



Audubon IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS



ARKANSAS'S IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Site Selection Criteria

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) have no legal land-use implications and should not be viewed as the only sites in Arkansas important to birds, or as the only sites in need of protection or management. This is a voluntary designation intended to help affect local conservation by building and nurturing networks of birds, local citizens, and conservation professionals. IBAs should provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds of conservation concern in Arkansas. They may vary in size, but should be discrete and distinguishable in character, habitat, or ornithological importance from surrounding areas.

Any site meeting at least one of the criteria in the following categories may be nominated for consideration as an Important Bird Area. Many sites will meet several criteria. **These criteria should not be considered absolute, and other factors, such as relative importance to other sites, may be weighed in making final site selections by the Arkansas IBA Technical Committee.**



Criterion 1: Regularly supports significant populations of one or more Arkansas Birds of Conservation Interest (ABCI).

Site regularly supports a significant breeding, wintering, or migrating population of one or more of the bird species considered by Audubon as vulnerable in Arkansas. Thresholds have been developed for each species (Table 1) based on species at risk categories, dispersion pattern, taxonomic group, sources of bird population data, and expert opinion. Thresholds are guidelines in the site review process; significance of a particular population is at the discretion of the Technical Committee.

Table 1. Thresholds for triggering Criterion 1 for Arkansas Birds of Conservation Interest. These are guidelines for site review.

Common Name	Breeding Threshold Individuals	Nonbreeding Threshold Individuals	Qualifier
Pied-billed Grebe	2	60	breeding
Anhinga	10	15	
American Bittern		6	
Least Bittern	4	6	
Little Blue Heron	40	60	
Tricolored Heron	2	4	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	10	20	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	10	20	
White Ibis	40	60	
Trumpeter Swan		30	
Mottled Duck	2	4	
Hooded Merganser	2	10	breeding
Osprey	2	4	
Swallow-tailed Kite	2	2	
Mississippi Kite	10	15	natural areas
Northern Harrier	2	10	breeding
Northern Bobwhite	40	60	
Yellow Rail		1	
King Rail	2	4	
Purple Gallinule	4	6	
Common Moorhen	40	60	
Piping Plover		2	
Buff-breasted Sandpiper		5	
American Woodcock	5	10	
“Interior” Least Tern	10	25	
Short-eared Owl		5	
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	4	6	
Ivory-billed Woodpecker	1	1	
Willow Flycatcher	2	4	
Loggerhead Shrike	5	15	
Bell’s Vireo	10	15	

Bank Swallow	10	50	
Bewick's Wren	2	2	
Sedge Wren	2	10	
Marsh Wren		10	
Sprague's Pipit		2	
Black-throated Green Warbler	5	30	breeding
Cerulean Warbler	5	10	
Worm-eating Warbler	10	15	
Swainson's Warbler	3	6	
Bachman's Sparrow	3	6	
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	2	5	
Grasshopper Sparrow	5	10	
Henslow's Sparrow	3	5	
Smith's Longspur		15	
Rusty Blackbird		60	

Criterion 2: Contains an assemblage of species characteristic of a representative, rare, threatened, or unique habitat.

This category is intended to cover relatively large areas capable of supporting significant bird populations of species with very particular habitat requirements. Small remnants of an exceptional habitat type may be included. Selection of sites will be based on avian assemblages present in the habitat type, not on the habitat type alone. Therefore, whenever possible, the species of birds that are characteristic of the habitat type should be identified and quantified. See Table 2 for habitat types and species assemblages.

Table 2. Characteristic bird species of important habitat types in Arkansas. The lists below include all species of habitat specialist (species that are largely dependent on the habitat in question) that occur in the relevant habitat and are ABCI species or Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Some species can be dependent on multiple similar habitats so will appear in more than one list. Not every species needs to occur in a habitat to qualify.

Glade

Greater Roadrunner	Prairie Warbler	Henslow's Sparrow
Bewick's Wren	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	

Cypress-tupelo Swamp

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Winter Wren
Wood Duck	White Ibis	Northern Parula
Anhinga	Wood Stork	Yellow-throated Warbler
Snowy Egret	Purple Gallinule	Prothonotary Warbler
Little Blue Heron	Common Moorhen	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Ivory-billed Woodpecker	

Bottomland Hardwood Forest

Wood Duck	Barred Owl	Kentucky Warbler
Swallow-tailed Kite	Ivory-billed Woodpecker	Hooded Warbler
Mississippi Kite	Winter Wren	Swainson's Warbler
American Woodcock	Yellow-throated Warbler	Rusty Blackbird
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Prothonotary Warbler	

Prairie

Greater Prairie-Chicken	Eastern Kingbird	Lark Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Grasshopper Sparrow
American Golden-Plover	Loggerhead Shrike	Henslow's Sparrow
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Sedge Wren	Le Conte's Sparrow
Upland Sandpiper	Sprague's Pipit	Smith's Longspur
Barn Owl	Field Sparrow	Dickcissel
Short-eared Owl	Vesper Sparrow	Eastern Meadowlark

Pine Savanna/Woodland

Northern Bobwhite	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Prairie Warbler
Red-headed Woodpecker	Bachman's Sparrow	Yellow-breasted Chat
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Pine Warbler	

Oak Savanna/Woodland

Wild Turkey	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Black-and-white Warbler
Northern Bobwhite	Red-eyed Vireo	Kentucky Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Bewick's Wren	Hooded Warbler
Greater Roadrunner	Wood Thrush	Yellow-breasted Chat
Red-headed Woodpecker	Black-throated Green Warbler	Eastern Towhee
		Bachman's Sparrow

Criterion 3: Regularly supports more than 1% of a single species' state population during some portion of the year.

In practice it will be difficult to estimate state population sizes for most species so expert opinion will play a role. This criterion might be applied to any species that congregates, including those that nest in colonies, forage in flocks, or roost communally.

Criteria 4-12: Regularly supports significant congregations of birds.

These criteria cover sites where native bird species regularly concentrate in significant numbers when breeding (e.g. wading birds), in winter (e.g. waterfowl), or during migration (e.g. shorebirds). Human-made food sources for gulls (landfills, dumpsites, sewage treatment plants or outflows, etc.) or man-made structures (dams, bridges, buildings, etc.) will not be considered as IBAs. Exceptions will be considered for habitat restoration projects due to their relative permanence and resemblance to natural habitats. The numerical thresholds are guidelines only, and the Technical Committee may consider other factors (quality and location of habitat, distribution and importance of species, etc.).

4: Regularly supports 10,000 or more wintering waterfowl (excluding Snow Geese).

5: Regularly supports 25 breeding pairs or more of wading birds.

6: Regularly supports 2,000 or more wintering gulls.

7: Regularly supports 1,000 or more migrating shorebirds.

8: 3,000 or more raptors pass site per seasonal migration, or 100 per day; or 3 raptors on winter territory per square mile.

9: Wintering roost site supports 50 or more eagles. Habitat supporting roost is natural, not manmade.

10: Supports 100 or more roosting vultures. Habitat supporting roost is natural, not man-made.

11: Supports 10 or more nests of Cliff Swallows or Bank Swallows. Nesting site is natural, not man-made.

12: Regularly supports more than 10,000 roosting Purple Martins in migration.

Criterion 13: Regularly contains exceptional numbers or diversity of migratory landbirds other than raptors.

Concentrations refer to seasonal totals rather than those occurring over brief period of time. This includes sites that provide important habitat for more landbirds than are found at most other sites during migration. No absolute thresholds have been set due to the scarcity of quantitative data. Sites should be clearly unique from other sites in the local area.

Criterion 14: Supports long-term avian research efforts.

Includes sites with a long record of data collection that have resulted in papers published in peer reviewed ornithological journals, or sites that afford us the ability to collect a unique and significant set of bird population data that are likely to be published, synthesized, and used for scientific purposes. Includes sites where a standardized system of monitoring has resulted in a significant and high quality set of bird population data, which are published in some form, and are scientifically useful for conservation planning purposes. Because these sites may not provide essential habitats for significant populations of birds, a site might not qualify as an IBA by this criterion alone. Recognition of this status is meant to facilitate continued study of bird populations and a continuing contribution to bird conservation.

Criterion 15: Provides important, bird-specific educational opportunities.

Includes sites with a long record of unique educational opportunities regarding birds and bird conservation, especially for a state or regional audience. Because these sites may not provide essential habitats for significant populations of birds, a site might not qualify as an IBA by this criterion alone.

Criterion 16: Regularly supports significant populations of one or more Audubon WatchList species.

Site regularly supports a significant breeding, wintering, or migrating population of one or more of the bird species considered by Audubon to be of global (red) or national (yellow) conservation concern. These species are not of high conservation concern at the state level because they are fairly common, but should be monitored due to their status at broader levels. A site may be recognized by the National IBA Technical Committee as a Global or Continental IBA if it supports at least the threshold population size (Table 3).

Table 3. WatchList species.

Species	WatchList Status	Breeding Threshold Individuals	Nonbreeding Threshold
American Golden-Plover	Yellow		480
Sanderling	Yellow		120
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Yellow		480
Western Sandpiper	Yellow		480

Species	WatchList Status	Breeding Threshold Individuals	Nonbreeding Threshold
White-rumped Sandpiper	Yellow		480
Stilt Sandpiper	Yellow		480
Red-headed Woodpecker	Yellow	90	90
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Yellow		90
Wood Thrush	Yellow	480	480
Blue-winged Warbler	Yellow	240	240
Prairie Warbler	Yellow	360	360
Prothonotary Warbler	Yellow	360	360
Kentucky Warbler	Yellow	360	360
Le Conte's Sparrow	Yellow	360	360
Painted Bunting	Yellow	90	90