



# IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROGRAM

## WISCONSIN BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE



### IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Important Bird Areas, or IBA, Program is an international effort to protect birds and their habitat. The IBA Program was started in Europe in the 1980s by BirdLife International and is now active in over 150 countries. The program came to the U.S. in 1995 and is administered by the National Audubon Society. Most states now have or are developing their own programs. In Wisconsin, the IBA program is being implemented as part of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI).



### HOW DOES THE IBA PROGRAM WORK?

- Nomination materials are released and the nomination process begins.
- Nominated sites are evaluated by the IBA Technical Committee, a panel of bird experts from around the state.
- The Technical Committee makes a final selection of sites that meet the criteria, and these are officially recognized as Important Bird Areas.
- Landowners, land managers, stakeholders, and interested parties identify conservation needs for each IBA and collaborate on management, stewardship, and education.

The recognition of a site as an IBA does not confer any legal or regulatory status, and is entirely voluntary on the part of the landowners or land managers. A voluntary, grassroots approach to conservation is a keystone of the IBA program. We rely on cooperative partnerships with many different groups to meet our program goals.



### WHAT IS AN IBA?

An IBA is a site that provides critical habitat for one or more species of bird. This includes sites for breeding, feeding, wintering, and/or migration. IBAs can vary in size from a few acres to thousands of acres, and may occur on public or private lands. Usually, they are discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape. To qualify as IBAs, sites must meet standardized scientific criteria. These criteria cover sites that support:

- threatened and endangered species
- high conservation priority species
- significant concentrations of birds
- assemblages of birds associated with rare or representative habitat types

Specific criteria have been developed for Wisconsin. These are the criteria that will be used to recognize IBAs in Wisconsin.

### HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- Nominate a site! The IBA Program welcomes nominations from the public. To obtain nomination materials, contact Yoyi Steele, the Wisconsin IBA Coordinator, or visit our website at: [www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba](http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba)
- Be a citizen scientist! Use your birding skills to advance conservation by visiting a potential IBA in your area and keeping track of the species and numbers of individuals you see and hear. Report the information to the IBA Coordinator.
- Be a volunteer steward! An IBA may need active stewardship such as trash clean-ups, restoration activities, or monitoring. Stay tuned for opportunities to help out at an IBA near you.
- Be a conservation advocate! Share IBA program information with local clubs or organizations. Write an article about IBAs in your local newsletter or paper. Encourage local school groups to learn more about the IBA program.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Contact Yoyi Steele, Wisconsin IBA Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 101 S. Webster St., WM/4, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921; 608-266-8169; [yoyi.steele@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:yoyi.steele@dnr.state.wi.us), or visit our website at [www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba](http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba)