

Arod Lakes IBA

Important Bird Areas are sites that provide essential habitat for threatened, unique, or particularly abundant species, during breeding, migration, or winter seasons.



American White Pelicans and California Gulls rely on habitats within this IBA.



The Arod Lakes IBA is a complex of lakes and small wetlands surrounded by native prairie on the Rocky Mountain Front northeast of the town of Choteau. The IBA is managed jointly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as a Waterfowl Production Area, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks as a Wildlife Management Area. Twenty percent of the area is privately owned. Islands on the main lake support one of only four nesting colonies of American White Pelicans in Montana. Double-crested Cormorants, Ring-billed Gulls, and California Gulls also nest here, but recent estimates of their numbers are lacking. During spring and fall migration, peak numbers of Snow Geese and Ross's Geese exceed 40,000 and 5,000, respectively, in some years. At breeding colonies, American White Pelicans can be shy and are prone to desert eggs or small young if approached by humans. The lake receives a fair amount of fishing pressure (the state record for carp comes from the main lake), which poses a threat to the pelicans during the nesting season.

Arod Lakes

Important Bird Area



Landscape by Amy Seaman



Notable bird species associated with the IBA

- > American White Pelican
- > California Gull
- > Double-crested Cormorant
- > Ross' Goose
- > Snow Goose

Coordinated by BirdLife International, the Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program is a global initiative aimed at identifying and conserving the most important places for birds. The IBA Program's foundation emphasizes science-based identification, assessment, and conservation of birds and the habitats needed to survive. IBAs rely on local stewardship and focus on engaging individuals, private landowners, local communities, businesses, partner organizations, and government agencies in site conservation. Important Bird Area designation does not confer legal or regulatory status to a site. Instead, participation in conservation is voluntary on the part of landowners and land managers. IBA boundaries serve as an initial spatial guide and help identify areas that warrant prioritization for protection and conservation actions.

You can help with the conservation of this IBA by submitting your bird observations through Montana Natural Heritage Program or at ebird.org, an online bird sighting database.

cormorant photo by Mike Chapman



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