

# GUARD CANADA'S COAST FOR WILDLIFE

The Atlantic Coastal Islands, declared surplus by the Canadian Coast Guard, must be transferred and protected as National Wildlife Areas to safeguard globally significant seabird populations and recover species at risk.



Up for grabs are 5 isolated islands spanning 5 Atlantic IBAs [Machias Seal Island, St. Paul Island, Country Island Complex, Southwest Wolf Island (part of the Wolves Archipelago IBA) and Cascumpec Sand Hills Island (part of Cascumpec Bay/ Alberton Harbour IBA)].

## The Atlantic Coastal Islands



© Government of Nova Scotia

The five Atlantic Coastal Islands are small in size but large in importance for Canada's birds. Machias Seal Island, a Migratory Bird Sanctuary, supports the most important seabird colony in the Bay of Fundy. St. Paul's stunted coniferous forests are home to the elusive Bicknell's Thrush.

The rocky Country Island Complex is home to a

high population of endangered Roseate Terns. Black-legged Kittiwakes nest on Southwest Wolf Island, and endangered Piping Plovers occasionally breed on Cascumpec Sand Hills. Other birds at risk supported across the islands include Harlequin Ducks, and Peregrine Falcons.



© Nature Canada

The Maritimes' largest colonies of this Arctic Tern are on Machias Seal Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

## Conservation Action

A private sale of these islands could be disastrous for thousands of seabirds. Machias Seal Island has long enjoyed a resident warden to control visitation, generating ecotourism while minimizing bird disturbance and habitat degradation. The uncontrolled access that may follow a private sale would lay waste to this history of protection. Environment Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard have been discussing the properties for years, but have yet to transfer the lands. Nature Canada is encouraging the transfer and promoting the sites' protection as National Wildlife Areas.



© Nature Canada

Like most of Canada's IBAs, the Atlantic Coastal Islands support both high concentrations of abundant birds and birds at risk of extinction like this endangered Piping Plover.



# 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](http://naturecanada.ca) and click on Reports and Downloads.

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

## 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.

A program of non-lethal gull control has been undertaken to help recover the threatened Roseate Tern, whose total Canadian population is less than 150 pairs.



Harlequin Duck

© Larry Maester

For more information visit these Web sites:  
[naturecanada.ca](http://naturecanada.ca) • [ibacanada.ca](http://ibacanada.ca) • [birdlife.org](http://birdlife.org)