

Important Bird Areas Program Fact Sheet

April 2008

What is an IBA?

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are sites that support significant populations of birds considered vulnerable. Sites are identified based on rigorous scientific criteria that focus on three categories of vulnerable birds:

- 1) At-risk species of conservation priority.
- 2) Species assemblages of birds that specialize in a particular habitat type.
- 3) Birds that occur in exceptional concentrations.

IBAs can be small or large in extent, but usually are discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape. IBAs may be National Wildlife Refuges, State Parks or other protected public lands, but they can also be private farms, forests and other private areas. Not all IBAs are open to the public – the intent of the IBA Program is conservation of birds and their habitats rather than highlighting places for bird watching.

Goals of the IBA Program

The overall goal of the IBA Program is to ensure the continued viability of the habitats and their bird populations within IBAs. It is a strategic conservation-planning tool, and as such it is proactive rather than reactive. Program goals are achieved through three areas of action:

Identify the most essential areas for birds

Monitor those sites for changes to birds and habitat

Conserve these areas for long-term protection of bird populations

The IBA program seeks to achieve conservation goals through partnerships with private landowners and managers of public lands. A major component of the program is the participation of volunteers who act as citizen scientists and conservation stewards, studying species population trends, evaluating threats to birds, and restoring and enhancing bird habitats. Conservation at IBAs can take the form of developing and improving management plans, pursuing conservation easement or land purchase and seeking legislative support and protection. On-the-ground activities may include management of vegetation, invasive species control, designing structures to reduce human impacts, erecting nesting structures and managing agricultural crops for wildlife.

A Brief History of the IBA Program

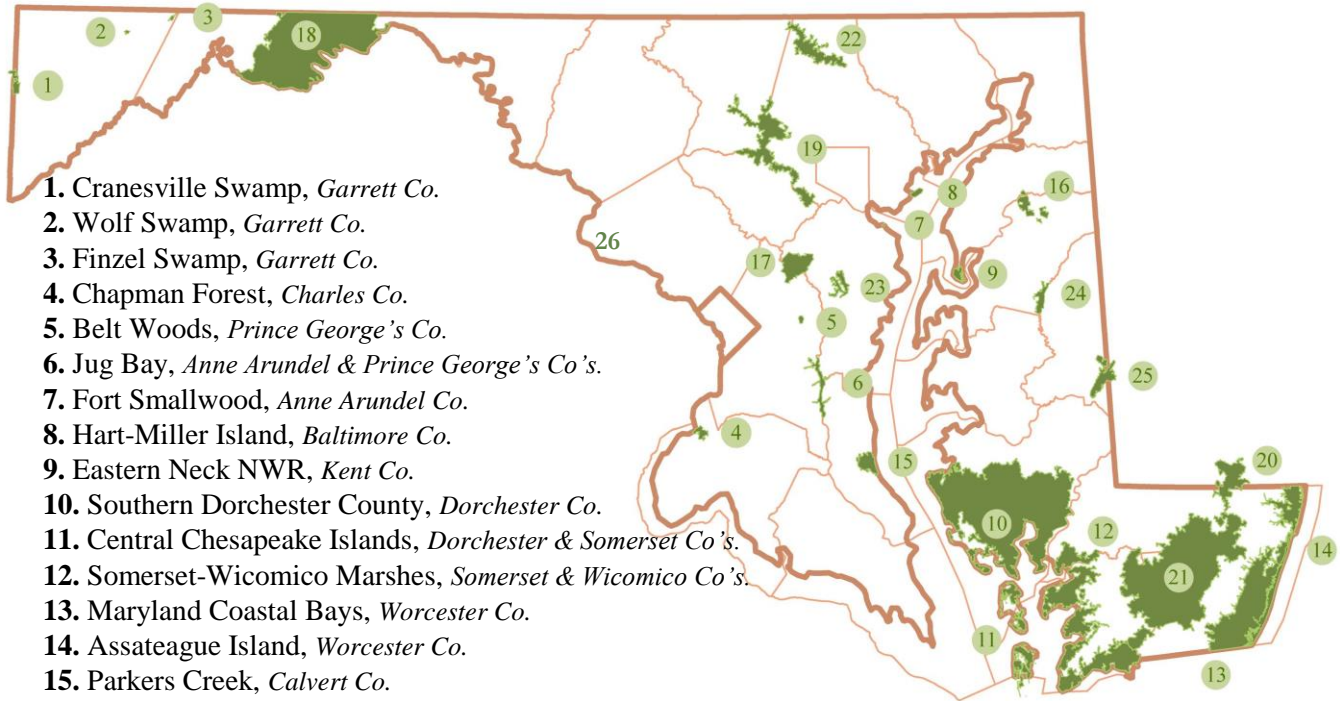
The IBA Program began in the 1980s as an initiative of BirdLife International, a global partnership of more than 100 organizations worldwide. First implemented in Europe, IBA programs now exist on every continent and over 10,000 IBAs have been identified worldwide. In the U.S. the National Audubon Society is BirdLife International's partner and has established IBA Programs state by state. Programs are now up and running in 46 states with over 2,100 IBAs identified across the country.

The IBA Program in Maryland and DC

In Maryland and DC, the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) first initiated an IBA program in the late 1990s and the Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS) coordinated a volunteer effort to identify sites. Although a 'first round' of IBAs was identified, changes in the criteria for selecting sites left their status somewhat unclear. In 2004, Audubon Maryland-DC resumed work on reviewing nominated sites with support from our donors and grant funding from DNR and the State Wildlife Grants Program.

Important Bird Areas are identified by an IBA Technical Review Committee, which reviews all nominated sites against scientific criteria based on analysis of bird populations and their habitats. The Audubon Maryland-DC IBA Technical Review Committee includes: Kyle Rambo (Chair), Patuxent River Naval Air Station; Wayne Bell, Washington College; David Curson, Audubon Maryland-DC; Lynn Davidson, Md. Department of Natural Resources; David Smith, Maryland Ornithological Society; Greg Kearns, Patuxent River Park; Glenn Therres, Md. Department of Natural Resources, David Ziolkowski, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

Important Bird Areas identified in Maryland and DC



1. Cranesville Swamp, *Garrett Co.*
2. Wolf Swamp, *Garrett Co.*
3. Finzel Swamp, *Garrett Co.*
4. Chapman Forest, *Charles Co.*
5. Belt Woods, *Prince George's Co.*
6. Jug Bay, *Anne Arundel & Prince George's Co's.*
7. Fort Smallwood, *Anne Arundel Co.*
8. Hart-Miller Island, *Baltimore Co.*
9. Eastern Neck NWR, *Kent Co.*
10. Southern Dorchester County, *Dorchester Co.*
11. Central Chesapeake Islands, *Dorchester & Somerset Co's.*
12. Somerset-Wicomico Marshes, *Somerset & Wicomico Co's.*
13. Maryland Coastal Bays, *Worcester Co.*
14. Assateague Island, *Worcester Co.*
15. Parkers Creek, *Calvert Co.*
16. Chino Farms, *Queen Anne's & Kent Co's.*
17. Patuxent Research Refuge, *Anne Arundel & Prince George's Co's.*
18. Green Ridge, *Allegany & Washington Co's.*
19. Patapsco Valley, *Carroll, Baltimore & Howard Co's.*
20. Great Cypress Swamp, *Worcester & Wicomico Co's.*
21. Pocomoke-Nassawango, *Worcester, Wicomico & Somerset Co's.*
22. Prettyboy, *Baltimore & Carroll Co's.*
23. South River Greenway, *Anne Arundel Co.*
24. Tuckahoe Creek, *Queen Anne's & Caroline Co's.*
25. Idylwild, *Caroline Co.*
26. Lower C & O Canal, *Montgomery, Frederick & Washington Co's (boundary not yet mapped)*

For more information visit our website at www.audubonmddc.org or contact:

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