

SAFEGUARD 5,000,000 MIGRATING BIRDS ON THE PACIFIC COAST

Enormous efforts are required to conserve Boundary Bay and the Fraser River Delta, where over 300 species of migrating, breeding and wintering birds are threatened by land and sea.

Boundary Bay – Roberts Bank – Sturgeon Bank – Fraser River Estuary Important Bird Area

Each spring, millions of migrant waterfowl and shorebirds, from Brant to Black-bellied Plovers, descend upon the Fraser River Delta's mudflats, marshes, and flooded farm fields.

Summer brings songbirds, woodpeckers, and raptors to the upland forests and shrubby hedgerows. Fall sees tens of thousands of migrating American Wigeons and Northern Pintails. Winter remains busy, with Gray-bellied Brant among the waterfowl, and large numbers of Glaucous-winged Gulls.



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Boundary Bay – Roberts Bank –
Sturgeon Bank – Fraser River
Estuary IBA spans 400 km² in
Canada's largest Pacific estuary.

Virtually the entire population of Western Sandpiper migrates through Boundary Bay in spring, with one-day estimates as high as 500,000 individuals.

Conservation Action

While portions of the Delta and Bay are protected areas, most of the site is threatened by development, agricultural encroachment, pollution, and misuse by the large human population that lives behind its dykes. An invasive seaweed threatens to alter the Bay's ecology, and shipping traffic, urbanization, and industrial growth gradually erode the natural habitat. To counter these threats, we support the Birds on the Bay Festival, through which volunteers and 40 partner organizations raise the IBA's profile and restore its wetlands and shorelines. Nationally, we're opposing unsound site developments, promoting habitat protection, and working to link our local site support group with an IBA partner in the Upper Bay of Panama—another critical migratory stopover of the Western Sandpiper.



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The IBA Communities in Action program helps restore wetlands that support breeding birds like this American Bittern.





Nature Canada's Priority IBA Program

As an international effort with 175 global partners, the IBA program unites Canada's conservationists with BirdLife partners in Latin America to achieve conservation of migrating birds throughout their range.

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.

Boundary Bay, the Fraser River Estuary and nearby offshore banks have a higher number of species with at least 1% of their global population on site than any other IBA in Canada. Studies of the IBA's mudflats have discovered a site-specific biochemistry—meaning that any change in water quality could make the site less suitable to birds.

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.



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Western Sandpiper

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