Department of Defense
Partners in Flight

Conserving birds and their habitats
on Department of Defense lands

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DoD and Migratory Birds

Why is DoD Important to Migratory Birds?
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

PARTNERS IN FLIGHT

Strategic Plan

The Conservation and Management of Migratory and Resident Landbirds and Their Habitats on Department of Defense Lands
Conservation Priorities
DoD Partners in Flight

- Monitoring
  - Radar ornithology
  - MAPS
  - Satellite and remote tracking
  - Remote acoustic monitoring
- BASH
- Grasslands
- Invasive & nuisance species
- International conservation
Important Bird Areas
DoD lands benefit priority bird species

What is an Important Bird Area? Some places are exceptionally important - even essential - for bird conservation. Directing protection and management efforts towards these sites is crucial if viable populations of many species are to persist in the long-term. Conservationists have long understood this fact, but only in recent years has a program emerged to identify and formally recognize these sites. Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are sites that are significant because they host large concentrations or an exceptional diversity of birds, harbor rare or endangered species, or contain unique or threatened habitat. The IBA program is founded on the premise that identifying and conserving key habitat areas for bird populations is essential to bird conservation efforts. The program's goal is to identify and protect a network of sites around the world to help maintain and restore key habitat areas for bird populations.

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History of the IBA Program in the US
From its start in Europe in the 1980s by BirdLife International, the IBA concept has led to the recognition of more than 7,900 sites worldwide. The IBA Program was launched in the U.S. in 1995 by BirdLife partner designate American Bird Conservancy (ABC), which identified and documented three sites of significance on a global level throughout all 50 states. The National Audubon Society (Audubon) initiated a state-based IBA program that same year in partnership with ABC, and has been building programs state by state. As of 2004, Audubon was operating IBA programs in 46 states. Today, ADC continues its IBA program for sites of global significance, but Audubon is now the BirdLife partner designate in the U.S., and is expanding its IBA program to include sites of global and continental significance.

Military Lands as IBAs
Some Department of Defense (DoD) lands, including military installations and Army Corps of Engineers projects, have been identified as IBAs. In general, an IBA should exist as an actual or potential protected area, or should have the potential to be managed in some way for both birds and general nature conservation. Military installations, through their Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMP) and Section 7 consultations, manage lands in ways that benefit native bird populations. Many Corps project sites also implement comprehensive management plans that enhance bird habitat. While IBAs have no minimum or maximum size, they should be large enough to supply all or most of the requirements of the bird(s) during the season for which they are important. DoD lands identified as IBAs also satisfy this need. To that end, the DoD PRP program endorses IBAs on military lands and Corps of Engineers lands, where appropriate.

Why are IBAs on DoD Lands Good? Currently, by identifying high quality habitats and recognizing them as being important for birds, the IBA Program seeks to mobilize the resources needed to protect these areas by raising public awareness of their significance. With over 71 million Americans who watch and/or feed birds, the public is a powerful constituency for bird conservation. An important distinction should also be made that an IBA is not necessarily an important binding area. An IBA exists for birds, not for bird watchers. IBAs can include Watchable Wildlife opportunities, but only if such opportunities do not compromise the military mission or continued conservation actions. On military lands, IBAs can be an effective tool to engage adjoining landowners in landscape level conservation planning. Sometimes, it is the training mission itself that creates and sustains quality habitat. IBA recognition is thus an important tool to educate the public that while DoD lands are managed to support the military's training mission, they also provide significant habitat for the conservation of natural resources, including birds. When a conservation plan is designed for a network of IBAs, INRMPs and Corps comprehensive management plans already provide the necessary information; no additional management planning is required.

Conclusion
Identification of DoD lands as Important Bird Areas is recognition from an outside organization (American Bird Conservancy, National Audubon Society, or both) of the excellent stewardship that benefits resident and migratory birds and their habitats. Identification and/or recognition as an IBA entails no legal or management requirements. In addition, public access is not linked in any way to IBA status. Public bird watching opportunities exist independently; some IBAs will not be open for public access, and many sites with public birding will not qualify as IBAs. Regardless of public access, IBA status is public recognition of which to be proud.

Nominations Process
Any military installation or Army Corps of Engineers project is eligible to be nominated as an IBA if it potentially meets IBA criteria. Once a site is nominated, the appropriate organization reviews the nomination. If it meets the criteria, the IBA is identified and an IBA. Once a site has been identified, official recognition as an IBA is a ceremony of other public outreach method can take place at the discretion of the installation.

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The Strategic Plan can be found at www.dodips.org, or through the contact information on next page.
Steppingstones of Migration

Some Neotropical migratory birds fly nonstop to other wintering habitats in Central, South America. Others stop step-by-step, using points of interest, resting, feeding, and taking to rest and roost along the way. These steppingstones of habitat are critical to the birds' survival. The Department of Defense (DOD) has developed a habitat that provides these steppingstones. DOD's natural resources management incorporates best habitat conservation objectives into its Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans, which are implemented to protect and manage the habitat within its public and private lands. In cooperation with partners in Flight, DOD supports the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABC). DOD is ensuring that these steppingstones of migration are always available to Neotropical migratory birds as they travel each year.
Partnerships

*Partners in Flight*

- **Federal Agencies**
  - *USFWS, USFS, NPS, BLM, BOR*
- **Non-governmental Organizations**
  - TNC, American Bird Conservancy, Audubon

“Partners, not competitors”
Partnerships
Legacy 2005 Areas of Emphasis

– Program Management
– National and International Initiatives
– Monitoring & Predicting Migratory Patterns of Birds & Animals
– Integrated Natural Resources Management
Partnerships
SERDP FY2005 Statements of Need

- “Development of an Advanced Monitoring Strategy for Migratory Birds on Military Lands”

- “Improved Remote Sensing Technologies for Detection of Threatened and Endangered Species and their Habitat”
Partnerships
Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit

- **Burrowing Owls**
  - Breeding, wintering, movements
  - TX, NM, AZ, CA
  - Other CESUs, Mexico, Canada

- **Hummingbird Monitoring Network**
  - Breeding, migratory routes
  - AZ, CA, NM, BC
Partnerships
The Nature Conservancy

• Conservation easements
  – Protect the mission
  – Protect biodiversity
  – Protect adjacent landowners

• Ecoregional planning
  – Priority species assessment
  – Identify important habitats
Bird Species of Concern

- **INRMP**
  - *Integrated* management document

- **USFWS**
  - Birds of Conservation Concern 2002
  - Species for DoD management action
  - MOU (EO 13186) - non-readiness
  - Migratory Bird Rule - readiness
Partnerships
US Fish & Wildlife Service

• DoD species of concern matrix
  – Birds of Conservation Concern 2002
  – Bird initiative priority species
    • Landbirds, waterbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl
  – Game birds
  – T&E

• AEC, States, TNC
Partnerships
DoD Services and Installations

- INRMP process
  - USFWS, States
  - Compliance and Stewardship
    - Game birds, T&E, species of concern

- Funding
  - Coordinated monitoring
  - Regional assessment
Important Bird Areas
4th IBA Conference, Sierra Vista AZ

• Partnering with Federal Agencies
  ❖ Joint presentation
  ❖ Discussion groups
  ❖ Guidance document

“Fort Huachuca is a very good example of an agency that has a mission, but it’s allowing for multiple uses by engaging the birding public, while focusing attention on bird conservation.”
  - John Cecil, IBA Program Director, Audubon
Monitoring

DoD PIF Priorities

- Baseline avian surveys
- LCTA
- Support MAPS stations
- National Point Count DB
- Coordinated bird monitoring
Monitoring Strategy

- Coordinated bird monitoring
  - Current status / Mgmt questions
  - Tools and protocols
  - Partnerships

- Funding
  - SERDP
  - Legacy
  - Services, Installations