

Safe Harbor Marsh IBA

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



Calliope Hummingbirds and Ruffed Grouse rely on habitats within this IBA.



The Safe Harbor Marsh Important Bird Area (53 hectares) is a Nature Conservancy property that is managed as a wildlife preserve. The site is actually a small bay connected by side channels to the large open body of water composing Flathead Lake. Though small, over 130 species of birds, many breeding, have been counted here in this unique low-elevation freshwater marsh. The marsh has bulrush and cattails along the edge that provide habitat for nesting species like Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Marsh Wren, Song Sparrow and Common Yellowthroat. Mixed Douglas fir and ponderosa pine conifer forest surrounds the marsh and supports forest species such as Western Wood Pewee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, various flycatchers and both Black-capped and Mountain Chickadee. Bald Eagles are known to over-winter in the area and other raptors such as Osprey and Northern Goshawk can also be seen. The Nature Conservancy is committed to stewardship at the Safe Harbor marsh, and so the site is protected from development and habitat destruction, and is open for visitation.

Safe Harbor Marsh Important Bird Area



Notable bird species
associated with the IBA
(above - Photo by Maria
Mantas, TNC)

- > Ruffed Grouse
- > Calliope Hummingbird
- > Rufous Hummingbird
- > Willow Flycatcher
- > Hammond's Flycatcher
- > Marsh Wren
- > Cassin's Finch
- > Song Sparrow
- > Common
Yellowthroat (top)
- > Yellow-headed Blackbird
- > Red-winged Blackbird

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. To get to Safe Harbor Marsh, follow highway 93 north to Rocky Point Rd. Turn right and then right again onto King's Point Rd. There are conservancy signs about 1.5 miles east to enter.

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