

# National Bison Range

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



**Bald Eagle and Grasshopper Sparrow** rely on habitats within this IBA.

The National Bison Range National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Important Bird Area (7,595 hectares) encompasses one of the country's oldest National Wildlife refuges. It was established in 1908 and lies within the Flathead Indian Reservation. The majority of the habitat is known as Palouse prairie, characterized by perennial bunch-grasses such as Idaho fescue and bluebunch wheatgrass, abundant wildflowers, deep soils, and rolling hills. It is one of the United States' most endangered ecosystems. Another quarter of the IBA is composed of a variety of conifer, riparian, and shrubby draw habitats. The area supports many mammal species such as elk, deer, bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, black bears, mountain lion, and 350-500 bison, in addition to 200 species of birds. Cottonwood stands support the majority of these birds during nesting season and exist along portions of Mission, Pauline, Elk, and Trisky creeks. Many are species of concern like Bald Eagle, Lewis' Woodpecker, Red-naped Sapsucker, Willow Flycatcher, Lazuli Bunting, and Grasshopper Sparrow.





# National Bison Range *Important Bird Area*



## Notable bird species associated with the IBA

- > Bald Eagle
- > Lewis's Woodpecker (above)
- > Willow Flycatcher
- > Grasshopper Sparrow



*Landscape by Janene Lichtenberg*

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 is an emphasis on 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](http://ebird.org), an online bird sighting database. If you plan on visiting CSKT lands you will need a Tribal Recreation Permit.

*woodpecker photo by Bob Evans*



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