

Important Bird Areas of Virginia

Instructions for completion of IBA Nomination Form

THE IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROCESS

The Important Bird Area (IBA) program is an international effort to identify, conserve, and monitor a network of sites that provide essential habitat for bird populations. BirdLife International began the IBA program in Europe in 1985. Since that time, BirdLife partners in more than 100 countries have joined together to build the global IBA network. Audubon, the BirdLife Partner in the U.S. has been working since 1995 to identify and conserve hundreds of IBAs all across the United States.

The Virginia IBA program is sponsored by The Virginia Audubon Council in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Virginia Society of Ornithology.

For more information, visit: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/index.html>

Or contact Aimee Weldon, the Virginia IBA Coordinator

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Additional copies of these Instructions and the Nomination Form may be downloaded from
www.virginia-iba.org

The process of identifying Important Bird Areas involves the following steps:

1. A site must be nominated. This involves completing a nomination form and providing the appropriate supporting data. Sites can be nominated by anyone. There is no minimum or maximum size for an IBA. Whenever possible, a site should be large enough to encompass most of the needs of the birds for which the site is important. It should be small enough to allow the practical implementation of conservation measures. The site should be distinguishable from the surrounding landscape in habitat, character, or ornithological importance. Boundaries commonly used to delimit IBAs include roads, watercourses and other geographic features, and administrative boundaries. An IBA may occur on public or private land or a combination and should exist as a protected or potentially protected area, or an area that can be managed for conservation purposes. Some sites that you are interested in nominating may have already been nominated. Contact your state IBA coordinator for more information before nominating a site (see above for contact information).
2. A site will qualify as an IBA if it provides essential habitat for a naturally occurring population of one or more species of birds in the state (it will therefore generally exclude introduced species, feral populations, and areas that are predominantly human in origin, such as landfills) and it meets one or more of the criteria described below in Instruction IV. The IBA designation is for sites that are truly important for birds, not necessarily for bird watching. A site may be significant at the state, national, continental, or global level. Similar criteria are used at each level, but the thresholds for national sites may be different than those for state sites, and so on. Sites that appear to meet the national or higher criteria will be reviewed at the state level and forwarded to the National Audubon IBA Program for consideration.
3. The nomination materials will be entered into the "World Bird Database". This global database, developed by BirdLife International, is the means by which information is stored for all sites internationally. Because of the need to integrate all IBA data around the world, certain standards for data collection must be followed. These are spelled out in the INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF IBA NOMINATION FORM.

INSTRUCTION I – Nominator Information

Provide the name(s) and contact information of the individual(s) preparing and submitting the nomination of this site. Additional pages may be attached if more than one individual or group is involved in the nomination.

Organization/Affiliation: List any organizations relevant to the nomination of the site.

Date: This is the date that the nomination form was completed.

INSTRUCTION II – Site Details

Site Name: Provide the official name of the site and any other names by which this site may be known.

Area: Be sure to specify whether you used acres, square miles, or hectares.

Elevation: Report the minimum and maximum elevation at this site. Specify whether it is in feet or meters.

Central Coordinates – latitude/longitude: (N/W)

Report coordinates at the center of the site as degrees (°), minutes ('), seconds (")

Ownership: Choose only one of the following

Federal

State

Private

International waters

Communal

Religious group

Other

Mixed (if more than one)

Note: Private landowners and/or public land managers should be notified in person if their land is being considered for an IBA nomination and should be invited to participate in the IBA nomination process. Their permission should be attained before any information is made public concerning the site.

Ownership Details: List specific owners, providing names of organizations or groups owning this land. If private owners are named, provide contact information and state whether they have been informed of this nomination.

INSTRUCTIONS IIIA -Species List and Population

Ornithological data should be reported as a count of a particular species population at the site during a particular season of a given year. The database will not accept averages of multiple years. The thoroughness and accuracy

of the data will aid in identifying the site as an IBA. Lack of data will not necessarily diminish the importance of the site as an IBA. Rather, it may draw attention to needs such as increased avian monitoring at the site. See below for sample entries.

Species Name	Season or Month / Day of Observation	Year of Observation	¹ Relative Abundance	² Counts		³ Types of Birds Counted (Required for All)	⁴ Reliability / Data Quality	⁵ Source	
				All Groups					Raptors and Cranes only
				Density #/ __ area	Max # / visit				Total Season Count
Piping Plover	Summer	1999			14		B	M	1
Piping Plover	Summer	2000			16		B	M	1
Brown Pelican	Aug. 10	2001			431		A I	G	2

1. Relative Abundance: Enter the code for the relative abundance for the reported year using the chart below.

Code	Relative Abundance	Description
A	Abundant	Encountered in large numbers in preferred habitat.
C	Common	Encountered singly or in small numbers in preferred habitat.
F	Frequent	Often, but not always, met within preferred habitat.
U	Uncommon	Encountered sporadically in preferred habitat.
R	Rare	Rarely seen, often implying less than 10 or so records.
NA	Not Available	Not possible to assess abundance based on available information.

2. Counts: Report counts either as the Density or as the Maximum # on one visit. If you are recording density, the # per area, be sure to specify whether you are using acres, hectares, or square miles. When using Maximum #, record the maximum number seen in one visit during the given season. For raptors and cranes, total counts are preferred.

3. Types of Birds Counted: Record the types of birds counted using one of the following designations.

Code	Type of Birds	
I	Individuals	Use this category to record males, females, adults and juveniles, juveniles only, and any other combination of types counted which cannot be encompassed by the other categories.
B	Breeding Pairs	
A	Adults only	
M	Males only	
F	Females only	
N	Nests	Active nests

4. Reliability: Qualify the reliability with one of the following designations.

Code	Data Quality	Description
G	Good	Accurate to within 10%
M	Medium	Accurate to within 50%
P	Poor	Definitely not accurate to within 50%
UN	Unknown	

5. Source: For each species population entry, enter the source number that corresponds with the listed source in the following Instruction IIIB-Source Details.

INSTRUCTIONS IIIB – Source Details

List the sources of data for entries in the previous Instruction, IIIA – Species List and Population. Sources may include personal field notes, surveys such as Christmas Bird Counts or Breeding Bird Surveys, or publications. Include the following in your citation: **Source Type, Authors (publication, report)/ Observers (field notes), Year, Title of Source, Journal, Volume, Pages** (if applicable). See examples below.

1. PUBLICATION, COX, J. A. 1987. *Status and distribution of the Florida Scrub Jay*. Florida Ornithological Society Special Publication Number 3. Gainesville, FL.
2. Personal Field Notes, Farley, G.H. and S. Newland. 1999. *Notes on breeding passerines at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, summer 1999*.

INSTRUCTIONS IV – Virginia IBA Criteria

Mark an “X” by all of the criteria that apply to the site using the following designations.

D1: Endangered, Threatened, or Vulnerable Species

The site sustains a breeding or non-breeding population of one or more bird species, sub-species, or isolated populations that is/are endangered, threatened or vulnerable to extirpation. This category excludes incidences of vagrancy, marginal occurrence, and historical records unless reintroduction efforts for a certain species are planned. Significant numbers will vary between species with a minimal threshold of 1 % of the state population in a given season or sites with the largest populations.

State Endangered, Threatened, Special Concern, or Vulnerable Species

Species	Conservation Status	Threshold
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American Black Duck	Vulnerable	5 breeding pairs
Gull-billed Tern	Threatened	10 breeding pairs
Black Skimmer	Vulnerable	100 breeding pairs/200 individuals
Black Rail	Special Concern	All breeding locations
Little Blue Heron	Special Concern	10 breeding pairs
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Vulnerable	40 breeding pairs
American Bittern	Vulnerable	5 breeding pairs
American Oystercatcher	Vulnerable	30 breeding pairs
Upland Sandpiper	Special Concern	All breeding locations
Wilson's Plover	Endangered	All breeding locations
Piping Plover	Endangered	All breeding locations
Bald Eagle	Threatened	30 breeding pairs or 100 non-breeding individuals
Peregrine Falcon	Threatened	Ridge and Valley breeding/hacking sites and locations known to support 10 or more wintering individuals
Northern Saw-whet Owl (Appalachian population)	Special Concern	2 breeding pairs
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Endangered	All breeding locations
Appalachian Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (note subspecies)	Vulnerable	All breeding locations
Appalachian Bewick's Wren	Endangered	All locations
Loggerhead Shrike	Threatened	2 breeding pairs
Golden-winged Warbler	Vulnerable	10 breeding pairs
Wayne's Black-throated Green Warbler (Coastal-Plain subspecies)	Vulnerable	2 breeding pairs
Cerulean Warbler	Vulnerable	50 breeding pairs
Swainson's Warbler	Vulnerable	5 breeding pairs, (20 breeding pairs Coastal Plain)
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow	Special Concern	5 breeding pairs
Bachman's Sparrow	Threatened	All breeding locations
Henslow's Sparrow	Threatened	All breeding locations
Red Crossbill (Type I, spruce/fir species)	Special Concern	All breeding locations

Additional Watchlist Species

Species Considered	Threshold (breeding season pairs / breeding, migration, winter # of individuals)
Brant (winter)	240 wintering individuals
Yellow Rail	All locations
Marbled Godwit	60 wintering individuals
Red Knot	240 transient individuals
Purple Sandpiper	100 transient or wintering individuals
Short-billed Dowitcher	500 transient or wintering individuals
American Woodcock	50 breeding pairs or 500 wintering individuals
Roseate Tern	All transient locations
Common Tern	200 breeding pairs
Least Tern	50 breeding pairs
Black-billed Cuckoo	75 breeding pairs

Short-eared Owl	10 breeding pairs
Chuck-will's-widow	100 breeding pairs
Whip-poor-will	750 breeding pairs
Red-headed Woodpecker	100 breeding pairs
Willow Flycatcher	150 breeding pairs
Brown-headed Nuthatch	80 breeding pairs
Sedge Wren	10 breeding pairs
Wood Thrush	5,000 breeding pairs
Blue-winged Warbler	20 breeding pairs
Prairie Warbler	1000 breeding pairs
Prothonotary Warbler	430 breeding pairs
Worm-eating Warbler	500 breeding pairs
Louisiana Waterthrush	230 breeding pairs
Kentucky Warbler	200 breeding pairs
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow	100 wintering individuals of Sharp-tailed Sparrow species
Rusty Blackbird	200 wintering individuals

D3: A site that contains a significant suite of species associated with a habitat type that is representative, rare, or threatened in Virginia

This site includes large natural areas capable of supporting significant bird populations, especially species with particular habitat requirements such as grasslands, high mountain “island” habitats, and bottomland hardwoods. It also includes sites that are small remnants of an exceptional habitat type. Selection of sites in this category is based on the assemblage of bird species characteristic of the habitat type, not on the habitat type alone.

D4: A site that contains a significant concentration of one or more species during the breeding season, winter, or during migration.

The site is important for dense populations of breeding birds (such as a colonial nesting species), and high concentrations of waterfowl, shorebirds, or landbirds during the migration and winter seasons.

Selection Criteria:

4a. Concentrations of Waterfowl. The site supports an important concentration site for 10,000 or more waterfowl (Anseriformes: swans, geese, ducks) on the Coastal Plain or 5,000 or more waterfowl on the Piedmont or Ridge and Valley physiographic provinces.

4b. Concentration of Pelagic Seabirds. The site supports an important concentration site for 1,000 or more pelagic seabirds.

4c. Concentration of raptors. The site is an important concentration site or migratory corridor for 10,000 or more individuals of raptorial species. Concentration refers to a seasonal total rather than the numbers that occur over a brief period of time.

4d. Concentration of wading birds and colonial waterbirds. The site supports an important concentration site for 1,000 individual (or 500 breeding pairs) of Great-blue Herons or 200 individual (or 100 breeding pairs) of one or more species of other colonial waterbirds (pelicans, ibis, herons, egrets, and terns).

4e. Concentration of migratory landbirds. The site supports an exceptional diversity and number of migratory landbirds during migration. No absolute thresholds have been set due to the scarcity of quantitative data but sites are expected to be important stopover areas for a seasonal total of $\geq 500,000$ landbirds and should be clearly unique from other sites in the local area so they represent the geographic extent of a migratory “bottleneck” area.

4f. Concentration of shorebirds. The site supports an important concentration site for 10,000 or more shorebirds and rail species.

INSTRUCTIONS V – Habitat Details

List major vegetation community types from the list below, or enter “Other” and describe the habitats. Record predominant plant species (if known) for each community. Record the percentage of cover for each type listed.

COASTAL PLAIN HABITATS

Grassland
Pine savannah
Other Pine forest
Shrub/scrub/barrens
Riparian habitats
Deciduous/Mixed upland forest
Forested wetland (=bottomland forest)
Fresh and Brackish marsh (emergent wetlands)
Salt marsh
Inter-tidal mudflat
Coastal bays
Barrier/bay Island
Open water types

PIEDMONT HABITATS

Grassland
Freshwater marsh (freshwater wetlands)
Deciduous/mixed forest
Pine forest
Shrub/scrub/barrens
Riparian habitats
Open water types

MOUNTAIN HABITATS

Grassland
Shrub/barrens/balds
Oak-hickory forest (low elevation deciduous forest)
Mixed mesophytic hardwoods (cove forests)
Northern hardwoods (higher elevation, Northeast aspect deciduous forests)
Xeric oak and Table Mt. Pine forests (high elevation oak savannas and dry pine sites)
Other Pine forest
Spruce/fir forest
Riparian forest

High elevation bogs, swamps, freshwater marsh (freshwater wetlands)
 Rhododendron thickets
 Open water types

INSTRUCTION VI – Land Use

Note the land use types that are used at the site. Mark whether the land use reported is of major, minor, or unknown usage. Also enter the percentage cover of this land use. Following are descriptions of land use codes.

LAND USE	NOTES
Agriculture 1: Row crops, small grains	All land affected by cultivation, including perennial crops/groves/orchards.
Agriculture 2: Grasslands (pasture, hay)	All land affected by pastoral agriculture, including grazing lands and rangelands of livestock, as well as hayfields.
Fisheries/aquaculture	All land or water affected by commercial angling, fishing, aquaculture, mariculture, shellfish cultivation or harvesting, etc. Recreational angling was listed under 'Tourism/Recreation'.
Forestry	This term means wooded land under active management for the extraction of timber and non-timber forest products, as well as for other non-extractive functions such as protection against erosion, etc. and provision of amenity areas for recreation/tourism, etc.
Hunting	Only list hunting as a land use if the land is officially designated for hunting.
Military	Any area of land or water used by the military, for any purpose.
Nature conservation/research	Land or water where 'Nature conservation/research' is a primary land use, i.e. protected areas with a relatively high level of protection or management for nature conservation.
Not utilized	The relevant area is not used.
Other	This category covers any human use of the IBA which cannot be classified under one of the other categories.
Tourism/recreation	Record this category only if the land or water is allocated specifically for this use, e.g. on planning maps.
Unknown	This category should be used when the land use, if any, over part or all of an IBA's area is not known to the nominator.
Urban/industrial/transport	This category includes: general residential and built-up areas (not only in cities but also towns or villages); infrastructure other than for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism/recreation or water management, i.e. mainly for transport and energy purposes, e.g. roads, bridges, railways, ports, airports, power-stations, pylon or pipeline networks, wind-farms, etc.; and non-built-up land used by commercial or industrial activities other than agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism/recreation or water management, i.e. such activities as extraction of oil/gas, mining of ores, peat, salt, gravel, etc.
Water management	This category includes the management of waterbodies such as rivers and lakes for purposes such as flood control, irrigation and storage (for drinking water, hydropower, cooling power-stations, etc.), large-scale redistribution (to balance disturbed hydrology, facilitate engineering projects, etc.).

INSTRUCTION VII - Threats

Note each threat and its level of importance to the site. Following are descriptions of some of the less obvious threat codes.

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THREAT	NOTES
Abandonment/land management reduction	Includes undergrazing; rural depopulation leading to reduced carrion for scavengers; abandonment of salt-pans. Abandonment of fish-ponds is treated under 'Aquaculture/fisheries'.
Agricultural expansion/intensification	Includes irrigation (including indirect impacts, e.g. draw-down of water leading to predators reaching breeding colonies on islands, or reservoir being kept artificially high in summer, etc.); high fertilizer input; excessive use of chemicals; changes in crop species or cultivation; loss of habitats; overgrazing; effects of pest control on non-target species; nutrient pollution of wetlands as a result of agricultural intensification.
Aquaculture/fisheries	The threat is not solely from intensification or expansion of aquaculture/fisheries—abandonment or reduction of traditional or non-intensive aquaculture can also affect some waterbirds (cf. agriculture). This category includes the persecution (shooting, etc.) of waterbirds that can occur at some fisheries/aquaculture sites. Reduction in fish farming due to economic crisis. If recreational angling causes a threat, this should be listed as a 'Recreation/tourism' threat.
Burning of vegetation	Fires that are not caused by natural events, i.e. all man-made fires, whether purposeful (e.g. to clear vegetation for grazing) or accidental or malicious.
Dam/dyke/barrage construction/operations	Includes such phenomena as water-level fluctuations in, or downstream of, hydropower reservoirs, changing levels of reservoirs or storage basins, altered sedimentation patterns downstream, etc.
Disturbance to birds	This threat is usually a consequence of other human activities than deliberate scaring, and thus is often listed in combination with other threat categories (ultimate factors), e.g. recreation/tourism or intensified forest management. Contributors to this inventory have often listed both 'Disturbance to birds' and the responsible activity too, to highlight the ultimate source of the disturbance. Active persecution of birds is generally classed as 'Other' threat, but when disturbance effects are more important than mortality effects, e.g. farmers shooting at Cranes <i>Grus grus</i> or geese <i>Anser/Branta</i> just enough to scare them away, then such activity is better classed here.
Dredging/canal building (irrigation)	Includes creation of canals for irrigation.
Filling-in of wetlands	Used for active filling-in only, e.g. land-fill using excess spoil or waste material. If the wetland is filling in due to increased sedimentation or other indirect processes, the threat should be classified under the cause of the increase in sedimentation.
Forest grazing (by native or domestic herbivores)	Includes damaging grazing caused by over-population of wild deer (through winter-feeding by hunters, eradication of natural predators, etc.).
Mineral/oil/peat extraction	Includes exploration as well as extraction activities/infrastructure and any resultant pollution, covering all kinds of extraction, e.g. not just mining but oil/gas, peat (commercial extraction only), etc., as well as pollution occurring during transport (accidental/deliberate cleaning of bilges of oil tankers, etc.).
Nonnative (exotic) animal/plant introduction	Include consequences of animal and plant introductions into natural systems here. Afforestation with exotic tree species should be treated under 'Plantation forestry/Afforestation' rather than here.
Plantation forestry (Afforestation) on previously open land	Planting monocultures for commercial purposes or establishing plantings for other purposes such as erosion control. Afforestation with exotic tree species should be treated here.

INSTRUCTION VIII – Protected Areas

Provide information for any protected areas contained within or that are adjacent to this site. If there are more than two different areas, please attach an additional sheet. Protected Areas generally are sites that have recognized boundaries and are often reserved for some particular use or purpose. Examples include National and State Forests, Monuments, Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, etc.

The state IBA coordinator will fill in the “**Designation**” of a protected area.

Area: Record the size of the protected area, noting if it is an “estimate”.

Relationship: Describe the location of the protected area relative to the IBA. Select from the following.

Protected area contains IBA

Protected area is adjacent to IBA

Protected area contained by IBA

Protected area overlaps with IBA

Unknown

Overlap: Amount of protected area that overlaps IBA.

INSTRUCTIONS IX – Text Summary

Use this section for detailed descriptions. Attach additional pages if necessary.