

## Location, location, location.

**Bird** conservationists increasingly recognize that some places on earth are more important to birds than others. And for that reason, Mass Audubon organized the Massachusetts Important Bird Areas (IBA) program, and we became part of an international effort to protect bird habitats around the globe.

In 2001, our bird conservation staff assembled a volunteer committee of knowledgeable birders, avian scientists, representatives from state and federal agencies, and conservation organizations to identify, nominate, and designate IBAs throughout the Commonwealth.

Today, our IBA program is helping birds by:

**Raising awareness** of 79 critical sites encompassing 900,000 acres that contribute to preservation of significant bird populations in Massachusetts;

**Providing scientific expertise** and guidance for management of bird habitats through restoration, control of invasive species, creation of cooperative funding opportunities, and land acquisition efforts;

**Increasing outreach** through engagement of bird clubs, land trusts, conservation commissions, and friends groups; and

**Creating educational opportunities** such as lectures, programs, site visits, and personal contact.



### History of the IBA program

In 1985 BirdLife International, based in England, initiated the *Important Bird Areas (IBA) Programme* as a movement to identify and protect critical bird habitat throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. In the 1990s BirdLife partnered with the National Audubon Society to develop an IBA program in the United States, and in the Commonwealth Mass Audubon took the lead. Today more than 130 countries worldwide participate.

To qualify, an IBA must regularly hold significant numbers of an endangered species; attract large numbers of breeding, wintering, or migratory species; contain assemblages of species characteristic of a unique habitat, or habitats containing species with a high conservation priority in the state; or be important for its long-term research or educational value.



Funded in part by the Charles Blake Fund  
of the Nuttall Ornithological Club.



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**Photography:** Shawn Carey ©: Ring-necked Duck; Richard Johnson ©: Common Eiders, King Rail, Saltmarsh Sharp-Tailed Sparrow; Blair Nikula ©: American Oystercatcher, South Beach Shorebirds; Eric Smith ©: Prairie Warbler; Bud Titlow NATUREGRAPHS ©: Birders; John Van de Graaff ©: Piping Plover, Sora, Blackpoll Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler; Scott Hecker: Roseate Tern; Wayne Petersen: View from Mr. Greylock, Quaboag, Monomoy Lighthouse

# Important Bird Areas in Massachusetts



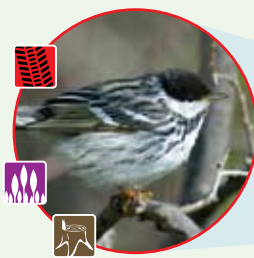
Mass Audubon

Preserving Our Common Wealth of Birds

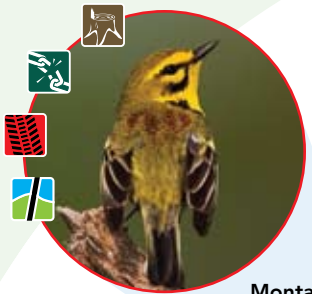


# Featured Massachusetts Important Bird Areas

**IBAs** vary in size from a few to many thousands of acres. They may coincide with the boundaries of existing wildlife refuges or be located on unprotected land. Although in Massachusetts IBAs have no legal standing, as the name implies they are simply—in the opinion of experts and supported by data—places of high importance to birds.



**Mount Greylock:** 12,500 acres and the highest point in Massachusetts (3,500'), the site is home to locally rare breeders such as Blackpoll and Mourning warblers



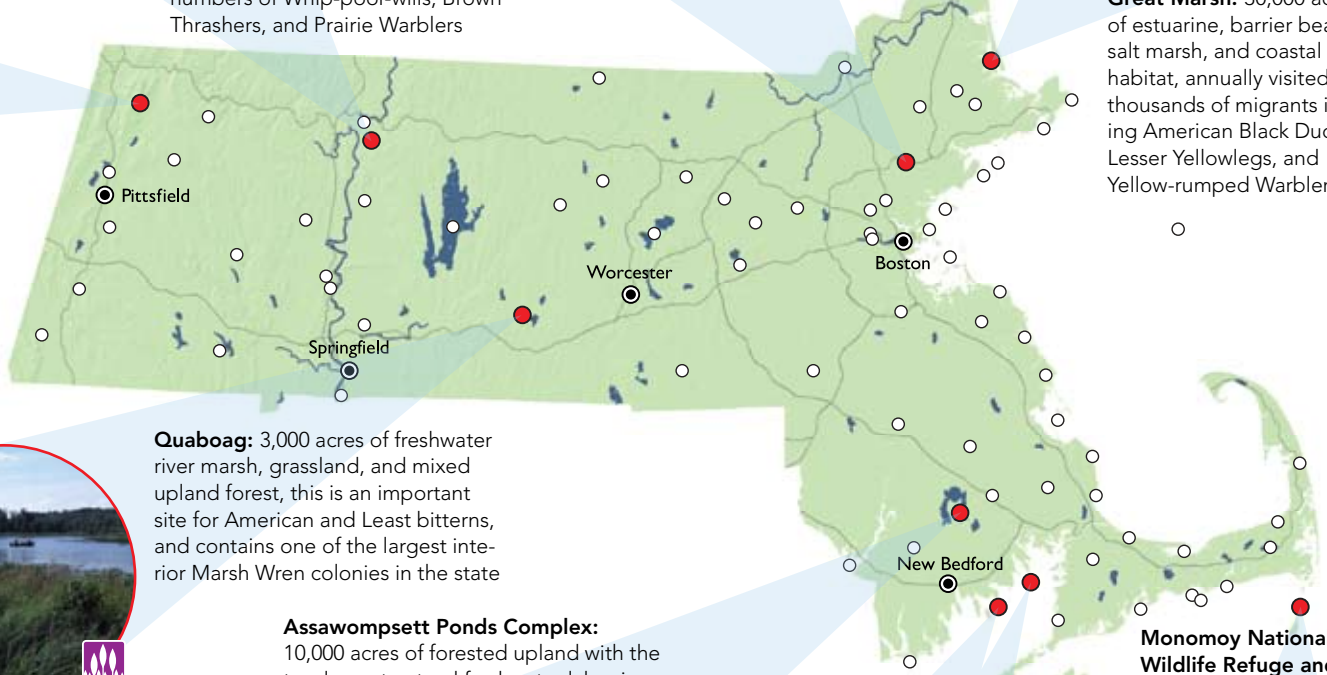
**Montague Sandplains:** 1,750 acres of interior shrubland and pitch pine/scrub oak forest that sustain robust numbers of Whip-poor-wills, Brown Thrashers, and Prairie Warblers



**Lynnfield Marsh:** 1,200 acres of deepwater freshwater marsh, this site is home to Virginia Rails, Soras, and Marsh Wrens, and occasionally King Rails and Common Moorhens



**Great Marsh:** 30,000 acres of estuarine, barrier beach, salt marsh, and coastal thicket habitat, annually visited by thousands of migrants including American Black Ducks, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Yellow-rumped Warblers



**Quaboag:** 3,000 acres of freshwater river marsh, grassland, and mixed upland forest, this is an important site for American and Least bitterns, and contains one of the largest interior Marsh Wren colonies in the state



**Assawompsett Ponds Complex:** 10,000 acres of forested upland with the two largest natural freshwater lakes in the state, this site hosts nesting Ospreys and Bald Eagles, along with hundreds of Ring-necked Ducks in fall








**Bird and Ram Islands:** less than 4 acres in area, these tiny islands support 50 percent of the breeding Roseate Terns in North America and nearly the entire population of those nesting in Massachusetts



**Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge and South Beach:** 3,000 acres of the most important coastal bird habitat in New England for nesting Piping Plovers and American Oystercatchers, and major late-summer concentrations of shorebirds and Roseate Terns

Birds in Massachusetts are increasingly threatened by:

-  Habitat loss
-  Fragmentation
-  Nonnative invasive species
-  Incompatible human use
-  Overall disruption of ecological processes

## How you can help

- ♦ Get to know your IBAs by taking a program at a nearby Mass Audubon wildlife sanctuary
- ♦ Advocate for protection of an IBA near your home and support IBA stewardship efforts whenever possible
- ♦ Become a Mass Audubon member and make a donation to the IBA program
- ♦ Record your IBA bird observations at [www.massaudubon.org/ebird](http://www.massaudubon.org/ebird), our free online computerized database

For more IBA information visit [www.massaudubon.org/iba](http://www.massaudubon.org/iba) or contact [iba@massaudubon.org](mailto:iba@massaudubon.org)

Learn about all 79 sites at [www.massaudubon.org/iba](http://www.massaudubon.org/iba)