

SAVE THE REMAINS OF ONTARIO'S MOST PRECIOUS HABITATS

Eastern Lake St. Clair IBA is under pressure from urban and agricultural expansion that threatens staging waterfowl, endangered species, and rare prairie and oak savannah habitats.

Eastern Lake St. Clair Important Bird Area

Eastern Lake St. Clair's shallow waters and extensive marshlands comprise one of Ontario's most significant waterfowl, shorebird and waterbird staging areas.

From congregating Canvasbacks and Black-bellied Plovers, to breeding Black and Forster's Terns, thousands of birds rely on this IBA year-round. Especially significant are

Walpole Island's remnants of tallgrass prairie, oak savannah, and Carolinian forest—rare habitats home to almost 50 species at risk, including Canada's largest self-sustaining populations of endangered Northern Bobwhites and King Rails.



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The IBA spans 924 km² along two major flyways – the Atlantic and Mississippi – in Southwest Ontario.

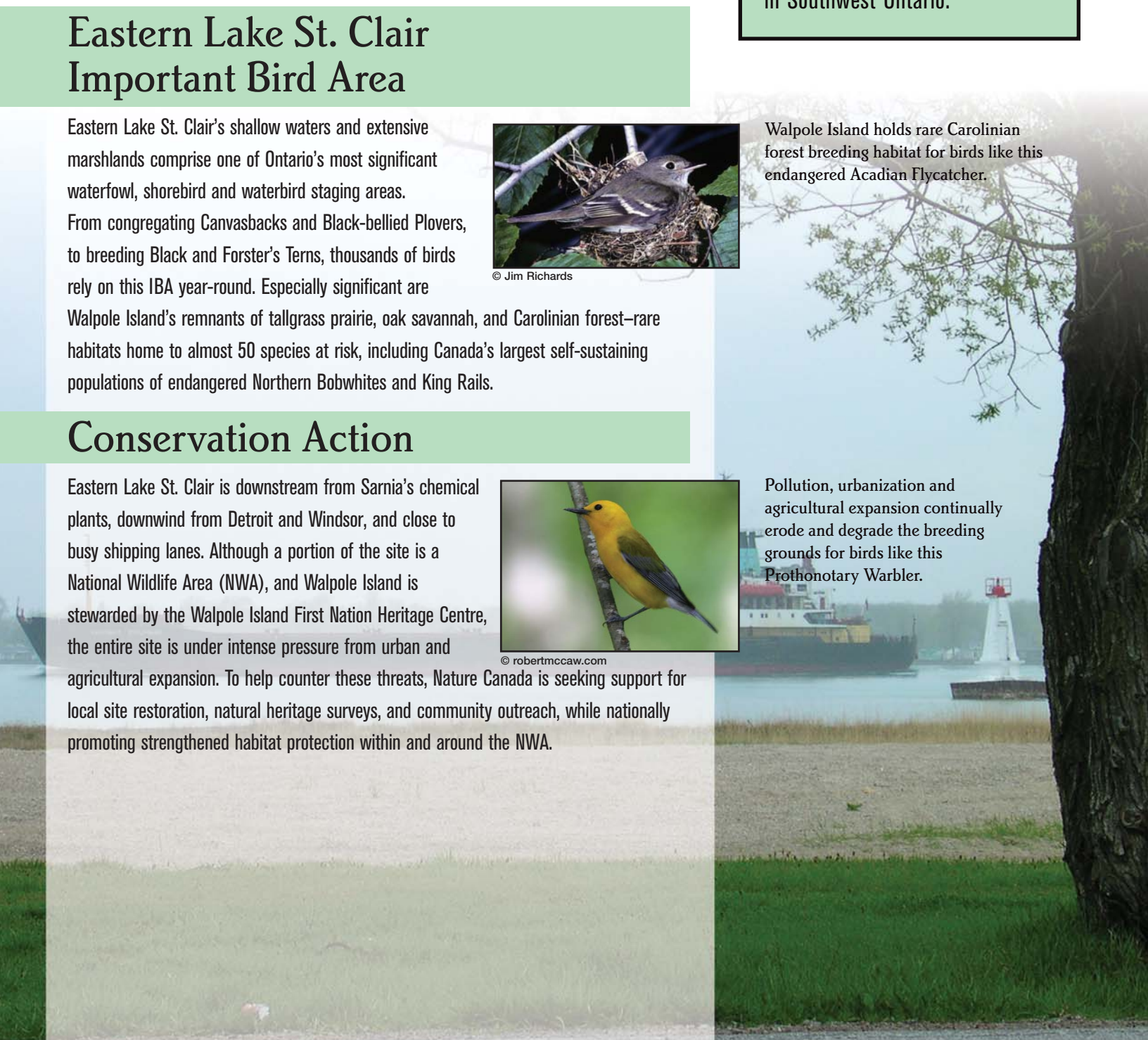
Conservation Action

Eastern Lake St. Clair is downstream from Sarnia's chemical plants, downwind from Detroit and Windsor, and close to busy shipping lanes. Although a portion of the site is a National Wildlife Area (NWA), and Walpole Island is stewarded by the Walpole Island First Nation Heritage Centre, the entire site is under intense pressure from urban and agricultural expansion. To help counter these threats, Nature Canada is seeking support for local site restoration, natural heritage surveys, and community outreach, while nationally promoting strengthened habitat protection within and around the NWA.



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Pollution, urbanization and agricultural expansion continually erode and degrade the breeding grounds for birds like this Prothonotary Warbler.





Nature Canada's Priority IBA Program

Thousands of volunteers have helped conserve IBAs by surveying bird populations, building nest boxes, erecting signs, removing invasive species, planting native grasses, and promoting awareness of the value of wildlife.

To address the complexities of privately owned sites like Eastern Lake St. Clair, the IBA Program brings stakeholders together to develop site conservation plans. We bridge local partnerships, educate communities, and build capacity in local site support groups to preserve fragile environments caught in the crossfire of competing land use interests.

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.

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.



Canada Geese

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