

PROTECT CANADA'S LAST WILD RIVER

Seven IBAs along the Mackenzie River – critical to hundreds of thousands of migrating birds – will be irreparably damaged if the Mackenzie Gas Project develops as proposed.

Mackenzie River Important Bird Areas

The Mackenzie River, with its headstreams, snakes 4,241 km through marshes, meadows, forests, and mudflats to an immense island-dotted delta. This powerful force of nature drains 1.8 million km² of land and delivers 9,700 cubic metres of freshwater into the Arctic Ocean every second.

This vast wilderness is the spring feeding ground for abundant Lesser Snow Geese and Tundra Swans. It is the summer home of Arctic Terns, Greater White-fronted Geese, and Red-throated Loons. It is the critical fall rest stop for Brant and Pectoral Sandpipers.

The 623-square-kilometre Kendall Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary is located at the northern tip of the Mackenzie River Delta, part of a globally significant breeding and staging ground for over 60,000 shorebirds, such as Red-necked Phalaropes, Whimbrels, and American Golden-Plovers. Established in 1961, Kendall Island is the only federally protected area in the Mackenzie Delta.



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As a largely intact ecosystem, this poorly studied region is equally critical for a diversity of large mammal populations, from grazing Barren-ground Caribou to calving Beluga Whales.

Conservation Action

The entire Mackenzie Valley is now threatened by Canada's biggest natural gas pipeline project ever. The multi-billion dollar Mackenzie Gas Project (MGP) would bring three major natural gas production fields north of Inuvik and two underground natural gas pipelines (the longest is 1,220 km) to carry gas south along the Mackenzie Valley to northern Alberta.

If unstopped, the proposed project will permanently damage the region's vast breeding and staging grounds—possibly even sinking the Kendall Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary! Nature Canada has testified on the failures of the Project's Environmental Impact Statement, and we'll keep fighting to stop the Project on legal grounds. We have joined with conservationists across Canada in declaring the Mackenzie WILD and raising national awareness of what the world has at stake in Canada's longest and wildest river.



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At risk are 7,545 km² of globally significant lands and waters in 7 IBAs in the Northwest Territories. [Mackenzie River Delta, Kugaluk River, Lower Mackenzie River Islands, Middle Mackenzie River Islands, Brackett Lake, Mills Lake, and Beaver Lake IBAs]

Without our intervention, hundreds of thousands of birds like this Red-necked Phalarope will endure pollution, flooding, and fragmentation of their summer habitat, as the northern wilderness is transformed into a grim industrial landscape.

In early May, the Mackenzie's open waters and exposed shorelines may be the only foraging sites available to hundreds of thousands of migrating waterfowl like this Snow Goose.



Nature Canada's Priority IBA Program

Nature Canada participates in environmental assessment processes where IBAs are threatened. We add our national expertise to the concerns of local conservationists to ensure that impacts on birds and their habitats are adequately assessed and mitigated *before* a project develops.

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.

Like most of Canada's IBAs, the Mackenzie River and Delta is globally significant for its concentrations of migrating birds, who rely on the site for survival but may use it only briefly. The valley has seen 350,000 birds one spring day leave behind just 10,000 birds days later, showing why site monitoring is essential to IBA conservation planning.

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.



Tundra Swans

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For more information visit these Web sites:
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