

Important Bird Areas of Washington

Compiled by Tim Cullinan



 Audubon WASHINGTON

June 2001

Olympia, Washington

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Foreword

We're proud to present *Important Bird Areas of Washington*, Audubon's first effort to scientifically identify places throughout our state that are essential to maintaining healthy bird populations. This book represents thousands of hours of work by Audubon chapter members, staff, and volunteers; and by our many partners in the scientific community, government agencies, and other conservation organizations. We especially applaud Tim Cullinan, Audubon Washington's Director of Science and Bird Conservation, whose exceptional skill as both scientist and communicator provided indispensable leadership for this first phase of the IBA project.

With this documentation of our Important Bird Areas (IBAs), Washington joins a worldwide effort to identify key places with significant bird populations. Our state, a vital link on the Pacific Flyway, provides habitat for more than 350 species of birds. Many of our migratory birds depend on small staging areas during their long journeys, like the millions of arctic-bound sandpipers that stop in more than 21 sites now formally identified as IBAs.

In Washington, our native flora and fauna are still fairly widespread and healthy. Yet, our human population is expected to increase by fifty percent in the next fifty years, which will put even greater pressure on habitat. This directory provides a tool for citizen activists, local governments, state and federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations to develop effective conservation strategies. It provides a framework for making decisions today that will protect areas that birds rely on for their well-being now and in the future.

So, in the spirit of John James Audubon, we commend this book to you, and wish you "Good birding!"

Jeff Parsons
Executive Director
Audubon Washington

Helen Engle
Chair
Audubon Washington Stewards

Acknowledgements

The Important Bird Area program would not have been possible without the dedication, commitment, and teamwork of many people and organizations. Audubon Washington happily shares credit for the program's success with hundreds of Audubon members, conservationists, professional biologists, government agency personnel, students, birders, and other volunteers; and with the organizations that provided funding.

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Christi Norman and Bríd Nowlan led the production of this book, enlisting artist Ed Newbold, who painted the color plates; Al Tietjen, who designed the layout and drew the pen-and-ink illustrations; and copy editor Elsa Gruber. We are especially grateful to our chief editor, Hilary Hilscher, who generously donated her time and expertise to the production of this book.

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As with any endeavor the size of the IBA program, the invaluable contributions of some individuals may not have been documented. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in the IBA program, and offer our sincere apologies to anyone inadvertently omitted from these acknowledgment lists.

This project was made possible by generous grants from the following organizations: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Projects Fund, Batdorf and Bronson Coffee Roasters, the Bullitt Foundation, the Greater Wenatchee Community Foundation, the New York Community Trust, Olympia Federal Savings, the Rathmann Family Foundation, the Seattle Foundation, and the Whatcom Community Foundation.

Finally, I thank my wife Val for tolerating my many late nights at the keyboard, and my many weekends away from home during this effort.

Tim Cullinan

Introduction

This publication presents the initial results of the Important Bird Area (IBA) program in Washington. Like IBA programs in other states and countries, ours has two primary and complementary goals: (1) to identify the sites in the state of Washington that are the most essential for long-term conservation of birds, and (2) to take action to ensure the conservation of these sites.

An Important Bird Area is a site that provides essential habitat for one or more species of birds. In most cases, IBAs are discrete sites on the landscape. As with all IBA programs, Washington's sites were chosen carefully, using standard biological criteria and expert ornithologists' review. All sites nominated as potential IBAs were rigorously evaluated to determine whether they met the necessary qualifications. IBAs represent both terrestrial and aquatic sites that are critically important to birds during breeding, wintering and migration.

The purpose of Audubon's nationwide IBA program is to identify in each state a network of sites essential to maintaining naturally occurring populations of birds, and to protect or manage those sites for long-term conservation. Each state has established an IBA program in its own unique way, but the goals, methods and outcomes are consistent across state and national programs.

The basic procedure for any IBA program has six key steps:

1. Establish objective, state-specific criteria for identifying IBAs.
2. Solicit IBA "nominations" from Audubon chapters, birders, scientists, land managers and owners, and other interested parties.
3. Collect data about the sites.
4. Evaluate data from each nomination and determine if the site meets the qualifications necessary to be an IBA.
5. Enter information into a database and report the results of the IBA inventory.
6. Collaborate with local, regional and statewide groups to establish conservation priorities and develop conservation plans for threatened or high-priority IBAs.

This publication contains, in part, the results of the first five steps. The sixth step will be accomplished in the second phase of the program.

This directory contains an accounting of all the IBAs in Washington identified to date. It should be regarded as a status report on the first round of nominations and site selection. The task of gathering credible ornithological and ecological information on all the potential IBAs in a state is enormous. This is especially true in a state as large and diverse as ours. Audubon staff, chapter members, and other dedicated volunteers worked diligently to gather the information necessary to identify and evaluate sites, but it was not possible to create a complete database in the first two years of the program. Consequently, we are aware that there are sites that have been overlooked. These will be inventoried and evaluated in the near future, and those that qualify will be included in a future edition of this publication.

Background

The Important Bird Area program is a global effort. It began in Europe in the mid-1980s, when a committee of scientists from the International Council of Bird Preservation (since renamed BirdLife International) sponsored an intensive inventory of key sites for birds throughout the continent. The scientists used an objective set of criteria to determine whether a site was an “Important Bird Area,” focusing on wetlands, aquatic habitats and sites where birds congregated in large numbers.

The initial product of that effort was the book *Important Bird Areas of Europe*, published in 1989. It identified over 2,400 IBAs in 31 countries and provided brief descriptions of each site and its bird life. By the year 2000, the list of IBAs in Europe had grown to 3,600 sites in 51 countries, covering seven percent of the European land mass.

Important Bird Areas of Europe is more than a mere catalogue of key bird habi-

tats. It serves as a blueprint for bird habitat protection throughout the continent. Shortly after the first edition was published, the European Community endorsed the findings of the IBA survey and encouraged its members to give “Special Protection” status to Important Bird Areas. Many countries responded favorably. For example, Denmark has now protected up to 97 percent of the IBAs within its borders. By the mid-1990s, hundreds of sites comprising almost sixteen million acres of habitat in Europe had been given some special protection.

Important Bird Area inventories have been or are now being conducted in 100 countries, on nearly every continent. IBA inventories are complete for Europe, the Middle East, and much of Africa. In North America, a first volume of Important Bird Areas in Canada, Mexico and the United States (50 sites in each country) was published in 1999 by the Commission on Environmental Cooperation, a tri-national body created under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation. As of summer 2001, Canada’s Important Bird Areas program has collected data on 600 sites and has initiated conservation planning on about 150 of these. The Mexican IBA program, *Areas de Importancia para la Conservacion de las Aves*, has identified most of the qualifying sites and has established a hierarchy of conservation priorities for that country’s IBAs.

The mid-1990s saw the creation of the American Bird Conservancy, the U.S. affiliate of BirdLife International. During the same time period, the National Audubon Society completed a long-range strategic plan, refocusing on its historic mission to conserve birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Together, the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and Audubon brought the IBA program to the United States. The ABC took on the task of identifying Important Bird Areas of national significance, while Audubon chose to conduct IBA inventories of individual states.

A pilot project was begun to identify and describe the Important Bird Areas in Pennsylvania in 1995, and a similar project in New York State soon followed.

Since then, most of the remaining states have begun IBA projects. As of summer 2001, IBA inventories are either complete or in progress in 30 states.

In late 1997, Audubon Washington entered into a partnership with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to begin an Important Bird Areas program in our state. Funding came from WDFW's Cooperative Projects Fund to help defray the travel costs of volunteers participating in the program. In 1998, volunteers were trained and data collection began. During the next two years, seventy-five sites were formally nominated and evaluated; additional evaluations are ongoing. This publication describes the first 53 sites selected as IBAs in Washington.

Goals of the IBA Program

The primary goal of the IBA program in Washington is to identify and describe specific places on the landscape that are essential for sustaining wild bird populations in our state. The aim is to provide landowners and managers, planners, developers, regulators, conservationists, and other interested parties with reliable information on where the birds are, in order to support sound land use and management decisions. By establishing science-based priorities for identification and conservation of IBAs, and by creating awareness of the places vital to the survival of bird populations, the IBA program promotes thoughtful, sensible decisions regarding land use and development.

The IBA program is, of course, more than just an information-management exercise. The ultimate goal is to slow the tide of habitat loss and to create safe havens that ensure healthy habitats for productive breeding, wintering and migration. The objective is to foster sound stewardship of vital bird habitats in Washington and to guarantee that the ornithological values of these sites will continue in the future.

Site Identification and Selection

Biological Rationale

The Important Bird Area concept is a site-based approach to wildlife conservation. It recognizes that there are some places on the landscape that provide exceptionally valuable habitat for birds. Enlightened management of these most-critical sites is an important approach to conservation. Many species can be effectively conserved in this manner.

Because of the gregarious nature of some species — such as herons, waterfowl, shorebirds and seabirds — sites with extraordinary values for these species are easily recognizable. In the case of more widely dispersed birds, most rare or declining species are closely associated with a specific habitat type or with a narrow range of habitats. Consequently, by recognizing and identifying the highest-quality examples of such habitats, we can delineate sites that will form the basis of a landscape-level conservation network. In either case, experience has shown that sites with high value for one bird species often support numerous species.

The IBA selection process examines sites based on: (1) the presence and abundance of birds, and/or (2) the condition and quality of the habitat. We seek, primarily, sites that support rare species, or an exceptional abundance of one or more species, or sites that contain large and relatively undisturbed examples of native habitats.

The Selection Process

The IBA program in Washington began in late 1997, when a team of bird experts from across the state developed selection criteria for IBAs. The team of eight people (the Expert Team) included expert birders, ornithologists, wildlife managers, and members of academia from most regions of the state. Using criteria from several eastern states as models, the Expert Team developed a set of draft standards for sites to qualify as Important Bird Areas (see next section).

It was immediately recognized that the criteria developed in the eastern U.S. could not be easily applied here. Therefore, selection criteria were deliberately left in draft form, with the understanding that they would be revised as the Team learned more about the characteristics of key bird areas in Washington. The selection criteria were made final in autumn 2000.

The IBA identification and selection process involved two steps: nomination of sites, and evaluation by the Expert Team. Nominations for IBAs were solicited from Audubon chapters, other bird advocacy groups, landowners and managers, natural resource agency personnel, and other interested parties. A site nomination involves completing a five-page form that provides information about the physical and biological characteristics of a site, its ornithological significance, habitat, land use, ownership, and potential threats to birds and habitat (see Appendix A). The Expert Team assisted in the design of the nomination form.

Audubon Washington began distributing IBA nomination forms in summer 1998. With grant funding from WDFW, we sponsored a two-day training session for our Audubon chapter leaders, to familiarize them with the IBA project and to train them in the identification and nomination of sites as IBAs. Ninety-three people, representing 23 of Washington's 26 local Audubon chapters, attended the training session.

Audubon chapter leaders recommended that the first step in the identification process be a list of potential sites. This list would serve two purposes. First, it would assist the staff in determining the scope of the project; second, it would allow us to coordinate among chapters the task of filling out nomination forms, to prevent duplication of effort. We used two methods to generate the initial list. Participants in the training session drew potential IBAs on a large-scale map of Washington. They then polled chapter members about likely IBAs in their areas and submitted descriptions of potential IBAs on an abbreviated, one-page version of the nomination form. With the use of these methods we identified nearly 160 sites as potential IBAs.

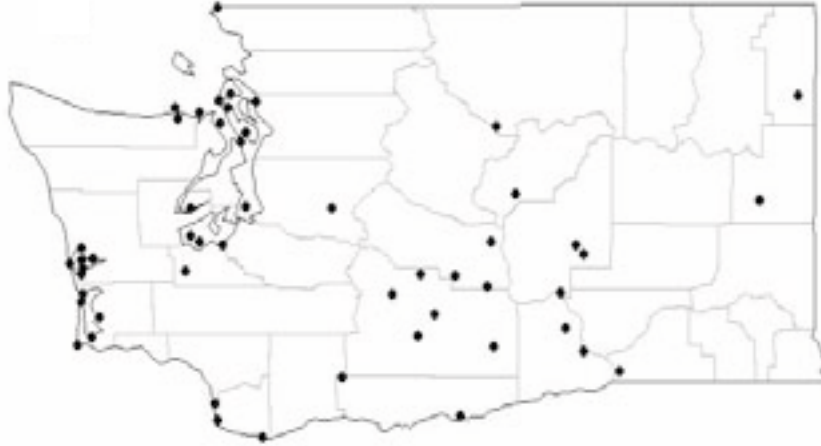
When nominations were received, the IBA coordinator summarized the information and sent it to members of the Expert Team for review. They evaluated the information and recommended that a site be either accepted or rejected as an IBA, or they requested additional information. Nominations and supporting information were kept on file, and summary data about each nominated site were stored in an ArcView database at Evergreen State College.

As of this writing, BirdLife International and the National Audubon Society are making final the American version of the *World Bird Database*, to be used by all states with IBA programs. This data management system is currently in use in most countries with IBA programs. When it becomes available for use by individual states, all of the Washington IBA data will be entered and stored on the *World Bird Database* system, where it will become part of the worldwide system and will be available for retrieval from the BirdLife International web site.

Selection Criteria

An Important Bird Area is a site providing essential habitat for one or more native species of birds in Washington at any time in their annual life cycle. Sites vary in size, and are usually distinguishable from surrounding areas in character, habitat, or ornithological importance. In most cases, sites are delineated by clearly recognizable physical features that separate them from adjacent areas. Boundaries include rivers, roads, ridgelines, abrupt habitat edges, and other clear landmarks. When possible, the boundaries of an IBA are drawn to encompass most of the birds' needs (e.g., feeding and roosting areas) during the seasons for which those are important.

In general, IBAs are predominantly natural areas. Human-made habitats such as landfills and sewage lagoons are generally not considered IBAs. Further, there should be reasonable potential for IBAs to receive additional protection and/or enhanced habitat management in the future, for the benefit of birds.



Location of IBA sites in Washington

Standardized criteria are used to identify and select Important Bird Areas. These criteria are biological in nature and reflect the quantity and/or quality of bird life in given areas. The criteria are not designed to evaluate the educational value or the recreational birding values of sites. While every attempt is made to fulfill one or more of the criteria when nominating sites for IBA designation, the criteria are not absolute and other factors, such as importance relative to other sites, may be taken into account when making final selections.

The criteria are divided into five major categories, described briefly below. Sites meeting one or more of these criteria can qualify as Important Bird Areas. More detailed information about the criteria can be found in Appendix B.

CATEGORY 1: Site for endangered or threatened species, or species of special concern in Washington.

CATEGORY 2: Site for species on the National Partners in Flight WatchList with significant breeding or wintering populations in Washington.

CATEGORY 3: Site containing species assemblages associated with a representative, rare, or threatened natural-community type in Washington.

CATEGORY 4: Site important for long-term avian research or monitoring.

CATEGORY 5: Site where birds regularly concentrate in significant numbers.

Conservation and Management of Important Bird Areas

The ultimate goal of the Important Bird Areas program is to promote the conservation of essential habitats for birds. Because the legal, political, regulatory, and voluntary means of habitat conservation vary widely among jurisdictions, regions, and land ownership, each site must have its own individually tailored conservation strategy. Audubon Washington encourages people interested in helping conserve IBAs to talk with our state office, as well as with landowners and managers, local officials, regulatory and management agencies, and other conservation organizations. Future publications from Audubon Washington will provide a more in-depth discussion of IBA conservation and management.

The Role of Important Bird Areas in Avian Conservation

It is important to note that the IBA program is not a panacea for bird conservation, nor is it one that will work equally well for all species. The IBA site-based approach to bird conservation is not even applicable to some species. For example, territorial species that are widely dispersed at low densities across a breeding range, such as raptors and songbirds, cannot be conserved by protecting a few sites where they are known to occur. Such species require landscape-level or management-based approaches— e.g., designing new land-use techniques that promote successful breeding and survival. *The lack of IBA status for a particular place does not imply that it is unimportant for birds.* Rather, the lack of IBA designation in that specific location may merely mean that a site-based approach to conservation is less effective than another method.

Also, the IBA program seeks to identify the most essential sites statewide. While some sites are not significant on the state level, they may nonetheless be very important for conserving birds on the county or local level. For example, many parks and green spaces in the heavily urbanized parts of western Washington provide the last refuges for birds in an entire city. Likewise, small, remnant

patches of mature or old-growth forest in landscapes dominated by short-rotation industrial forestry provide high-quality habitat for some old-growth associated birds. While such parks and remnant forests are not extraordinary from a state-wide perspective—and therefore are not eligible for IBA status—they may be vital on the local level.

Though the IBA Program is not the final word on bird conservation in Washington, it is a substantial and effective tool. IBAs, together with other approaches to safeguarding birds and their habitats, will help ensure that future human generations will be able to experience the same richness and diversity of bird life that current generations now enjoy.

General Guidelines

This publication can be used to help determine local, county, and state conservation priorities. IBA information allows different areas to be compared, using several criteria: the area's importance to birds; the nature and urgency of threats; and the feasibility of successfully implementing conservation actions. To the greatest extent possible, we have used objective, numerical criteria to assess sites. However, our information base is incomplete at this time: Not all potential IBA sites in Washington have yet been evaluated, and there certainly will be more IBA sites identified in the future.

The process of identifying IBAs has also produced data useful for guiding land use planning and habitat management decisions. Information about the species and groups present, their seasonal abundance, and major habitat types can assist landowners and managers in avoiding detrimental impacts. Some IBA descriptions are merely summaries of the data we have collected, and people interested in conservation of a particular site should contact Audubon Washington to see if more information is available.

Because the IBA concept is site-based, conservation strategies will differ from

site to site. For each IBA, owners, managers, and conservationists will need to assess the location, physical and biological characteristics, patterns of current and past land use, habitat and management needs, laws, regulations, and the availability of resources, before proceeding with any conservation strategy. Such assessments must also consider the needs and attitudes of people using the area, because the most successful and enduring conservation arises from cooperative partnerships among private landowners, public land managers, governments, individuals, and non-government organizations. The best conservation planning involves all stakeholders, and private landowners must be given the opportunity to participate in the cooperative planning process.

The Important Bird Area program carries no regulatory authority. Identification of a site as an IBA imposes no legal restrictions or management requirements on any property, public or private. It is our intent that the recognition of an area as important for birds will encourage a sense of stewardship among landowners and managers, and lead them to voluntarily safeguard the habitat and bird life on their lands. Audubon Washington's goal is to achieve—through partnerships, education, and outreach—an environment in which individuals and communities take pride in the knowledge that they are the stewards of extraordinary natural resources, and that their involvement will help ensure a better future for both birds and people.

Site Summaries

A summary of each Important Bird Area appears in this section. The sites are organized geographically, with the state divided into four regions: Pacific Coast, Western Lowlands, Cascade Mountains, and Columbia Basin. Within each of the four areas, the sites are arranged alphabetically by site name. All sites and corresponding page numbers are listed in the index.

The summaries were compiled from information submitted in nomination forms, from published and unpublished literature, and from interviews. Printed sources are listed in the bibliography. The information in the summaries is arranged under the following headings:

- Name of Site
- Geographic Coordinates
- Elevation/Size
- Ownership
- IBA Criteria
- Habitats
- Land Use
- Site Description
- Birds and Habitat
- Conservation Issues

Name of Site

The site name suggested by the nominator. Often, this is a name that appears on U.S. Geological Survey maps. Most site names are based on a natural landmark or geographical feature, or on a land management unit such as a state wildlife area or national wildlife refuge. In cases where a site is known by more than one name, the second is listed in parentheses. Where several geographical locations were combined into a single IBA, the names were combined.

Geographic Coordinates

Latitude and longitude of the approximate center of the IBA.

Elevation/Size

The site's elevation in meters above sea level, and the size of the area in hectares. One hectare (ha) = 2.47 acres; one meter (m) = 3.28 feet.

Ownership

General land ownership categories, listed in order of relative amount from most to least. Additional information about site ownership also appears in some of the site descriptions.

IBA Criteria

The criteria under which the site qualifies as an IBA. Additional information about the site's qualifications is found under the **Birds and Habitat** heading.

Habitats

General categories of major habitats present on the site, listed in order of relative amount, from most to least. In some cases, additional information about habitat appears in site descriptions or under the **Birds and Habitat** heading.

Land Use

General categories of land use, listed in order of amount, from most to least.

Additional information about land use may appear in the site description or conservation issues sections.

Site Description

General description of the location, and the physical and ecological characteristics of the site. Additional information about ownership or management, habitat, and land use may appear under this heading.

Birds and Habitat

Overview of why the site is important to birds. In particular, this section describes the evidence upon which the site's identification as an IBA was based. It includes available information on bird population sizes and the significance of those populations. Where a site qualifies under Category 3, the description lists the habitat and describes the assemblage of species associated with that habitat. In some cases, a separate table lists the important species or groups and estimates of their seasonal abundance, when available.

Conservation Issues

Summary of the existing or potential threats to the birds or habitat on the site.

Key to Codes Used in Site Summaries

IBA Criteria

These are standardized criteria used to identify and select Important Bird Areas. They are divided into the following categories. See Appendix B for a more detailed description of the IBA selection criteria.

CATEGORY 1: Site for endangered or threatened species, or species of special concern in Washington.

CATEGORY 2: Site for species on the National Partners in Flight WatchList with significant breeding or wintering populations in Washington.

CATEGORY 3: Site containing species assemblages associated with a representative, rare, or threatened natural-community type in Washington.

CATEGORY 4: Site important for long-term avian research or monitoring.

CATEGORY 5: Site where birds regularly concentrate in significant numbers.

5a. Over a short period of time during any season: at least 2,000 waterfowl in fresh water habitats; or 5,000 waterfowl in marine/estuarine habitats.

5b. Over a short period of time during any season: at least 50 seabirds, in either marine or terrestrial nesting areas; or 1,000 gulls at inland sites or 5,000 gulls at coastal sites; or 50 terns.

5c. At least 100 shorebirds in fresh water habitats or 1,000 shorebirds in marine/estuarine habitats, over a short period of time during any season; or 12 or more shorebird species over a season (two to three months).

5d. At least 50 Great Blue Heron nests; or any nesting pelicans, egrets, or Black-Crowned Night Herons during breeding season; or 30 Brown Pelicans at any time of the year.

5e. Migratory corridor for at least 1,000 raptors (seasonal total) during

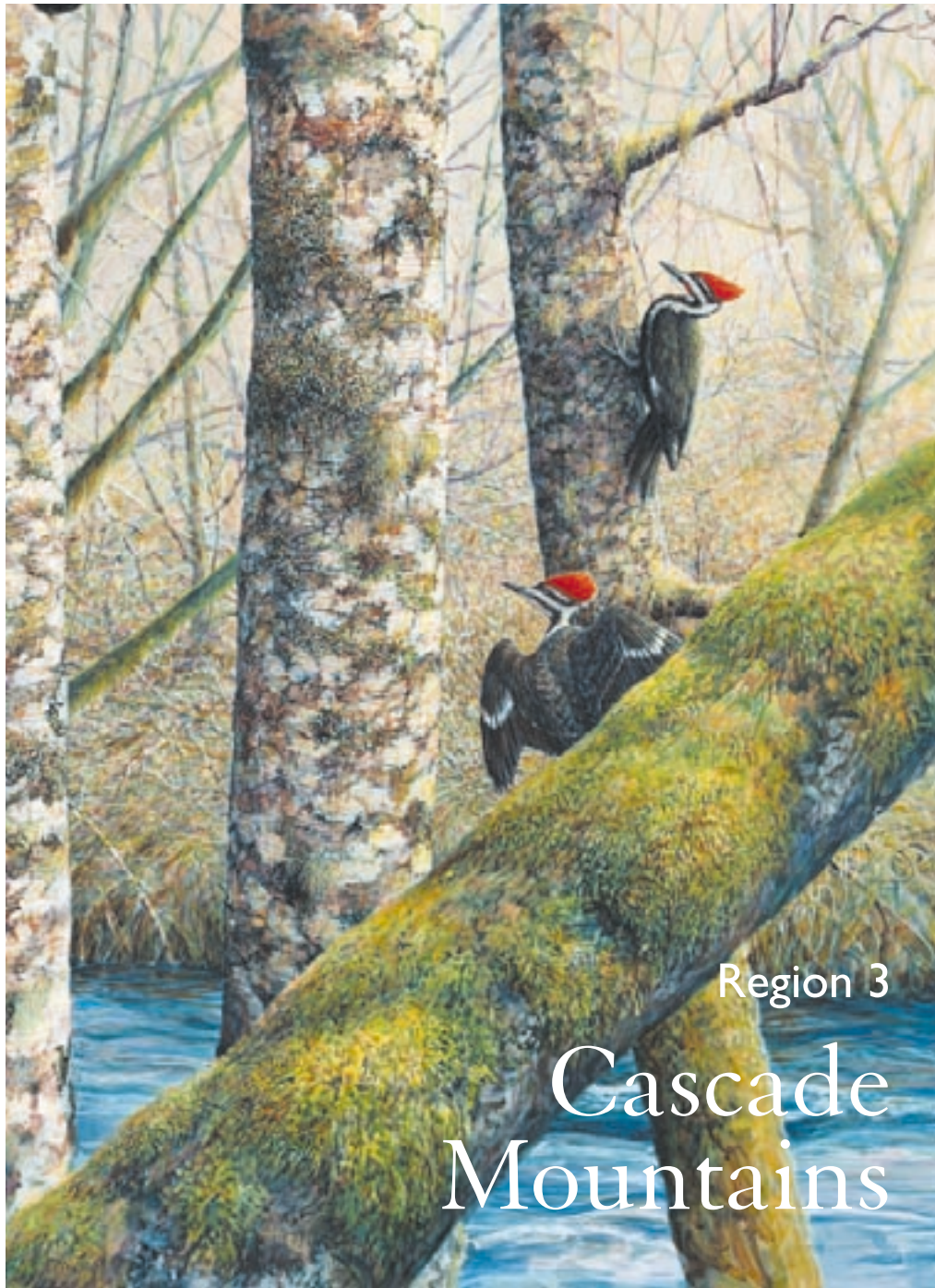
spring or fall migration; or a winter concentration area used by at least 100 raptors.

5f. Significant proportion of a species' statewide or regional population at one time during some part of the year.

5g. Exceptional number or diversity of terrestrial birds during the migration season.

Season Codes

W=winter, **S**=spring, **B**=breeding, **F**=fall, **M**=migration.



Region 3

Cascade Mountains

CASCADE MOUNTAINS

Cedar River Watershed

47° 22' N, 121° 39' W

168-1,680 m/36,640 ha

Ownership	City
IBA Criteria	1, 3, 5e, 5f
Habitats	Coniferous forest, open fresh water, riparian, deciduous forest
Land Use	Watershed protection, municipal water supply

Site Description

The Cedar River Watershed, a main source of water for the city of Seattle, is a long, narrow valley located 48 kilometers southeast of Seattle in the western Cascades. Predominantly coniferous forest, the site includes the 525-hectare Chester Morse Lake; and 25 to 30 smaller lakes and ponds, many of which are bordered by sedge/willow habitat. There are also some riparian corridors, wetlands, a sphagnum bog, upland meadows, and talus cliffs. The watershed is not open to the public.

Birds and Habitat

The primary value of this site is its substantial amount of relatively undisturbed low-elevation coniferous forest, the only large area of protected habitat of this type in a contiguous block within the fragmented checkerboard landscape south of Interstate 90. It contains 5,670 hectares of old-growth forest, with trees as old as 850 years. The watershed acts as a *de facto* reserve, and is most significant from a conservation perspective because of the large amount of mature Western Hemlock forest.

CASCADE MOUNTAINS

Recent King County Breeding Bird Atlas surveys detected 103 breeding species. The site supports an assemblage of species associated with mature coniferous forest, including Northern Goshawk, Marbled Murrelet, Northern Spotted Owl, Vaux's Swift, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-Breasted Nuthatch, and Brown Creeper. Breeding Peregrine Falcons have also been confirmed. Twenty-five percent of the breeding Common Loons in Washington nest in the watershed. These nesting pairs typically produce the majority of the state's fledgling loons on a yearly basis.

Conservation Issues

At present, the habitat in the Cedar River Watershed is well protected. The Seattle City Council recently approved a Habitat Conservation Plan that prohibits logging. Over the 50-year period covered by the plan, the proportion of mature forest in the watershed will increase to 85 percent.



CASCADE MOUNTAINS

Chelan Ridge (Cooper Mountain)

48° 01' N, 120° 05' W

1,400-1,730 m/1,560 ha

Ownership	Federal
IBA Criteria	5e
Habitats	Coniferous forest, shrub-steppe, deciduous forest
Land Use	Wildlife conservation, forestry, rangeland, recreation

Site Description

Chelan Ridge is a raptor observation site located 21 kilometers north-northwest of the town of Chelan in the Wenatchee National Forest. The Chelan Ridge lookout is at an elevation of 1,730 meters, and provides a 360-degree view of the surrounding landscape, including Lake Chelan, the Sawtooth and Pasayten Wildernesses, and the Waterville Plateau. The lookout's southwest slope is a 60-meter cliff face with a 70- to 80-degree slope that provides excellent updrafts, allowing observation of raptors at close range. There are also unobstructed views of valleys to the south and west where thermals usually form. The site is in the transition zone between shrub-steppe and conifer forest, and is located within a 24,280-hectare area that burned in 1970.

Birds and Habitat

Chelan Ridge is an excellent migratory corridor for raptors. An average of 2,065 raptors (maximum 2,336) representing 16 species are recorded in fall. It is also the site of a raptor banding station jointly operated by the U.S. Forest Service, Hawkwatch International, and the Falcon Research Group. In addition to the raptors, Northern Hawk-owls and Ferruginous Hawks occur here occasionally. Gray-crowned Rosy Finches are common. This site also supports the

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highest-known numbers of the northern alligator lizard, as well as populations of lynx and wolverine.

SPECIES OR GROUP	SEASON	AVERAGE	MAXIMUM
Bald Eagle	FM	5	17
Sharp-shinned Hawk	FM	940	949
Cooper's Hawk	FM	240	247
Northern Goshawk	FM	41	50
Red-tailed Hawk	FM	316	450
Golden Eagle	FM	98	141
Merlin	FM	45	55
Prairie Falcon	FM	9	10
Peregrine Falcon	FM	6	9

Conservation Issues

Due to the high, arid nature of Chelan Ridge, the vegetation and soils are vulnerable to damage from recreational overuse. At present, the site can accommodate no more than 50 visitors per day.



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Tieton River Corridor

46° 41' N, 121° 05' W

550-1,800 m/15,540 ha

Ownership	Federal, state
IBA Criteria	1, 5e, 5g
Habitats	Coniferous forest, open fresh water, oak forest, cliffs, riparian
Land Use	Forestry, recreation, water supply

Site Description

This area is a long, narrow corridor flanking the main stem of the Tieton River from Rimrock Lake to its confluence with the Naches River 40 kilometers northwest of Yakima. The site includes Rimrock Lake and the South Fork of Clear Creek up to White Pass. The 50-kilometer canyon represents a cross-section of eastern Washington habitats, from shrub-steppe to mixed forest to alpine meadow. Nearly all of the area is in public ownership.

Birds and Habitat

The corridor is primarily mixed conifer forest, with ponderosa pine on the lower slopes, grading into shrub-steppe. In the lower reaches of the canyon are extensive stands of Oregon white oak. Basalt cliffs in the middle reaches of the canyon provide nesting sites for falcons and Golden Eagles, and the alder thickets along the southern shore of Rimrock Lake support a high diversity and abundance of songbirds. At least 11 species of woodpeckers are found in this area; the sub-alpine forests near White Pass support three species of sapsuckers in close proximity. The diverse forests in the corridor support up to 16 species of raptors during the breeding season.

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SPECIES OR GROUP	SEASON	AVERAGE	MAXIMUM
Common Loon	SM, FM	--	10
Bald Eagle	B	--	12
Golden Eagle	B	--	10
Peregrine Falcon	B	--	4
Prairie Falcon	B	--	6

Conservation Issues

Most of the river corridor is in public ownership, managed for multiple use. The state ownership is mostly in the Oak Creek State Wildlife Area. The lower two-thirds of the Tieton River is subject to extreme changes in flow caused by management of water releases from the dam at Rimrock Lake. This can damage food sources for aquatic birds such as Harlequin Ducks and mergansers. The valley is bisected by State Route 12, so recreational use is high, thus increasing the probability for introduction of invasive non-native plants and for disturbance to birds.



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Trout Lake Marsh

46° 01' N, 121° 33' W

600 m/965 ha

Ownership	State, private
IBA Criteria	3, 5f
Habitats	Marsh, open fresh water, riparian
Land Use	Wildlife conservation, agriculture

Site Description

Trout Lake Marsh is located in the northwest corner of Klickitat County, just north of the town of Trout Lake. It has open fresh water, marsh, and riparian wetlands, with aspen stands and Oregon white oak woodlands on the higher ground. Most of the site is managed as a Natural Area Preserve by the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

Birds and Habitat

The extensive marshes and adjacent cottonwood forests comprise one of the largest intact wetland ecosystems in south central Washington, and support an assemblage of birds associated with these habitats. More than 150 bird species are known to use this site, including an exceptional diversity of breeding neotropical migrants. At least 50 species, including 10 species of warblers, are known to nest here. Listed or candidate species include Bald Eagle, Sandhill Crane, Vaux's Swift, White-headed Woodpecker, and Loggerhead Shrike. WatchList species include Long-billed Curlew, Band-tailed Pigeon, Short-eared Owl, Rufous Hummingbird, and Hermit Warbler. Washington's westernmost breeding records of Veery and Gray Catbird were obtained at this site.

Conservation Issues

Runoff from agriculture and from upstream commercial forestland is a minor threat. Erosion from upstream land use could result in sediment deposition in the marsh, which could alter the marsh hydrology.

Wenas Basin/ Clemans Mountain

46° 51' N, 120° 48' W

536-1,864 m/41,440 ha

Ownership	State, private, federal
IBA Criteria	1, 3
Habitats	Coniferous forest, shrub-steppe, riparian
Land Use	Wildlife conservation and recreation, forestry, rangeland

Site Description

This site is located in the upper half of the Wenas Creek watershed, 30 kilometers northwest of the town of Selah. It includes the lands draining into Wenas Creek above the Wenas Lake dam, and all of Clemans Mountain southeast of Benton Creek. The majority of the land is in state or federal ownership; about 50 percent of the area lies within the Oak Creek State Wildlife Area. Wenas Creek flows through a narrow, steep-sided canyon in the upper half of the area, then enters a broad valley drained by tributaries descending the north face of Clemans Mountain.

Birds and Habitat

Situated in the transition zone between the shrub-steppe region of the Columbia Plateau and the coniferous forests of the eastern Cascade Mountains, this area contains a habitat mosaic that supports a rich diversity and abundance of birds. Further contributing to the bird diversity is the lush riparian forest along Wenas Creek and its major tributaries. The site is renowned for its assemblage of birds associated with mature ponderosa pine forest, including Northern Goshawk, Flammulated Owl, Vaux's Swift, and White-headed Woodpecker, all candidates for listing as threatened species by the Washington Wildlife Commission. The Wenas Valley also supports a diverse assemblage of birds associated with eastern Washington riparian habitat, such as the Willow Flycatcher, Veery,

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Gray Catbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat, all of which are fairly common in the area.

SPECIES OR GROUP	SEASON	AVERAGE	MAXIMUM
Bald Eagle	W	--	5
Ferruginous Hawk	B	--	2
Golden Eagle	B	--	2
Northern Goshawk	B	--	20
Prairie Falcon	B	--	6
Flammulated Owl	B	--	100
Vaux's Swift	B	--	250

Conservation Issues

The most serious threat to the forest-associated birds is the logging of old-growth ponderosa pine. In recent years, the Wenas Valley has become popular as a rural residential area, so there is a threat of converting rangeland and forest to high-density, hobby-farm development. Recreational use is high, and some of the riparian habitat has been lost because of off-road vehicle traffic and illegal firewood cutting. These threats are likely to continue.