- record observations about habitat within the IBA and monitor for changes over time

3) Reporting

- submit bird count data to eBird after each monitoring trip or using paper IBA monitoring forms supplied to you
- record and report any signs of threats to the birds or habitat within the IBA
- track and submit volunteer hours on a monthly or yearly basis to the IBA Coordinator
- compile and submit a brief Year-end Summary Report for your IBA to the IBA Coordinator

4) Optional activities

- Photography: of birds and habitat at your IBA for promotional or documentation purposes
- Public Outreach: creating a brochure or developing a Facebook or web page for your IBA; organizing and leading a birding walk at your IBA; writing an article for a local paper or blog post for the Manitoba IBA website; participating in local events to promote your IBA; delivering presentations to schools, town council etc.
- Environmental Stewardship: removing garbage at your IBA; installing IBA signs or information panels; invasive plant removal

Note: For some IBAs, access to a boat or quad may be necessary.

Time Commitment: 10 to 15 hours/year

This includes a minimum of 3 site visits to monitor the IBA from May 1 to November 1. Ideally, this will include one visit during spring migration, one visit during breeding season and one visit during fall migration (this may vary from site to site).



Informed Consent & Liability Release Agreement



Manitoba Important Bird Areas Program Volunteers

Safety during IBA site visits is a top priority. IBAs can be remote and challenging to access so please take great care when visiting the IBA. Your personal safety is of utmost importance.

To increase your level of preparedness, minimize risk of injury and ensure that IBA monitoring is conducted as safely as possible, please follow these "risk management" guidelines:

- Please bring a friend along on your site visit, whenever possible. If you are using a boat to monitor in your IBA, you must be accompanied by another person.
- Always inform someone that you are conducting a site visit, including your expected return time.
- Check the weather before you head out. If severe inclement weather (i.e. cold or heat advisories, wind or wave warnings) is in the forecast, we strongly advise rescheduling your site visit.
- Always wear appropriate clothing for the weather and other environmental conditions such as biting insects or ticks.
- Be bear-aware, following latest guidance from Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship (http://www.manitoba.ca/conservation/wildlife/problem_wildlife/pdf/bebearsmart_bklt.pdf).

Please also 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. Plan your visits well in advance and always contact the appropriate management body or landowner to obtain permission to gain access. The IBA Coordinator may be able to facilitate access for monitoring if needed. Where permission to enter was not sought in advance, it is best to make observations from a public access point such as a roadside pull-off.

Informed Consent & Liability Release Agreement

I understand that Nature Manitoba is the organization that oversees the Manitoba IBA program. I understand that Nature Manitoba is a not-for-profit corporation and that the objectives of Nature Manitoba are, among other things, to facilitate participation by members and volunteers in outdoor, wilderness and recreational activities and that participation in such activities may involve risk of bodily injury or death.

I acknowledge that risks of injury and death are inherent to participation in outdoor, wilderness and recreational activities. I understand that I am solely responsible for determining my ability to participate in IBA monitoring activities.

I agree that my participation in the Manitoba IBA program shall be entirely at my own risk and I assume full responsibility for myself. In consideration of the foregoing and the Nature Manitoba enabling me to participate in the activity, the sufficiency of which consideration I do hereby acknowledge, I hereby assume on my behalf all risks arising from participation in the above activity, including travel to and from the activity. I do hereby release and discharge Nature Manitoba of all claims of whatever nature in respect of any liability loss, cost or damage whatsoever, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, bodily injury or death, damage to or loss of property, arising out of or in connection with my participation including travel to and from the activity.

I acknowledge having read and understood the activity as outlined in the IBA Volunteer Description provided to me. I declare having read and understood the above information and release in its entirety.

Date: _____

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____



Manitoba IBA Site Caretaker - Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for volunteering with the Manitoba IBA Program. The success of the IBA Program is fuelled by the energy and dedication of our volunteers. We appreciate your contribution and are dedicated to ensuring that you have a quality experience that is both productive and rewarding.

Your primary point of contact for the Manitoba IBA Program is Tim Poole, IBA Coordinator, who can be reached at iba@naturemanitoba.ca or 204-943-9029.

The Manitoba IBA Program commits to the following:

- To provide adequate information and training to help you meet the expectations as described in your volunteer role description.
- To explain what is required of you and to support your efforts to help you achieve your goals.
- To treat you with respect and courtesy at all times and to be receptive to comments and feedback from volunteers.
- To value and recognize volunteer contributions as a significant resource in achieving the goals of our program.

The Volunteer commits to the following:

- To fulfill my role as outlined in the attached volunteer role description for a minimum of one year from my start date.
- To follow the Manitoba IBA Program policies and procedures provided to me (i.e. monitoring protocols, safety, communications).
- To notify the Manitoba IBA Coordinator regarding all new projects and partnerships I initiate at my IBA.

Agreed to by:

Signature: _____

Start Date: _____

Volunteer Name (first and last): _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

IBA Name: _____

Manitoba IBA Program Signature _____ Date _____



Communication Guidelines for Manitoba IBA Program Volunteers

These guidelines have been developed by the MB Important Bird Area (IBA) Steering Committee to assist you with communication projects that you may undertake at your IBA. These guidelines reflect the importance of effective communication and maintaining consistency with IBA program recognition and cover all forms of graphic and promotional materials produced for Important Bird Areas in MB, including posters, signs, brochures, presentations, magazines articles, local media and other publications, etc.

BEST PRACTICES for IBA Communications

1) Consider Content Carefully

If you have identified yourself as being associated with the Manitoba IBA Program, the communications material you produce may be interpreted as being the official voice of the Manitoba IBA Program. As such, please be mindful and careful when creating or choosing content. Please remain neutral in your communications (e.g. regarding your opinions on political or corporate affairs). Please ensure that bird count and other data presented or quoted are accurate.

2) Communicate Effectively

Be a valuable resource for information about your IBA and the Manitoba IBA Program. Maintain a positive tone and share your passion for birds and IBAs. Use your best judgment and do not publish anything that you are unsure of.

Please respond to questions and comments posed to you in a timely manner. If you have made a factual mistake in a communication piece, that's ok - be upfront about it and do your best to visibly correct your mistake. If something you have produced creates controversy or generates concerns, please contact the Manitoba IBA Coordinator to discuss ways to respectfully resolve the situation in a timely manner.

3) Photo Permission

Using the Photo Permission Form provided in Appendix A, please remember to get written consent from any person pictured in a photo you intend to use in IBA communication materials. Written permission is particularly critical when posting pictures of children or youth.

IBA Recognition Standards

These standards aim to ensure that all graphic and written materials produced for IBA educational or awareness purposes (a) appropriately acknowledge the key organizations involved in the IBA program in Manitoba and in Canada, and (b) portray consistent messages and formatting that will identify individual IBAs as part of a large network of IBAs across Canada and the rest of the world.

Requirements

i) Unless otherwise specified, these requirements apply to all forms of graphic materials produced for Important Bird Areas in MB, including posters, signs, brochures, presentations as well as articles for magazines, local media and other publications, etc.



ii) Please use the Manitoba IBA program logo on all materials as well as branded Manitoba IBA program templates to create brochures or signs to promote your IBA. Email iba@naturemanitoba.ca for a high resolution copy of the MB IBA logo and appropriate template(s).

iii) A draft of the graphic or written item (e.g., sign, poster, brochure, article, presentation) should be sent to the MB IBA Coordinator (see contact info below) for review to ensure that standards are followed prior to being finalized and printed/presented. Please allow two weeks for review (we can accommodate shorter timelines where necessary).



iv) The BirdLife International IBA logo should be placed on all graphic items and may be placed on written materials as appropriate. The IBA logo should be larger (minimum of 10 mm in height) and separated from logos for partnering and funding organizations (see Appendix B). Please email iba@naturemanitoba.ca to request a high-resolution copy of the logo.

v) The following logos should appear in this order along with other partnering and funding organizations on all graphic items and may be placed on written materials as appropriate. Please email iba@naturemanitoba.ca for a copy of this graphic.



Where space does not permit the use of this partnership logo, the following phrase may be used instead, although logos are preferred:

The IBA Program is a global conservation initiative of BirdLife International. The Canadian co-partners in BirdLife International are Bird Studies Canada and Nature Canada, represented in this province by Nature Manitoba.

vi) The graphic or written material should refer the reader to both the IBA Canada website (www.ibacanada.ca) and the Manitoba IBA website (www.importantbirdareasm.ca) for more information.

vii) Information that can be used to describe the IBA program in communication materials is found in Appendix C.

Appendix A. Photo Permission Form



Photo Permission Form

Subject: _____

Location: _____

I grant to the Manitoba Important Bird Areas Program, its representatives and employees the right to take photographs of me and my property in connection with the above-identified subject. I authorize the Manitoba Important Bird Areas Program, its assigns and transferees to copyright, use and publish the same in print and/or electronically.

I agree that the Manitoba Important Bird Areas Program may use such photographs of me with or without my name and for any lawful purpose, including for example such purposes as publicity, advertising and Web content.

I have read and understand the above:

Signature _____

Date _____

Printed name _____

Organization Name (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Signature of parent or guardian (if under 18 years of age) _____

Appendix B. BirdLife Requirements regarding IBA branding

BirdLife International's Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are increasingly recognized worldwide. One strength of IBAs is that they are an international currency for bird conservation. IBAs from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe have the same meaning. To promote BirdLife IBA conservation work, a global IBA brand has been developed. It shows the global acronym – IBA, includes the explanation in national language to clarify the meaning of the acronym and to support local promotion and advocacy. Always make sure that the logo is clearly readable and a minimum of 10mm high.



*Only BirdLife network organizations (in Canada's case, Bird Studies Canada and Nature Canada) are allowed to use the IBA brand or license it to others within their own country or territory.

Appendix C. IBA Message Bank

1. Important Bird Areas, or IBAs, provide essential habitat for birds.

The IBA Program of BirdLife International aims to identify, monitor and protect a global network of IBAs for the conservation of the world's birds and other biodiversity.

Canada's Important Bird Areas Program is a science-based initiative to identify, conserve, and monitor a network of sites that provide essential habitat for Canada's bird populations.

The Important Bird Areas program of BirdLife International is a global network of sites that support significant populations of birds.

There are nearly 600 Important Bird Areas across Canada that provide habitat for threatened birds, large groups of birds, and birds found almost nowhere else on Earth.

Birds face many pressures – pollution, habitat loss, climate change, and human disturbance – and conserving Important Bird Areas is an essential way of relieving those pressures.

Migratory birds depend on Important Bird Areas to rest, feed and breed. Without them, birds could not make their long and difficult journey each year.

Important Bird Areas unite people, communities and organizations in a common goal to conserve healthy bird populations.

Canada's Important Bird Areas are part of a global system of more than 11,000 sites worldwide, which gives them a conservation currency that transcends borders and promotes international collaboration for protecting the world's birds.

The Important Bird Areas Program of BirdLife International is non-regulatory. The program identifies areas that are important for birds and works with local communities, landowners, individuals and organizations to ensure that people and birds can co-exist in these areas.

2. Protecting and monitoring Important Bird Areas are the cornerstones of effective bird conservation in Canada.

The International Important Bird Area Program brings people around the world together to identify, monitor and conserve exceptional places for birds and nature.

Many bird populations are in serious decline and more on-the-ground conservation action is needed to keep common birds common and to recover species at risk.

Community care of local habitats in and around Important Bird Areas is essential for the health of our birds and for protecting the environment.

The Important Bird Area Program identifies, monitors and protects the most vital places in Canada for birds – Important Bird Areas – so that conservation action can be directed in the most effective way possible.

The IBA Program provides the scientific and conservation information decision-makers need to make better, more sustainable land use decisions.

3. Canada's Caretaker Network empowers volunteers to watch over and protect Important Bird Areas.

Caretakers work within their communities to promote Important Bird areas and to ensure that local conservation ideas are put into action. Their hands-on volunteer work puts Caretakers on the frontlines of bird habitat protection.

The Canadian IBA Caretaker Network is coordinated by regional partners Nature Manitoba, BC Nature, Federation of Alberta Naturalists, Nature Saskatchewan, Nature Quebec, and by national partners, Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada.

Caretakers are the eyes, ears, and hands on the ground at Important Bird Areas across Canada. They monitor birds, assess habitats, and conduct conservation activities within IBAs.

Becoming a Caretaker can be a rewarding experience and an effective way to make a positive impact on this planet.

4. Milestones for Manitoba IBA Program

In 1996, a number of Manitoba birders gathered to begin identification of potential Manitoba IBA's.

By 1999, over 100 locations were nominated for IBA status in Manitoba. After review, 38 sites met IBA criteria and were designated as IBAs.

In August of 1999, Nature Manitoba (then the Manitoba Naturalists Society) began IBA community conservation planning with the hiring of a conservation biologist.

In 2012, the MB IBA Caretaker program was launched by Nature Manitoba with the hiring of an IBA Coordinator.