

**IMPORTANT BIRD  
AREAS OF CANADA**



**LES ZONES IMPORTANTES  
POUR LA CONSERVATION  
DES OISEAUX AU CANADA**

# **RESTIGOUCHE ESTUARY IMPORTANT BIRD AREA**

**New Brunswick,  
Canada**

## **Conservation Concerns and Measures**

**October 2000**

**In co-operation with the**

**Restigouche Naturalists' Club  
Campbellton, New Brunswick**



*A Natural Legacy 2000 program • Un programme de La nature en héritage 2000*

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# 1 Introduction

The Restigouche Estuary in north-eastern New Brunswick has been known as a very species rich ecosystem for many years. Although people's attention has mainly been focused on salmon and other aquatic species, its richness has not gone unnoticed by naturalists and birdwatchers. The estuary functions as an important stopover for migrating seaducks. It's rich mudflats, that lie below 1 meter of water at high tide, provide plenty of food for a variety of fauna. Mussel banks are also present in the area. The constant mixing of salt- and freshwater sets the stage for a high biological productivity in the estuary.

The role of the Maritime Important Bird Areas Program, which commenced in 1999, is to provide interest groups such as the Restigouche Naturalists' Club with tools to protect, conserve, or monitor sites of importance to birds that are identified as Important Bird Areas under the national program (please refer to Section 5.3 for more information). The main objective of the program is to provide tools and ideas for protecting bird species and their habitats. The program promotes conservation, encourages action, carries out education, and helps groups develop their own approaches to bird conservation at sites that they are interested in. IBA conservation plans (documents outlining conservation concerns and measures) are written with and for the group, and become a tool.

The IBA program is an international initiative co-ordinated by BirdLife International, a partnership of member-based organizations in over 100 countries seeking to identify and conserve sites important to all bird species worldwide. The Canadian BirdLife co-partners are the Canadian Nature Federation (CNF) and Bird Studies Canada (BSC). In the Maritime Provinces the Natural History Society of P.E.I., the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists, and the Nova Scotia Federation of Naturalists

sponsor the Maritime Important Bird Areas Program.

The Restigouche Estuary Important Bird Area, as identified by the Canadian IBA program, crosses the border to Québec, which runs through the middle of the estuary. A relatively small area has been identified for the staging Black Scoters. Until a few years ago, only sporadic observations had been recorded of the occurrence of these seaducks staging here in the spring. Through a co-operative monitoring effort between local naturalists and the Canadian Wildlife Service, it is now estimated that a large portion of the Black Scoter population actually stays in the estuary during spring migration on their way north (Lushington and Clifford 2000). The area has been identified as a globally Important Bird Area due to this large number of Black Scoters, a species in general thought to be in decline globally (Savard and Lamothe 1991).

The Restigouche Naturalists' Club has identified the need for continued monitoring (including the use of radio collars, evaluating the number of birds coming into the estuary, implementation of a joint effort with Québec), analysis of the diet of scoters in the estuary, and an analysis of food for possible contamination. The long-term goal for the Restigouche Estuary Important Bird Area is to ensure the protection of the Black Scoters and the habitat they use during their migration and particularly during their stay in the Restigouche Estuary. This document is intended as a tool for the Restigouche Naturalists' Club and other interested individuals and groups to work on the issues they are concerned with. It outlines the following conservation measures and identifies actions to achieve these objectives:

- ▶ Gain more knowledge about the scoters in the estuary.

- ▶ Maintain, establish, and encourage linkages with other observation posts in New Brunswick, and possibly beyond.
- ▶ Increase the interest of the public and naturalists in migration.
- ▶ Facilitate the observation of the scoter migration.
- ▶ Minimise potential impacts on the birds during their stay in the estuary.

There remains much to be learned about scoters. Scientists are trying to learn more about the species and the reasons for its decline. The identification of the area as an IBA and its designation will raise the profile not only of the area but also of the species.

## 2 IBA Site Information

Site identification number: CANB001

### 2.1 *Site Description*

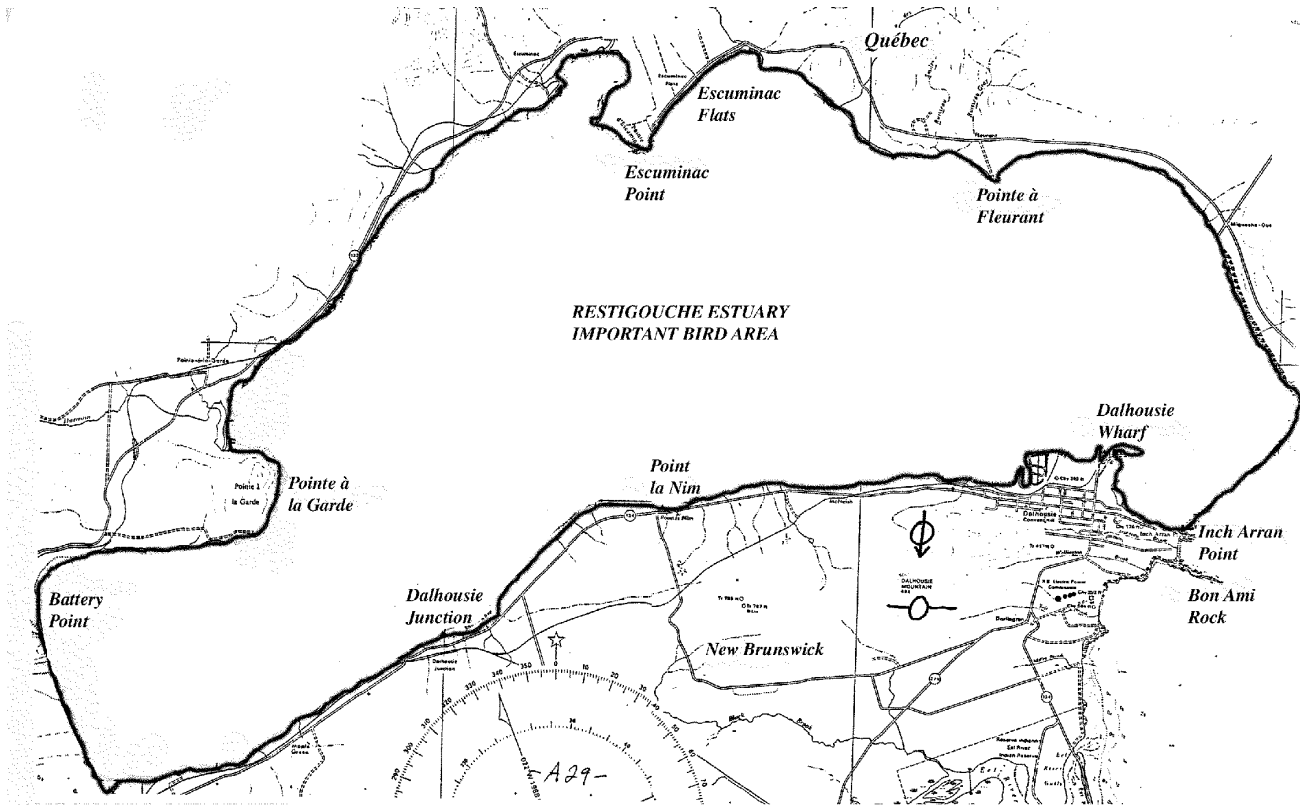
The Restigouche Estuary IBA, a strictly aquatic site, is located between McLeod's Siding to the west, the east wharf of Dalhousie to the east, and extending north to the Quebec shoreline (see Section 2.2), covering an area of 77,000 hectares. The Restigouche River is about 210 km long, originating in western New Brunswick. It flows northeast before emptying through the Restigouche Estuary into Chaleur Bay, an arm of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In 1995, the upper Restigouche River was nominated as a Canadian Heritage River.

The boundary between New Brunswick and Quebec is located along the middle of the estuary. The width of the IBA varies from four to six km and is approximately 15 km in length. The habitats within the Important Bird Area are primarily submerged mud flats with concentrations of mussels and other marine life. The river estuary is relatively shallow with an average depth of less than three to four metres. A deeper channel is located down the middle.

The climate of this region is continental with long, cold winters and dry summers. Ice begins to form in December. The estuary remains one hundred percent ice covered from January to early April.

The two largest communities adjacent to the IBA site are Dalhousie, New Brunswick, and Escuminac, Quebec.

## 2.2 Map of the IBA Site



Please note: the black line outlines the Restigouche Estuary Important Bird Area.

## 2.3 IBA Species Information

### Black Scoters (*Melanitta nigra*)

The Restigouche Estuary was identified as an Important Bird Area primarily due to the spectacular number of Black Scoters that stage here during spring migration. During the last few years, an estimated 60,000 to 80,000 Black Scoters have been observed between mid to late April and the end of May (this is the equivalent of at least 14 % of the estimated world population). In the spring of 2000, high numbers of scoters were observed for one month, with a peak occurring around May 4. On that day over 90,000 scoters were counted (Lushington and Clifford 2000). Observations in the spring of 2000 also indicated that the scoters do not stay

in the estuary for any length of time, but that there might be a steady 'flow in and out of the estuary'. The observations suggested that the total number of scoters migrating through the estuary might be as high as 185,000 (Lushington and Clifford 2000). The status and the size of the Black Scoter population in Canada are not well known (for more information on scoters, please refer to Section 6.1).

## **2.4 Other Elements of High Conservation Value**

In addition to Black Scoters, the estuary is also used as a staging area by Surf Scoters (6,000 to 8,000 in the spring), with a possible 20 percent of the total scoters counted in 2000 having been Surf Scoters (Lushington and Clifford 2000). Red-breasted Mergansers, to a lesser degree Common Mergansers, Barrow's Goldeneyes (listed as nationally vulnerable by COSEWIC), and Harlequin Ducks (listed as nationally endangered by COSEWIC) can also be observed in the estuary. Barrow's Goldeneye are more incidental in the IBA, but several hundred stage around the Bon Ami Rocks every year (Lushington pers. com.). Harlequin Ducks have been confirmed to have nested in the Benjamin and Jacquet Rivers, further to the south east of the IBA. During spring, migrating flocks of Common Eiders, Northern Gannets, and Common Loons regularly pass by. In the fall, a variety of staging ducks and geese use the Restigouche Estuary.

The Restigouche Estuary plays an important role for many species all year round. Several hundred immature Black Scoters and 200 to 300 immature Common Loons stay in the estuary all summer. In August and September, several hundred Bonaparte Gulls can be seen regularly. At least five pairs of Osprey and a number of Common Eiders also use the estuary as a feeding area. Common Goldeneyes can also be found in the estuary (Lushington pers. com.).

During fall migration, a few hundred Ruddy Turnstones use the area along the shore. Surf Scoters use the estuary in the fall as well, with numbers probably around 500 to 1000 individuals. Black Scoters pass by in the fall in small numbers only, a few hundred at the most (Lushington pers. com.).

Both species of Scaup use the estuary, especially the lower reaches, until late November (Lushington pers. com.). The Escuminac Flats,

on the Quebec side of the estuary, are an important rafting area for Canada Geese and occasional Snow Geese. Several thousand Canada Geese have been observed through September and October, especially in the evenings and overnight.

## **2.5 Ownership and Use of Waters within the IBA**

Resource-use industries have historically been established along the river and estuary to take advantage of the abundant wood supply and other natural resources (i.e. salmon). These industries and activities have left their mark on the ecosystem. Some of these activities have ceased, others are still in operation such as Bowater (paper mill), and newer operations have been added, such as the Belledune Power Plant (N.B. Power). Dalhousie is an industrial town, with a paper mill (Bowater), a thermal generating station (N.B. Power), and a small chemical plant. The population of the town itself is less than five thousand (Lushington pers. com.). The small city of Campbellton is just to the west of the IBA, and has a population of around 10 000. At one time it was a major Canadian National railway stop. Campbellton is now mainly a service district for north-central New Brunswick and the nearby communities in Quebec (Lushington pers. com.).

The area that is identified as an Important Bird Area is entirely located in the water. The landowner is the Government of Canada (Fisheries and Oceans). The provinces of New Brunswick and Québec claim the intertidal area as being within their jurisdiction.

Adjacent lands are mainly privately owned lots with houses. No major fishery occurs in the waters of the site. Some Rock Crab fishery is on-going and carried out by the Eel Ground First Nations reserve in the fall. Further up river, recreational salmon and trout fisheries are in process. The Restigouche River and Estuary used to be an extremely important salmon river

economically. A commercial salmon fishery existed until the 1950's when it was closed due to the depletion of the resource. One tour operator takes visitors out for boat tours. He also takes birdwatchers to observe the Black Scoters in the spring. Tourism is becoming more important in the area, with recent developments at the Bon Ami Rocks attracting people to certain locations.

### 3 Conservation Concerns

All scoter species have a generally low reproductive success, and are highly vulnerable to adult mortality. Hunting, accidental deaths from fishing nets, or oil spills can have a significant impact on the population (Savard, Bordage, Reed 1998).

The industrial port of Dalhousie is of some concern, as sediments in the harbour area might contain contaminants that could travel up the food chain and through the mussels to the scoters. The harbour regularly handles oil, mining concentrates, chemical products from the local chemical plant, and large shipments of paper products.

An oil spill could have a great impact on the various migrating seabird species. Should a spill happen at peak migration - for example mid-April to mid May - there could be a serious impact on large parts of the Black Scoter population. As the birds stage and feed in the estuary, this is of serious concern. Oil poses a number of threats. Hydrocarbons in the water are toxic to marine and other life. Once a slick spreads, birds can get oiled, which is lethal. Either they try cleaning their feathers and thus poison themselves, or the oil causes their feathers to lose their insulating capabilities and the birds die of hypothermia.

Orimulsion, which is used as the fuel at the Belledune N.B. Power plant, is a product that contains hydrocarbons in dissolved form. In case of a spill, it would not create any slick as

such, ingested particles have the same impact. As well, the emulsifier used in orimulsion is of serious concern to the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, who are studying the effects of these substances (so-called endocrine disrupters) and their effects on fish (Wayne Fairchild pers. com.).

Bacterial contamination can result from uncontrolled or inadequately cleaned sewage. Areas in the estuary have been closed to shellfish harvesting, indicating that there is a problem with bacterial contamination in the estuary.

### 4 Conservation History

The Restigouche Naturalists' Club has been very active in monitoring the scoters. They have also nominated the site as an IBA and are very keen in seeing some protection for the area. In the past, the club and its members have co-operated with the Canadian Wildlife Service in increasing the monitoring of spring migration and assessing the numbers of scoters using the area. In 2000, with funding from the Community Action Fund of the IBA program, and the Canadian Wildlife Service, they carried out a study of the scoter migration in the estuary (Lushington and Clifford 2000).

The Canadian Wildlife Service has a keen interest in the area and has co-operated in the past with the naturalists club in monitoring the scoter activity.

Since 1998, the Annual Seabird Superwatch, a project of the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists, has been carried out co-operatively with the Canadian Wildlife Service in the three Maritime Provinces. The objectives of the Superwatch are to:

- ▶ Provide volunteers with the opportunity to participate in a scientific study of migrating seabirds, thereby adding to our understanding of the target species.



- ▶ Provide a means for volunteers to acquire field experience in identifying and counting migratory water birds.
- ▶ Collect baseline information in a systematic manner.
- ▶ Make this information available to researchers.
- ▶ Determine the chronology of seaduck migration through the Maritime Provinces in spring.
- ▶ Determine seaduck population trends over time.

Although the information gathered through this project is only one piece of the puzzle, and a detailed analysis has not been carried out yet, Superwatch has already added information that gives a clearer picture. Apparently, the tides in the upper Bay of Fundy play an important role in the movement of the birds in this part of the Bay. Nova Scotia and eastern Prince Edward Island do not seem to factor very much in the movement of scoters, at least during the time of the Superwatch. In the Bay of Fundy, the birds appear to be mostly on the move, but in the Northumberland Strait and Chaleur Bay, staging birds have been reported. Some information has been gathered on some of the regular staging sites (Arsenault pers. com.).

The results of the 1999 Superwatch helped identify the likely migratory route the birds take from the Bay of Fundy north, up the Peticodiac River, where they switch over to the Memramcook Valley, and head towards Shediac Bay (Arsenault pers. com.). Only a portion of the birds going up the Northumberland Coast might actually make it into the Restigouche Estuary, as not the same numbers that are observed around Miscou Island show up in the estuary (1999 Superwatch results). Recent monitoring has also demonstrated that Black Scoters prefer to migrate and cross land at night.

In June of 2000 the Restigouche Estuary was officially designated as an Important Bird Area. A ceremony was held at Sugarloaf Provincial park during the Annual General Meeting of the New Brunswick federation of Naturalists.

## 5 Conservation Measures

The following conservation measures have been developed with members of the Restigouche Naturalists' Club, and in consultation with other individuals and groups. The objectives and actions listed below are by no means exhaustive. An attempt has been made to provide some possible avenues for action to further the protection and conservation of Black Scoters and their habitat.

### **Objective 1    Gain more knowledge about the scoters in the estuary.**

Knowledge about scoters in the spring is still not adequate. Superwatch, a co-operative effort among naturalists and the Canadian Wildlife Service to monitor seaduck migration in the Maritimes (see information in section 5.1), and the Scoter Study, carried out by the Restigouche Naturalists' Club in the spring of 2000, have answered some of the questions, but there are still many that remain. We still do not clearly understand movements, or the timing of migration. Better knowledge will ensure that we can manage our activities more appropriately in relation to the times when the birds are most vulnerable.

Black Scoters appear to remain in the Restigouche Estuary for several weeks. Nowhere else along their migration through the Maritimes do they seem to stop as long as here. Scientists do not understand whether they stay until the ice opens further north, or whether there is another reason such as good feeding areas. Information is crucial in order to understand the apparent decline in scoter numbers, and their migration patterns. At the

same time, their food sources need to be studied, as contaminated food could have a negative impact on the reproductive success of the scoters.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Continue and expand yearly monitoring of scoters.	Yearly, Restigouche Nat. Club (RNC)
2. Observations need to be expanded to the Québec side to validate the numbers of birds counted in certain areas.	2001, Québec IBA program, RNC
3. Certain areas need to be covered that were not covered before, such as Miguasha Point on the Québec side, where staging birds in great numbers have been observed.	2001, Québec IBA program, RNC
4. A monitoring program can be set up at the Dalhousie Wharf to determine the movement of birds in and out of the estuary.	2001, RNC
5. Monitoring needs to be done at night as well.	2001, RNC
6. Monitor the movement of the birds by using radio collars.	CWS
7. Carry out a study of the contamination of molluscs in the estuary, especially in the feeding areas identified by the Scoter Study as main concentrations.	2001 / 2002, Env. Canada, U. d Moncton.

**Objective 2**     **Maintain, establish, and encourage linkages with other observation posts in New Brunswick, and possibly beyond.**

Other areas along the coast have similarly significant numbers of seaducks passing through during migration. Already in 1999, and again in 2000, observations were organized all along the coast (Superwatch) to better understand seaduck movements. The connection with points such as Cape Jourimaine, Miscou Island, and Pointe Lepreau should be maintained and encouraged to monitor the movement of seaducks.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Continue the 'Superwatch'.	2001, NBFN, individual groups
2. Ensure the data is collected and processed in a timely manner, so that results and analyses can be returned to the naturalists.	2000 / 2001, and beyond, CWS
3. Carry out promotion so that the interest in the Superwatch is maintained or increased.	On-going, NBFN Ron Arsenault

**Objective 3**    **Increase the interest of the public and naturalists in migration.**

Education is an essential factor in changing attitudes and actions of the public. Although this is an objective that will only show results in the long-term, it is crucial in ensuring that informed decisions are made by the public and governing bodies when it comes to managing and protecting our resources.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Inform public about the staging scoters, their numbers, and the importance of the estuary for them.	2000 / 2001, RNC, CWS, NBFN
2. Present the information gathered to local industries.	2000 / 2001, RNC, CWS
3. Designate the estuary as an IBA and install a plaque.	Spring 2000, has taken place

**Objective 4**    **Communicate monitoring results**

Agencies responsible for regulating coastal resources and their uses need to be made aware of the results of the studies carried out. The data provided to the agencies will allow them to better evaluate cumulative impacts of activities in the region.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
Inform the provincial (DNR&E) and federal (CWS, DFO) agencies of results of observations and studies	Yearly, RNC, CWS, NBFN

**Objective 5**    **Facilitate the observation of the scoter migration.**

The public is more likely to understand the importance of this site when there is a possibility of observing the birds in the spring. Observation posts can facilitate such observation, and can become a site for interpretation and information panels. A number of potential sites have been identified, mostly on private land.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Identify the sites that could function as observation posts.	2000 / 2001, RNC
2. Identify the landowners.	Long-term, RNC
3. Develop plans for each site, what could be developed, parking options, interpretation panels.	Long-term, RNC
4. Explore funding possibilities.	Long-term, RNC
5. Build the structures necessary.	Long-term, RNC
6. Include these observation posts in tourism maps for the area.	Long-term, RNC, Tourism organizations

**Objective 6     Minimise potential impacts on the birds during their stay in the estuary.**

It appears that a very big portion of the Black Scoter population stays in the estuary for a few weeks. Thus, it is crucial to ensure a safe passage for these birds. For example, an oil spill at this time of the year could have a disastrous effect on staging Black Scoters.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Inform N.B. Power of the importance of the area to the scoters.	2000, 2001, RNC, CWS
2. Discuss the possibility of avoiding loading and unloading during the critical time.	Long-term, RNC
3. Involve the naturalists in the spill response planning process, and evaluation of plans.	Long-term, RNC, Coast Guard

**6 Background Information**

**6.1 IBA Species Accounts**

All three scoter species, Black, White-winged, and Surf, can be observed during migration along our coasts. Scoters nest in the north, and spend their winter along the coasts further south in most cases. Their diet consists in general of molluscs on their wintering grounds and during migration, and of invertebrates on their breeding grounds inland. All of these scoters have a low reproductive success, a relatively long life span, and a high adult survival rate. While both Surf Scoter and White-winged Scoter numbers exceed the number of Black Scoters, their migration routes differ; therefore the two former are not as numerous as the Black Scoters during

migration on the east coast. On their breeding grounds, all scoters migrate to specific sites where they congregate and go through their moult (the birds lose their old feathers and grow new ones, which takes a few weeks).

Black Scoters (*Melanitta nigra*) are probably one of the least known seaducks in North America. They are large and plump looking. Adult males are completely black with a yellow protuberance on their bill, which distinguishes them from the other two scoter species, the White-winged, and the Surf Scoter. The females are dark brown and are more difficult to distinguish from other female scoter species.

On their way north, the bulk of Black Scoters seem to pass through the Bay of Fundy during a few days in April. The Bay acts as a funnel. They then migrate up the Peticodiac River, cross over to the Memramcook Valley, and then on to the Northumberland Coast which they follow northwards around Miscou Island. They seem to head across to the Québec shore, and then a part of the population heads into the Restigouche Estuary (Arsenault pers. com. and Lushington and Clifford 2000). It seems that they continue their way north once the conditions seem favourable. In fall, the peak migration occurs in October, but is more spread out. Confirmed breeding areas include Northern Québec and Labrador, Alaska and the northern Arctic. In winter, Black Scoters range on the Atlantic Coast from Florida north to Newfoundland, in the interior, and in Alaska to northern Washington. Black Scoters also breed in Iceland, the British Isles, Russia, and Siberia.

The Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) can be distinguished by the lack of white on the wings and the two defined white patches, one on the forehead, the other one on the neck. It is named after its habit of diving through breaking surf. This is an endemic scoter, breeding only in North America. It winters along the Atlantic coast from Newfoundland to Florida, and on the pacific coast, where Surf Scoters are more numerous.

The White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*) is the largest of the three species of scoters and can be distinguished by its white patch on the wing that is very conspicuous in flight. The bill is orange with a black enlargement at the base. This species is the most numerous and best known of the scoters. The White-winged Scoters nest in north-western North America, and only scattered in Eastern Canada. They winter on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts in large bays and estuaries. Research indicates that northern and eastern breeding populations generally winter on the Atlantic coast.

## 6.2 *The IBA Program*

The IBA program is an international initiative co-ordinated by BirdLife International, a partnership of member-based organizations in over 100 countries seeking to identify and conserve sites important to all bird species worldwide. The Canadian BirdLife co-partners are the Canadian Nature Federation (CNF) and Bird Studies Canada (BSC). In the Maritime Provinces the Prince Edward Island Natural History Society, the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists, and the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists sponsor the Important Bird Areas Program.

Through the protection of birds and habitats, they also promote the conservation of the world's biodiversity. There are currently IBA programs in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas.

The Canadian IBA program is part of the Americas IBA program which includes the United States, Mexico, and 17 countries in Central and South America.

*The goals of the Canadian IBA program are to:*

- ▶ Identify a network of sites that conserve the natural diversity of Canadian bird species and are critical to the long-term viability of naturally occurring bird populations;
- ▶ Determine the type of protection or stewardship required for each site, and ensure the conservation of sites through partnerships of local stakeholders who develop and implement appropriate on-the-ground conservation plans; and
- ▶ Establish ongoing local involvement in site protection and monitoring.

*IBAs are identified by the presence of birds falling under one or more of the following internationally agreed-upon categories:*

- 1) Sites regularly holding significant numbers of an endangered, threatened, or vulnerable species.
- 2) Sites regularly holding an endemic species, or species with restricted ranges.
- 3) Sites regularly holding an assemblage of species largely restricted to a biome.
- 4) Sites where birds concentrate in significant numbers when breeding, in winter, or during migration.

The Maritimes Important Bird Areas program is a co-operative effort with the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists, the Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island, and the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists.

### **6.3 Information on the Lead Organizations of the IBA Program**

#### ***New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists***

The Federation is a non-profit organization formed in 1972 to encourage an understanding of nature and the environment, and to focus concern for the natural heritage of New Brunswick (website: <http://personal.nbnet.nb.ca/maryspt/NBFN.html>.)

#### ***Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists***

The Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists exists to support the common interests of naturalist clubs, and to represent those clubs at the provincial level. Its primary activities include the conservation of species and spaces, education, and the sustainable use of resources (website: <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Environment/FNSN/>.)

#### ***Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island***

The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island is a naturalist group that is particularly interested in natural history issues and conservation. They record natural events on the island, maintain a bird check list, offer bird identification courses, field trips, conduct bird counts, and record unusual or rare sightings.

#### ***BirdLife International***

A pioneer in its field, BirdLife International (BL) is the first non-government organization dedicated to promoting world-wide interest in and concern for the conservation of all birds and the special contribution they make to global biodiversity. BirdLife operates as a partnership of non-governmental conservation organizations, grouped together within geographic regions (e.g. Europe, Africa, and Americas) for the purpose of planning and

implementing regional programs. These organizations provide a link to on-the-ground conservation projects that involve local people with local expertise and knowledge. There are currently 20 countries involved in the Americas program throughout North, Central, and South America.

For further information about BirdLife International, check the following website: <http://www.birdlife.net/>.

The Canadian Important Bird Areas Program has been undertaken by a partnership of two lead agencies. The Canadian Nature Federation and Bird Studies Canada are the Canadian BirdLife International partners.

#### ***The Canadian Nature Federation (CNF)***

The Canadian Nature Federation is a national conservation organization with a mission to be Canada's voice for the protection of nature, its diversity, and the processes that sustain it. The CNF represents the naturalist community and works closely with provincial, territorial, and local affiliated naturalists organizations to directly reach 100,000 Canadians. The strength of CNF's grassroots naturalists' network allows the organization to work effectively and knowledgeably on national conservation issues that affect a diversity of ecosystems and human populations in Canada. The CNF also works in partnership with other environmental organizations, government, and industry, wherever possible.

CNF's approach is open and co-operative while remaining firm in the goal of developing ecologically sound solutions to conservation problems. CNF's website is <http://www.cnf.ca>.

## ***Bird Studies Canada (BSC)***

The mission of Bird Studies Canada is to advance the understanding, appreciation and conservation of wild birds and their habitats, in Canada and elsewhere, through studies that engage the skills, enthusiasm and support of its members, volunteers, staff and the interested public. Bird Studies Canada believes that thousands of volunteers working together, with the guidance of a small group of professionals, can accomplish much more than could the two groups working independently. Current programs collectively involve over 10,000 volunteer participants from across Canada.

Bird Studies Canada is recognised nation-wide as a leading and respected not-for-profit conservation organization dedicated to the study and understanding of wild birds and their habitats. Bird Studies Canada's website is <<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/>>.

### ***6.4 Information on Organizations and Groups***

The Restigouche Naturalists' Club is a group of naturalists whose mandate is to 'foster interest in nature and to promote environmental concern and responsibility for all aspects of the ecology of the region.' They undertake outings, invite guest speakers, and undertake various projects related to nature. For the group it is important to develop, maintain, and encourage linkages between any IBA sites in New Brunswick that have been identified for scoters. All sites are important for their migration and offer great opportunities to find out more about these seaducks.

The New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists is a province-wide organization that has been in existence since 1972. The federation supports the activities of its federated clubs, which includes the Restigouche Naturalists' Club. There is a great interest among naturalists to gather useful information. The Superwatch is

an excellent example of how naturalists across a province can co-ordinate the gathering of valuable information to improve our knowledge of bird migration.

The Canadian Wildlife Service works closely with the Restigouche Naturalists' Club to analyse the collected data, and produce annual reports. This information is used for monitoring seaduck populations as part of the broader Seaduck Joint Venture between Canada and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is the federal department that has authority over the estuary. Their interest has expanded from a purely fisheries oriented on to include areas important to all marine species (under the Oceans Act). The Coast Guard is responsible for oil response planning and response. They have an interest in not only ensuring that their response planning is adequate, but as well that the public is well informed and involved in response planning.

Chaleur Phantom Tours, which is a tour boat operation owned by John Barbary out of Dalhousie, brings people out to see the natural heritage of the Restigouche Estuary. He has a great interest in the scoters and the estuary, and supports the efforts by the Naturalists club.

N.B. Power runs the Belledune Power Plant, which is fired with orimulsion.

The town of Dalhousie has embarked on a rather aggressive tourism development program within the past few years. Much of the activity centres on the water, particularly at the Bon Ami Rocks and the Inch Arran Park, both just to the east of the IBA. Town officials are interested in developing and promoting ecotourism, and proper promotion of the IBA could be an acceptable proposition (Lushington pers. com.).

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