

CONSERVE BIRDS AND BIODIVERSITY IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

Sable Island IBA's migratory bird concentrations and species at risk need on-site stewardship and legal habitat protection within a National Wildlife Area.

Sable Island Important Bird Area

The word "sandbar" cannot convey the majesty of Sable Island's biodiversity. Over 330 bird species have been sighted here, including virtually the entire breeding population of Ipswich Savannah Sparrows. Thousands of Arctic and Common Terns nest on site, as do thousands of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls, which prey on the terns' young with alarming success. The sandbar supports more than 175 plant species and 600 catalogued invertebrates. The marine areas support diverse mammals, including 16,000 breeding Grey Seals. Sable Island's only terrestrial mammals—and its most controversial and famous residents—are several hundred wild and unmanaged horses.



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GREEN HORSE SOCIETY

This remote sandbar, 150 km east of mainland Nova Scotia, encompasses 50 km² of vegetated sand dunes and open sea.

For now, the Sable Island Station offers full-time human presence and stewardship for globally significant concentrations of landbirds like this Ipswich Savannah Sparrow.

Conservation Action

Sable Island is a highly valued and restricted site, with no imminent threats. However, as the Sable Island Station faces closure, the potential for inappropriate land use looms larger. Uncontrolled access would disturb nesting birds and accelerate erosion of the sandbar. A continued human presence is needed to safeguard the site, prevent and respond to ship-sourced oil pollution, and monitor the fragile dynamic between rising gull and diminishing tern populations. To achieve this, Nature Canada is working with local land stewards to promote Sable Island IBA for designation as a National Wildlife Area, and protect this special place in perpetuity.



Nationally threatened Roseate Terns nest among Sable Island's globally significant Common and Arctic Tern colonies.



Nature Canada's Priority IBA Program

Nature Canada is the Canadian co-partner of the international IBA Program. We've identified 597 designated Important Bird Areas across Canada, developed 150 site conservation plans, and invested in 150 on-site conservation projects.

From vast tracts of intact wilderness to fragmented urban environments, hundreds of sites in Canada are vitally important for breeding, migrating, and wintering birds, and the conservation of these sites is a cornerstone of effective bird conservation. Nature Canada is a co-partner in the international Important Bird Areas (IBA) program, which aims to identify, conserve and monitor a network of sites that provides essential habitat for bird populations.

Of our 597 Important Bird Areas in Canada, Nature Canada highlights the sites of greatest biological significance, those facing the most imminent threats, and those offering timely conservation opportunities, in its series, *Natural Priorities: Protecting our Important Bird Areas*.

To obtain other fact sheets in our series, visit our web site at naturecanada.ca and click on Reports and Downloads.

Or call 1-800-267-4088 ext. 241 to request one.

IBAs are areas of high biodiversity, home to myriad species both common and endangered. IBA conservation helps achieve the objectives of the federal Species at Risk Act while ensuring that each site's ecological integrity is maintained across species boundaries.

About Nature Canada

Nature Canada is the Canadian co-partner (with Bird Studies Canada) of BirdLife International, a global alliance of conservation organizations working together for the world's birds and people. We are a member-based non-profit conservation organization with supporters in every province and territory. Our mission is to protect nature, its diversity, and the processes that sustain it.



Savannah Sparrow

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For more information visit these Web sites:
naturecanada.ca • ibacanada.ca • birdlife.org