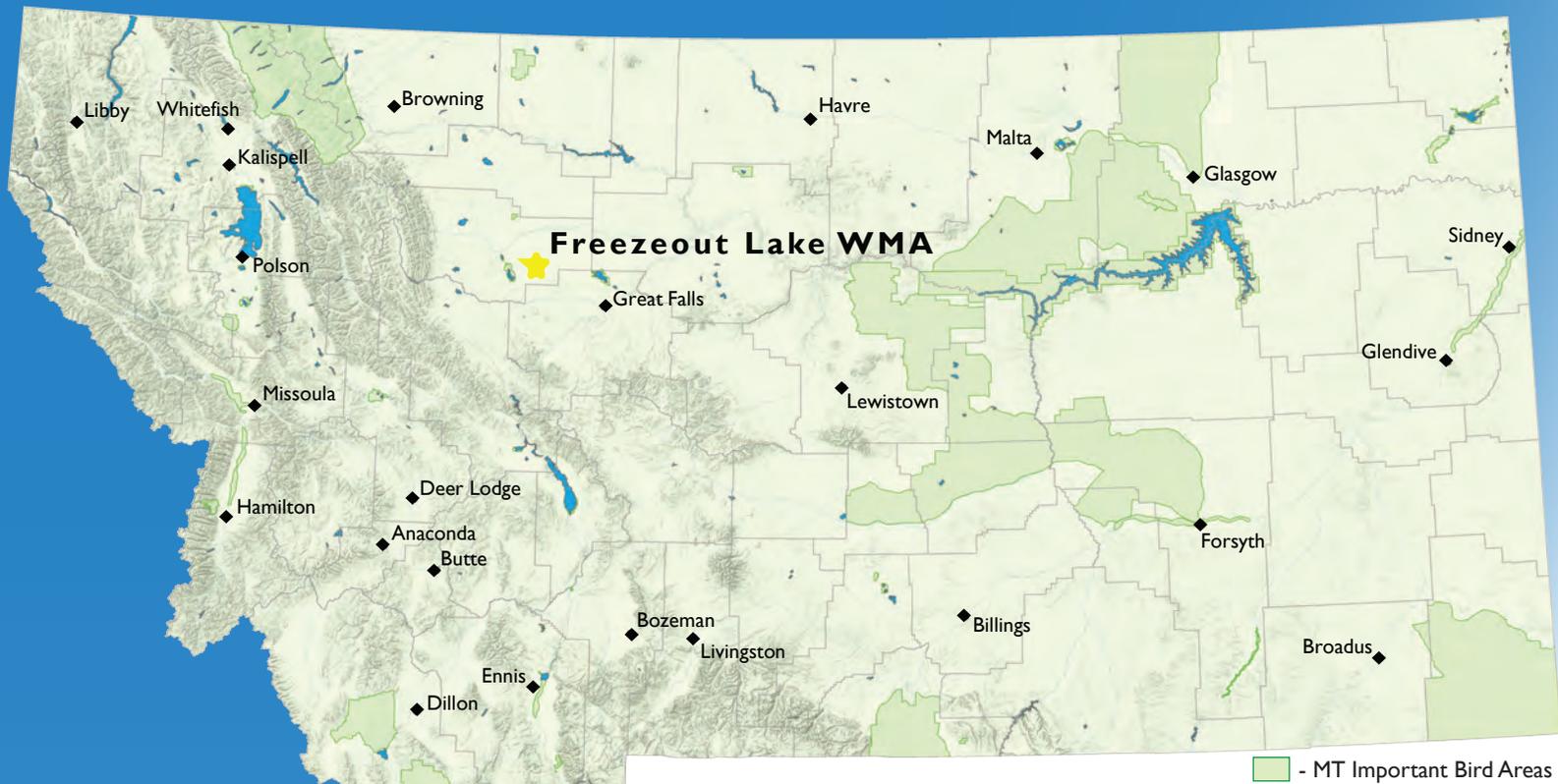


Freezeout Lake IBA

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



Snow and Ross's Goose rely on habitats within this IBA.

Freezeout Lake is a natural sink surrounded by short-grass prairie at the base of the Rocky Mountain Front. A shallow lake dominates the site, that also contains smaller ponds with abundant emergent vegetation. The entire IBA is a wildlife management area (WMA) owned by the state and administered by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Over 200 species of birds have been documented, thousands of waterfowl breed here, and hundreds of thousands of birds (waterfowl and shorebirds combined) congregate during migration. Recent counts of white geese (Snow and Ross's) in early spring have exceeded 300,000 individuals. A large colony of Franklin's Gulls nest on the main lake, as do Eared and Western grebes. Breeding shorebirds include Long-billed Curlews, Marbled Godwits, and Wilson's Phalarope. Freezeout Lake WMA receives high visitation in fall, when waterfowl and pheasant hunters congregate to take advantage of state-owned land for hunting and birdwatching is popular in late March and early April when abundant migrants are present. The emergent vegetation and shortgrass prairie are in good shape, however water levels in the wetlands and main lake are at risk due to surrounding irrigation and drought.



Freezeout Lake Important Bird Area



Notable bird species associated with the IBA

- > American Avocet
- > American Wigeon
- > Canada Goose
- > Canvasback
- > Common Goldeneye
- > Common Tern
- > Double-crested Cormorant
- > Eared and Western Grebe
- > Franklin's Gull
- > Lesser Scaup
- > Long-billed Curlew
- > Marbled Godwit
- > Northern Pintail
- > Northern Shoveler
- > Red-breasted Merganser
- > Red-necked Phalarope
- > Ross's and Snow Goose
- > Ruddy Duck
- > Tundra Swan
- > Wilson's Phalarope (above)



Landscape by Bob Martinka

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.

phalarope photo by Bob Martinka



For more information contact
Amy Seaman: aseaman@mtaudubon.org