



## Important Bird Areas Program Fact Sheet

December 2012

### **What is an IBA?**

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are sites that support significant populations of birds considered vulnerable. Sites are identified based on rigorous scientific criteria that focus on three categories of vulnerable birds:

- 1) At-risk species of conservation priority.
- 2) Species assemblages of birds that specialize in a particular habitat type.
- 3) Birds that occur in exceptional concentrations.

IBAs can be small or large in extent, but usually are discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape. IBAs may be National Wildlife Refuges, State Parks or other protected public lands, but they can also be private farms, forests and other private areas. Not all IBAs are open to the public – the intent of the IBA Program is conservation of birds and their habitats rather than highlighting places for bird watching.

### **Goals of the IBA Program**

The overall goal of the IBA Program is to ensure the continued viability of the habitats and their bird populations within IBAs. It is a strategic conservation-planning tool, and as such it is proactive rather than reactive. Program goals are achieved through three action steps:

*Identify* the most essential areas for birds

*Monitor* those sites for changes to birds and habitat

*Conserve* these areas for long-term protection of bird populations

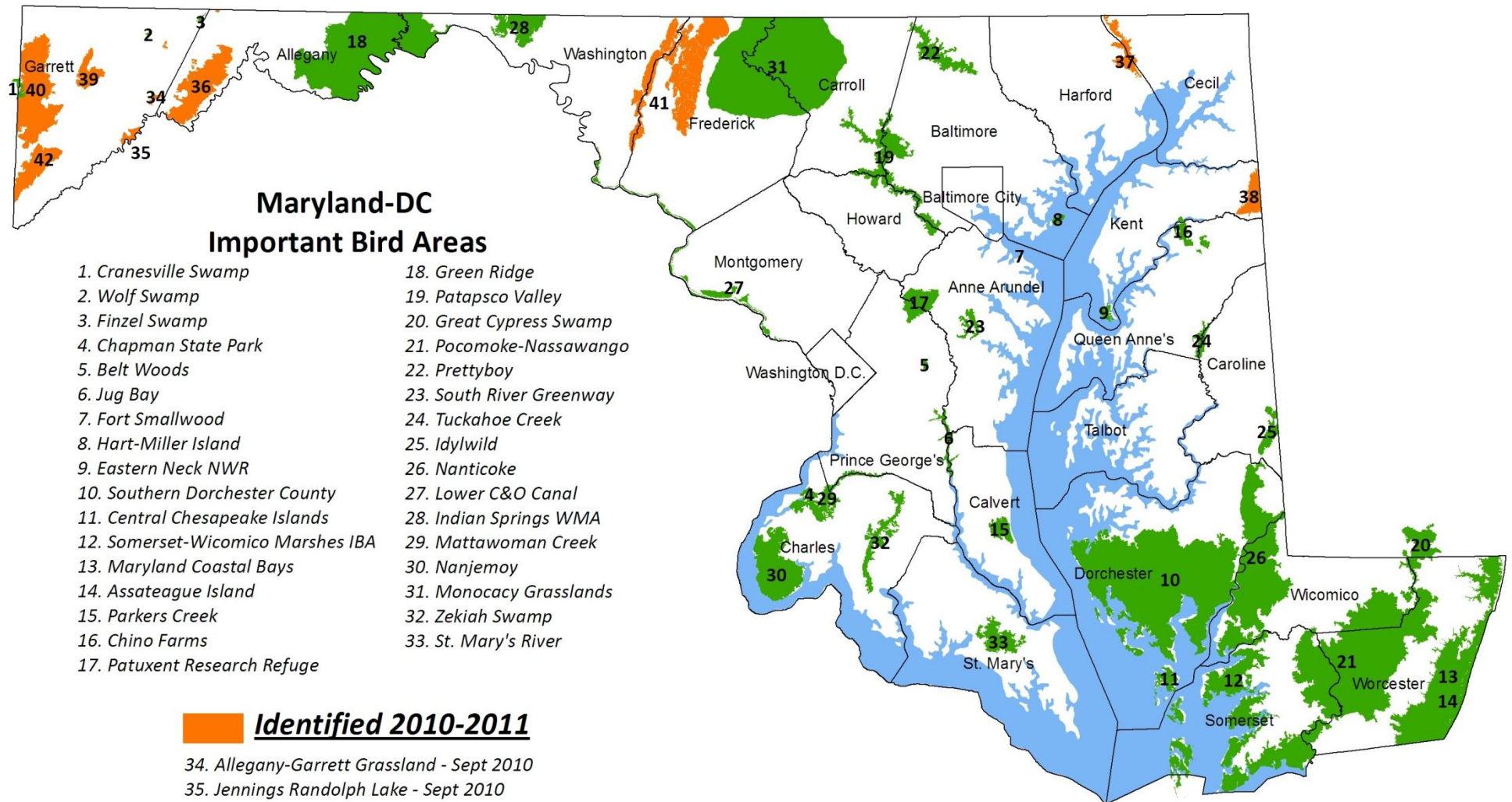
The IBA program seeks to achieve conservation goals through partnerships with conservation planners, private landowners and managers of public lands. A major component of the program is the participation of volunteers who act as citizen scientists and conservation stewards, studying species population trends, evaluating threats to birds, and restoring and enhancing bird habitats. Conservation at IBAs can take the form of developing and improving management plans, pursuing conservation easement or land purchase and seeking legislative support and protection. On-the-ground activities may include management of vegetation, invasive species control, designing structures to reduce human impacts, erecting nesting structures and managing agricultural crops for wildlife.

### **A Brief History of the IBA Program**

The IBA Program began in the 1980s as an initiative of BirdLife International, a global partnership of more than 100 organizations worldwide. First implemented in Europe, IBA programs now exist on every continent and over 10,000 IBAs have been identified worldwide. In the U.S. the National Audubon Society is BirdLife International's partner and has established IBA Programs state by state. Programs are now up and running in 46 states with over 2,100 IBAs identified across the country.

### **The IBA Program in Maryland and DC**

Important Bird Areas are identified by an IBA Technical Review Committee, which reviews all nominated sites against scientific criteria based on analysis of bird populations and their habitats. The Audubon Maryland-DC IBA Technical Review Committee includes: Kyle Rambo (Chair), Patuxent River Naval Air Station; Wayne Bell, Washington College; David Curson, Audubon Maryland-DC; David Yeany II, Audubon Maryland-DC; Lynn Davidson, Md. Department of Natural Resources; David Smith, Maryland Ornithological Society; Glenn Therres, Md. Department of Natural Resources, Bill Hubick, David Ziolkowski, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.



**Identified 2010-2011**

- 34. Allegany-Garrett Grassland - Sept 2010
- 35. Jennings Randolph Lake - Sept 2010
- 36. Dan's Mountain - Sept 2010
- 37. Susquehanna River - Nov 2010
- 38. Millington - Nov 2010
- 39. The Glades - Dec 2010
- 40. Youghiogheny Valley - Dec 2010
- 41. Maryland Blue Ridge - Mar 2011
- 42. Pleasant Valley - Mar 2011

For more information visit our website at <http://md.audubon.org/> or contact:

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