

Ninepipe NWR IBA

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



Forster's Terns
and **Western Grebes** rely on habitats within this IBA.



The Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Important Bird Area (2,400 hectares) includes the reservoir, state wildlife management area, and surrounding wetlands near the base of the Mission Mountains. It is located within the Flathead Indian Reservation. The terrain is rolling bunchgrass prairie containing many grasses, sedges, and forbs interspersed with pothole wetlands. This area provides migration stopover habitat and breeding sites for notable bird species including Trumpeter Swan, Western Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Common Loon, Common Tern, Caspian Tern, Forster's Tern, California Gull, and Ring-billed Gull. Emergent wetlands support Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Wilson's Phalarope, American Bittern, and Sandhill Crane. At least 11 species of duck nest here, and the surrounding prairie supports many grassland bird species (92 species identified by CSKT biologists). The refuge is used mostly by fisherman and birdwatchers, but much of it is closed in spring and summer to provide wildlife security.



Notable bird species associated with the IBA

- > Bald Eagle
- > California Gull
- > Canada Goose
- > Caspian Tern
- > Double-crested Cormorant
- > Forster's Tern
- > Great Blue Heron
- > Mallard
- > Ring-billed Gull
- > Short-eared Owl (above)
- > Western Grebe
- > Yellow-headed Blackbird



Photo by Amy Seaman

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, an online bird sighting database. If you plan to visit CSKT lands you will need a Tribal Recreation Permit.

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