

IBA Site criteria list

Goal: To identify and conserve sites most critical to bird populations in our region.

To be considered for IBA status, nominated sites should meet one of the following scientific criteria. Keep in mind that these are logical guidelines to follow and are not absolute. Other relevant factors may be weighed in making final site selections, such as total diversity of bird composition or importance of adjacent habitats.

I) Threatened and endangered species

Sites should consistently support significant breeding densities of one or more of the following federal or state listed species. Sites should not be imminently imperiled with destruction or major alteration, or be areas of infrequent or historical occurrence for the species.

Piping Plover

Mountain Plover

Interior Least Tern

II) Species of significant concern

a) Sites should attract regularly occurring, significant breeding densities of any one of the following species. Special consideration will be made for sites with 3 or more species, or those with the highest known regularly occurring populations.

Eared Grebe

Western Grebe

American Bittern

Least Bittern

Trumpeter Swan

Northern Harrier

Red-shouldered Hawk

Swainson's Hawk

Ferruginous Hawk

Greater Prairie-Chicken

Willet

Upland Sandpiper

Long-billed Curlew

Wilson's Phalarope

Forster's Tern

Black Tern

Black-billed Cuckoo

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Burrowing Owl

Short-eared Owl

Whip-poor-will

Lewis's Woodpecker

Red-headed Woodpecker

Pileated Woodpecker

Acadian Flycatcher

Cordilleran Flycatcher

Loggerhead Shrike

Bell's Vireo

Pygmy Nuthatch

Wood Thrush

Cerulean Warbler

Prothonotary Warbler

Kentucky Warbler

Cassin's Sparrow

Brewer's Sparrow

Lark Bunting

Grasshopper Sparrow

Henslow's Sparrow

Swamp Sparrow

McCown's Longspur

Chestnut-collared Longspur

Dickcissel

Bobolink

b) Sites should contain a significant proportion of any of the following species' flyway population during spring or fall migration (non-breeding occurrences). Special consideration will be made for sites with 3 or more species, or those with the highest known regularly occurring populations. (Species listed in both 'a' and 'b' sections of Category 2 would be found in different habitats during breeding and migration seasons.)

Greater White-fronted Goose

Sandhill Crane

Whooping Crane

American Golden-Plover

Piping Plover

Long-billed Curlew

Hudsonian Godwit

White-rumped Sandpiper

Baird's Sandpiper

Stilt Sandpiper

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Wilson's Phalarope

Franklin's Gull

c) Sites attracting species of which knowledge of their life histories in Nebraska (breeding records, migration patterns, overall population trends) is limited and education/research is needed.

Clark's Grebe	Black Rail	Baird's Sparrow
Hooded Merganser (breeding)	Sandhill Crane (breeding)	Smith's Longspur
Mississippi Kite	Long-eared Owl	
Yellow Rail	Sprague's Pipit	

III) Birds that congregate in significant numbers

Sites should consistently attract high densities, high diversities, or both of one or more species in any of the following categories. Occurrences can be during breeding season, migration, or winter. Introduced or nuisance species—European starling, Canada goose (non-migratory), et al.—should not be included.

a) Aquatic habitats:

- 1) Waterfowl (loons, grebes, cormorants, geese, ducks, swans, and coots)
- 2) Shorebirds (plovers, sandpipers, snipe, woodcock, and phalaropes)
- 3) Waders (bitterns, herons, egrets, cranes, and ibises)
- 4) Gulls and terns

b) Terrestrial habitats: (for example, important migratory stopovers where geographical features concentrate large numbers of birds)

- 1) Raptors
- 2) Passerines

IV) Public education and research of birds

Sites that are natural areas where long-term avian research, monitoring projects, or both take place, or that contribute substantially to ornithology, bird conservation, and education.

V) Rare or vulnerable habitat(s), or exceptional habitats

Sites that contain rare or vulnerable habitats within the state/region or an exceptional representative of a natural habitat (containing high species and natural habitat diversity), and that hold important species or species assemblages largely restricted to a distinctive habitat type.