

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

Date

Name
Affiliation
Address
Address

Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in becoming an IBA Monitor for Manitoba's Important Bird Area (IBA). As an IBA Monitor, 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 bird monitoring volunteers across Manitoba, Canada, and the world.

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

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

Enclosed you will also find the following resources:

- a map of Manitoba's IBAs;
- the Manitoba IBA monitoring form and an eBird for MB IBA info sheet;
- a form to track your volunteer hours.

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

Site summaries with bird and habitat information, as well as detailed IBA maps displaying IBA boundaries can be found at ibacanada.ca in the "Explore IBAs" menu under "IBA Site Directory".

I would appreciate hearing back from you at least once per year with a record of your total volunteer hours (i.e. by January 30 for the previous year).

Thank you again for volunteering to be an IBA Monitor for Manitoba's IBAs. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you have or for support with your monitoring activities.

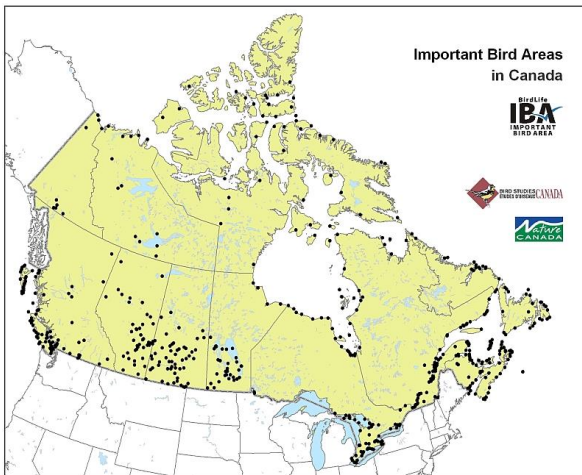
Sincerely,

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 Monitor – Volunteer Job Description

IBA Monitors are roving citizen scientists who would like the flexibility to observe and count birds in different IBAs throughout migration and breeding seasons.

Tasks Involved:

1) Bird Monitoring

-observe bird populations at an IBA using a standardized protocol for the IBA Program

2) Reporting

- conduct bird counts at 2 or more IBAs using a standardized protocol for the IBA Program

- submit bird count data to eBird after each monitoring trip or using paper IBA monitoring forms supplied to you

- track and submit volunteer hours on a monthly or annual basis to the IBA Coordinator

3) Optional Activity

- bird and habitat photography at IBAs for promotional or documentation purposes

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

Time Commitment: 2 to 15 hours/year from May 1 to November 1.



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.

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 Monitor - 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).

Agreed to by:

Signature: _____

Start Date: _____

Volunteer Name (first and last): _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Manitoba IBA Program Signature _____ Date _____

