



Have you seen this bird?

Eastern Whip-poor-will

Manitoba is home to some of the most outstanding sites in the world for concentrations of birds. The importance of these sites to the maintenance of the world's bird populations is recognized internationally through their designation as Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

We need your help finding this bird. If you see or hear any Eastern Whip-poor-wills please contact us at: iba@naturemanitoba.ca

Made famous in folk songs, poems, and literature for their endless chanting on summer nights, Eastern Whip-poor-wills are easy to hear but hard to see. Their brindled plumage blends perfectly with the gray-brown leaf litter of the open forests where they breed and roost. At dawn and dusk, and on moonlit nights, they sally out from perches to sweep up insects in their cavernous mouths. These birds are declining in parts of their range as open forests are converted to suburbs or agriculture, culminating in them being listed as threatened in Canada and Manitoba.



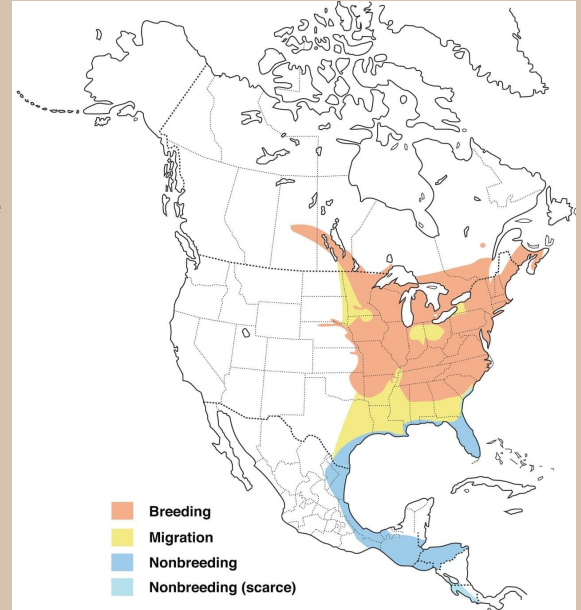
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Habitat

- Nesting habitat includes deciduous and mixed-woods forests. They prefer to nest in semi-open forests or clearings of patchy forests. Forests recovering after a disturbance (like a forest fire) can be good habitat
- Feeding habitat includes shrubby pastureland or wetland areas with perches. Feeding areas will have a variety of insects for the Eastern Whip-poor-will to eat.

Did you know?

- Eastern Whip-poor-wills are nocturnal birds with loud, distinctive voices. At night they fly slowly and silently, often wheeling around 180 degrees in between wing flaps. When nesting or roosting, whip-poor-wills spend the day sitting motionless, becoming active only at dusk. They can fly nearly vertically when chasing insects.
- Eastern Whip-poor-will numbers have declined by almost 3% per year between 1966 and 2015, resulting in a total decline of 75% during that time, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey.
- Eastern Whip-poor-wills lay their eggs in phase with the lunar cycle, so that they hatch on average 10 days before a full moon. When the moon is near full, the adults can forage the entire night and capture large quantities of insects to feed to their nestlings.
- The female Eastern Whip-poor-will lays her eggs directly on the leaf litter of the forest floor, usually on the north or northeast side of a small herb, shrub, or seedling that will shade the nest from the hot afternoon sun.
- The Eastern Whip-poor-will may locate insects by seeing the bugs' silhouettes against the sky. Its eyes have a reflective structure behind the retina that is probably an adaptation to low light conditions.
- Eastern Whip-poor-wills feed exclusively on insects, including moths, beetles, grasshoppers, stoneflies, ants, bees, wasps, fireflies, and weevils.



- They start foraging 30 minutes after sunset and continue until it gets too dark to see their prey. At first light they resume feeding, stopping about 40 minutes before sunrise. When the moon is bright enough, they may hunt all night long.

Sources

- https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Whip-poor-will
- https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Whip-poor-will/maps-range

*Connecting people to nature in order to protect
essential bird habitat in Manitoba's IBAs.*

<https://importantbirdareasm.ca/>

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