

2024

KBA CANADA ANNUAL REPORT



2024 ANNUAL KBA REPORT

Additional information can be found on the KBA Canada website:
KBACanada.org

Suggested citation:

KBA Canada Secretariat (2025) 2024 KBA Canada Annual Report.

Report prepared by:

KBA Canada Secretariat (Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, Birds Canada, NatureServe Canada) on behalf of KBA Canada. Published on January 22, 2025.

Cover photo credits:

Long-billed Curlew in Grasslands National Park KBA. Photo credit to Cairang Jia

ABOUT KBA CANADA

KBA Canada is a coalition of NGOs, governments, universities and other institutions that are working together to lead the identification of Key Biodiversity Areas in Canada, and to promote the use of KBA information within conservation action and decision-making.

The KBA Canada Secretariat, comprising WCS Canada, Birds Canada, and NatureServe Canada, coordinates KBA Canada and is responsible for gathering and organizing data and information from the network, communicating about the process and results, developing long term infrastructure for data management and sharing, and coordinating governance of the process to ensure program outputs are seen as highly credible, legitimate and relevant.

For more on who's involved with the KBA Canada program visit:
<https://kbacanada.org/whos-involved/>

Table of Contents

KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS IN CANADA

1

PROGRESS TO DECEMBER 2024

- Progress and highlights
- World Database of KBAs (WDKBA) and the KBA Canada Website
- Milestones in Ecosystem KBAs and Criterion C work in Canada

2-7

UNDER THE HOOD

- The Biodiversity data fueling KBA Identification
- Ecosystem-based Automated Range (EBAR) Mapping Project
- Ecosystem KBAs
- Ecological Integrity and Criterion C KBAs

8-11

COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

- Engagement partners and communities around KBAs
- Supporting KBA identification, monitoring and stewardship in BC
- Communications and media highlights
- Beyond KBA identification: a tool for biodiversity conservation
- Using KBA information to track how Canada is safeguarding biodiversity
- KBAs and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMBGF)

12-16

LOOKING AHEAD: NEXT STEPS & THANK YOU

17-18

KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

Found across land, freshwater, marine, and subterranean environments, Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are places that contain remarkable concentrations of rare or vulnerable plants, animals, and habitats, as well as key natural processes. Identifying these sites is part of a global initiative to recognize the most important places for the survival of species and ecosystems across the planet. Information on KBAs informs protected-area and land use planning, stewardship, biodiversity monitoring, and regulatory approaches to conservation in Canada and around the world.

The [Global KBA Standard](#), developed by a [broad scientific partnership led by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#), outlines the methods for identifying KBAs using quantitative thresholds and rigorous scientific review. Canada was the first country in the world to develop a [national KBA standard](#) (2021), and identifies both national and global KBAs across the country to identify the most important places for the persistence of Canadian and global biodiversity. Identifying KBAs in Canada is a highly collaborative, 'bottom-up' process that often involves various levels of government, Indigenous peoples and communities, environmental NGOs, academic institutions, and many other knowledge holders. Many of these collaborators participate formally in the Canadian KBA Coalition and share a common goal of protecting nature by recognizing and communicating the importance of KBAs.



Double-crested Cormorant colony © Patricia Homonylo

IMPORTANT BIRD AND BIODIVERSITY AREAS (IBAS)

IBAs are foundational to identifying KBAs in Canada. IBAs have similar criteria and a 25-year history supporting significant populations of at-risk species and aggregations of birds. They are a model for stewardship in KBAs. The IBA program began in the 1980s as part of a global conservation initiative of BirdLife International. In the mid-1990s, Canadian BirdLife partners Birds Canada and Nature Canada led in identifying nearly 600 sites across Canada. Birds Canada has undertaken the process of transitioning qualifying IBAs to KBAs so that these sites are recognized for their importance to both birds and other biodiversity. Integrating existing sites for birds, with other taxa and ecosystems, further highlights the ecological value of these sites, and may help advance existing stewardship through the network of Caretakers associated with many of these KBAs.



Red Winged Dock leaf © Lauren Pitt

PROGRESS TO DECEMBER 2024

PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS

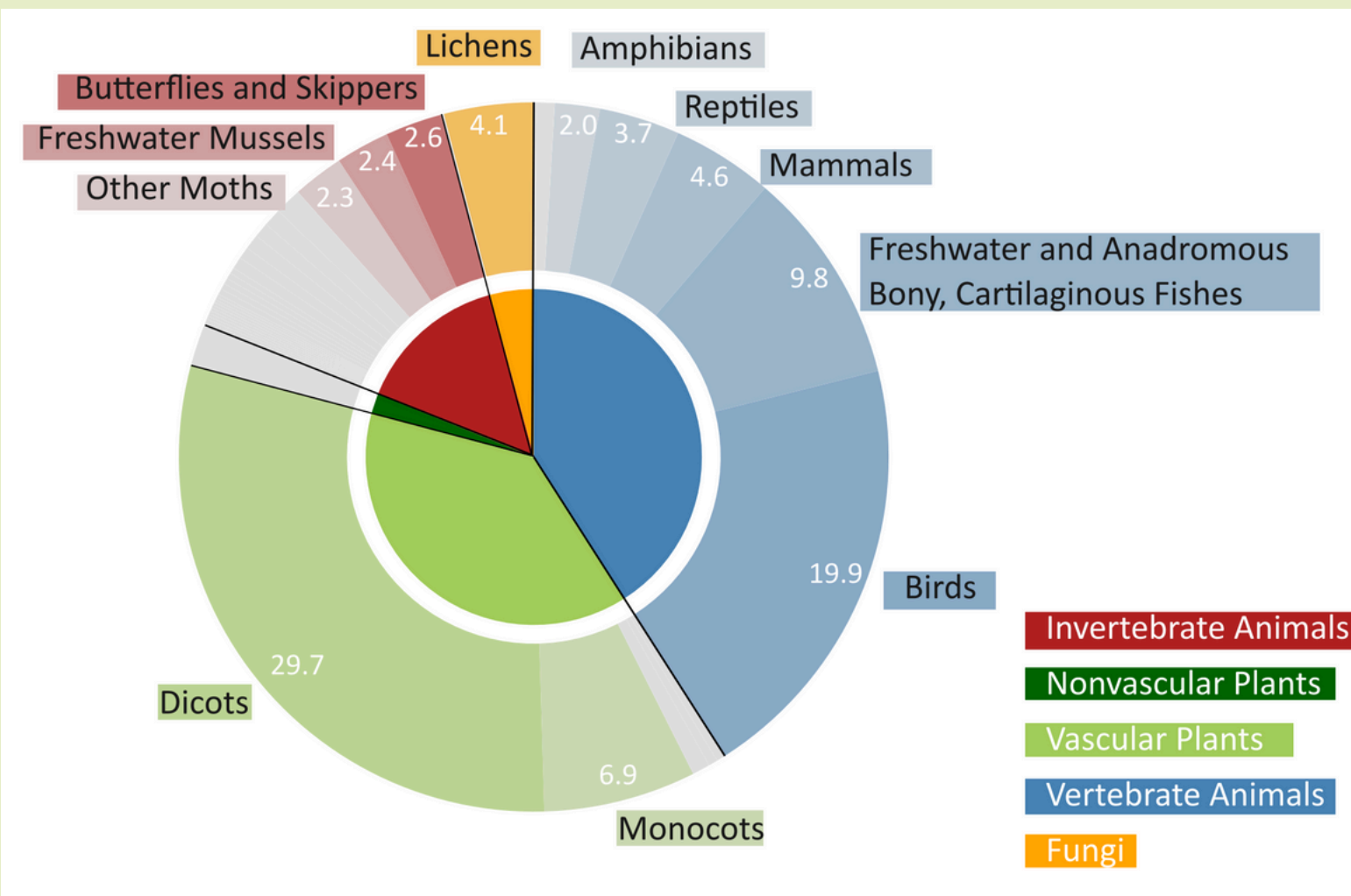
In the past year, rapid progress was made in identifying KBAs using robust science and a broad participatory review process, with qualifying sites now published on the Canadian KBA website. In 2024, 161 KBA proposals completed expert review, and 117 new KBAs appeared on the KBA website. The intensive phase of identifying new KBAs was wrapped up in Manitoba, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada. All proposals for new sites in BC, Alberta, and Saskatchewan will be submitted within the next month or two, and while the completion of all KBA proposals in Québec will take a bit longer, the end is in sight. Many sites in Northern Canada have been identified as strong candidates, and outreach with Indigenous groups in these areas is ongoing. The work of transitioning qualifying pre-existing IBAs to KBAs will be completed by June 2025.

This means that a comprehensive set of KBAs in Canada now exists, and the data are available to be used by anyone and everyone to inform their conservation planning decisions, rally community stewardship, raise funds, and more. There are a few caveats – many sites have been identified but are still undergoing review or community outreach.

This means that the sites are scientifically robust, but have yet to be published. In addition, the work of identifying sites for threatened, rare, and ecologically intact ecosystems will continue for years to come, as the underlying information that is required for this work – completed ecosystem classification and mapping for all of Canada – is ongoing, and KBA Canada is contributing to this as well. Until all the KBA data is published and becomes available on the [KBA Canada](#) website, you can request complete datasets, including the unpublished sites, for use in planning and decision-making.

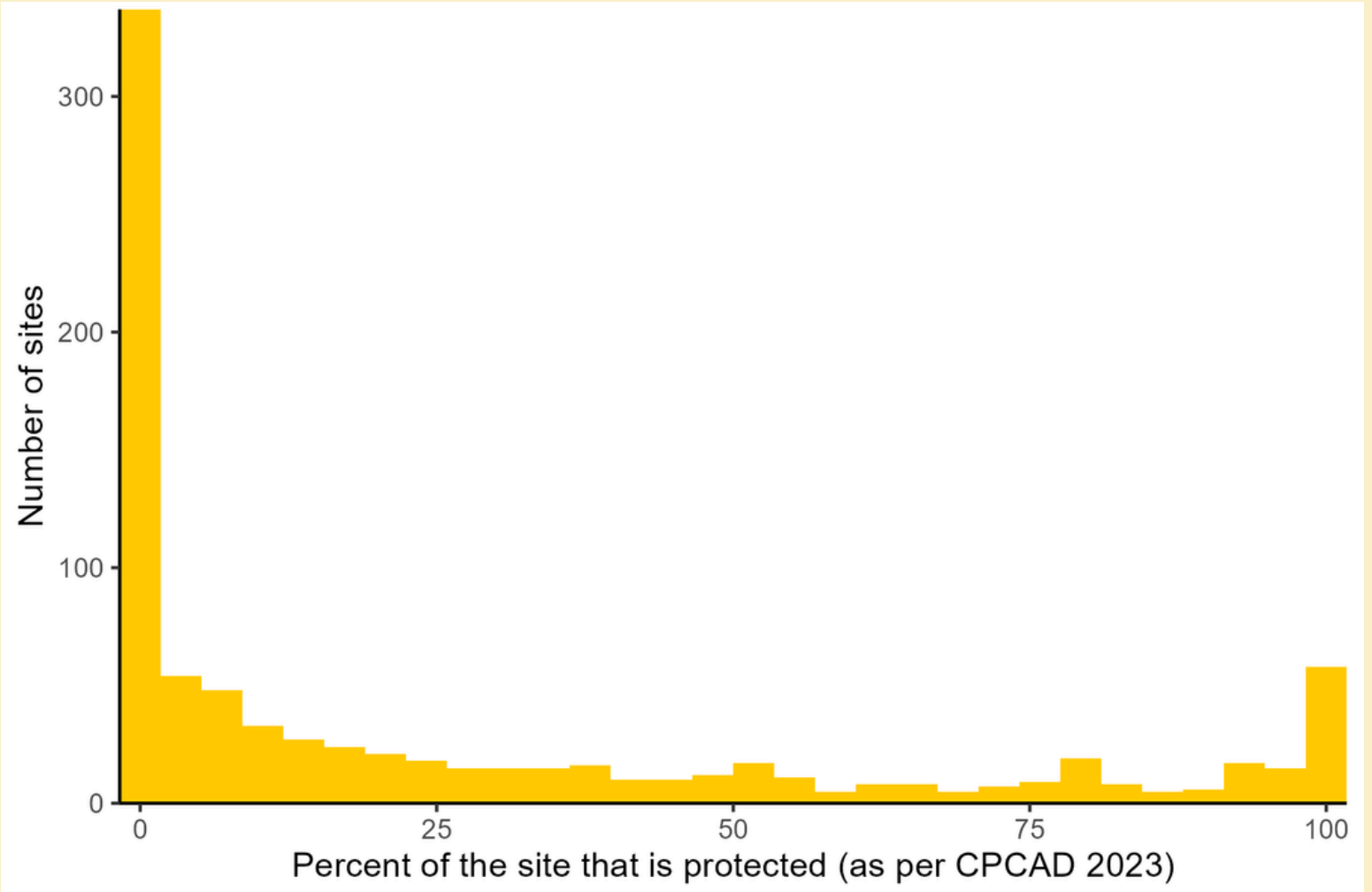
The following pages provide some highlights and figures summarizing information about the current collection of KBAs in Canada. [More complete information about sites in Canada can be found in the appendices linked at the end of this Report.](#) Information in the appendices includes information tables on published and candidate KBA sites, species meeting KBA criteria in Canada, species that may meet KBA criteria but require more supporting data, and sites that may meet KBA criteria but need more information.

Please get in touch to know more!



A taxonomic breakdown of species and infraspecies meeting KBA criteria. To date, 744 taxa meet KBA criteria in published and candidate sites in Canada, for either national or global criteria. Numbers in the pie chart represent percentages of the total number of taxa belonging to each taxonomic group.

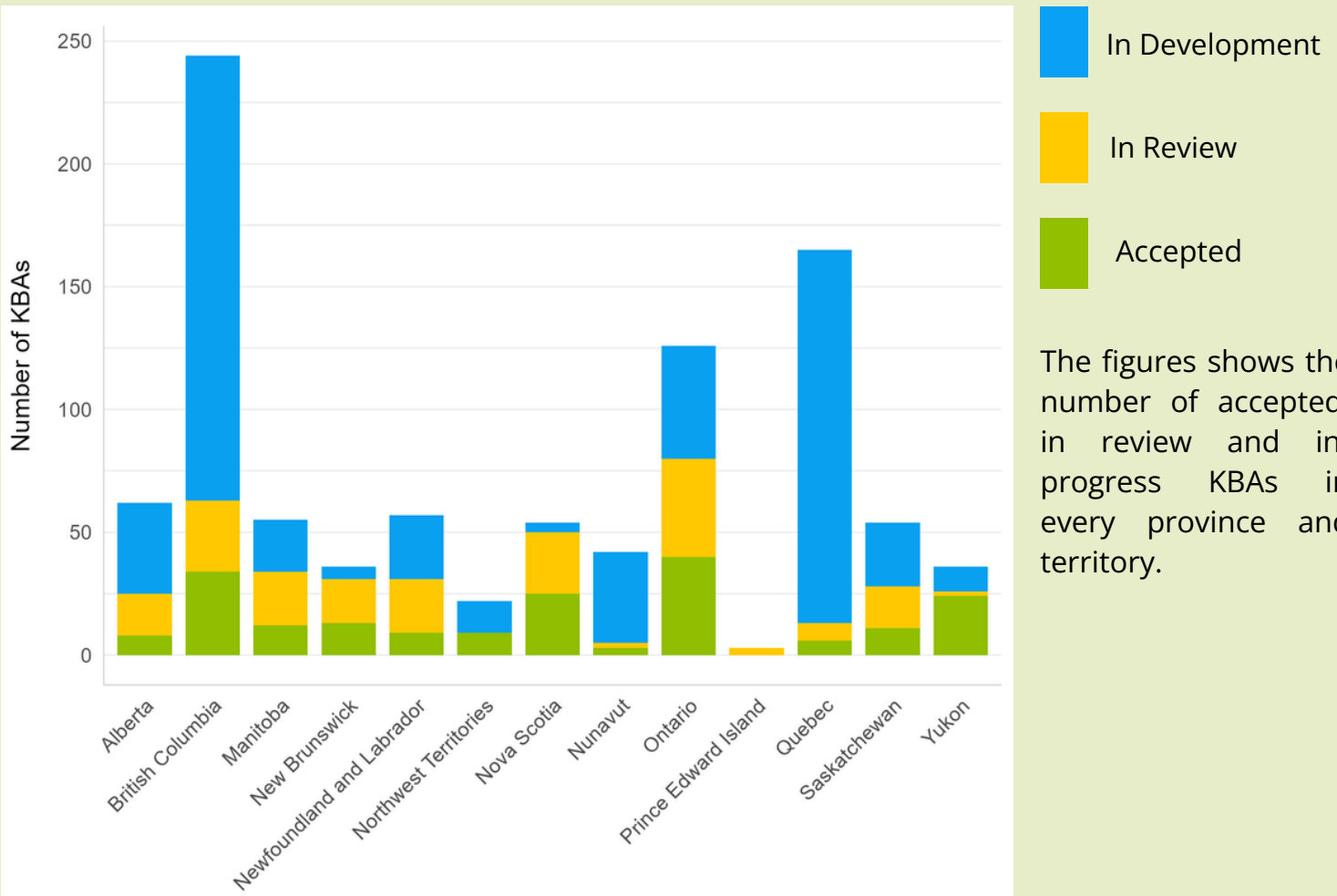
Note that KBAs can also be identified for ecosystems, which are not represented in this figure.



The histogram shows the number of KBAs (including candidate sites) by the percentage of the site that overlaps with protected and conserved areas. Protected and conserved areas include national parks, provincial parks, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, land trust properties, and other forms of conserved areas present in [CPCAD](#) (last updated in 2023). About 37% of all KBAs have less than 1% of their area covered by protected areas, whereas 6.0% of KBAs are more than 99% protected and conserved.



This map shows both ‘published’ KBAs that are on the [national KBA website](#) and candidate KBAs in progress across the country, with proposals in development or review. Most KBA proposals will be completed by June 2025, although the period of review for these KBAs may last for several months beyond that. The following page contains figures showing key statistics describing progress and the current status of KBA identification work.



WORLD DATABASE OF KBAS (WDKBA) AND THE KBA CANADA WEBSITE

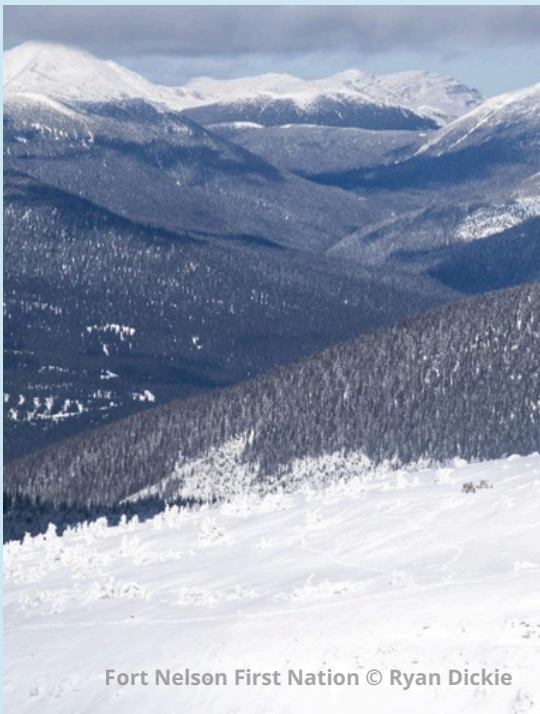
In Canada, the most up-to-date information and data on KBAs should be accessed through the KBA Canada website at www.KBACanada.org. The most up-to-date data on KBAs in Canada can be explored and downloaded directly, for free, from this site, which is currently the only national KBA database. The [WDKBA was developed by the global KBA Partnership](#) and contains data for KBAs across the world, including Canada. However, the WDKBA only contains 'globally significant' KBAs, whereas the KBA Canada website contains both global KBAs and nationally significant sites that are distinctly important for Canadian conservation. The WDKBA is also updated less frequently by the global partnership, and currently still contains many legacy sites that no longer meet criteria and need to be delisted. It will take some time before the collection of sites for Canada on the WDKBA is accurate. The WDKBA provides a database and tools to support users in any country to propose new KBAs or to update assessments of existing KBAs in countries that do not have national tools or a KBA website. The KBA Canada team recommends anyone looking for Canadian KBA data access it through the [Canadian KBA website](#), but if you are interested in KBAs beyond Canada, go explore the [WDKBA](#).

MILESTONES IN ECOSYSTEM KBAS AND CRITERION C WORK IN CANADA

A milestone for 2024 included the official publication of our first two ecosystem sites on the KBA Canada website. The first, [Marble Ridge Alvar](#), contains over 64% of the entire global extent of the rare Boreal-Transition Alvar ecosystem, which is found only in central Manitoba. [Long Point Peninsula and Marshes](#), a site previously identified for 27 species meeting KBA criteria, became the second ecosystem KBA as the rare Great Lakes Dunes ecosystem is present at the site. The KBA contains almost 36% of the national extent of this ecosystem, which forms exclusively in sandy coastal environments in the Great Lakes region of Canada and the United States. Several other ecosystem KBAs based on the Great Lakes Alvar and Limestone Woodlands ecosystems, both of which are globally rare and found mostly in Ontario, are currently moving through the review process.

KLINSE-ZA KBA

British Columbia | Saulteau First Nation | West Moberly First Nation | Treaty 8 and territories of the Tse'khene (Sekanki) | Kelly Lake Metis Settlement Society | Takla First Nation (part of Tse'khene Tribal Council) | Dënéndeh | Beaver



Fort Nelson First Nation © Ryan Dickie

Criteria Met: National - Threatened species and Geographically-restricted species

Biodiversity Element Trigger(s): Caribou Central Mountain population (*Rangifer tarandus pop. 18*)

Site Description: The [Klinse-Za](#) caribou herd is estimated to have about 100 adults, supporting 15.3% of the Central Mountain population in Canada. Intensive, Indigenous-led management actions such as the protection of pregnant females and wolf reductions in the area have raised the herd's abundance from 38 individuals in 2013 to over 100 by 2021 (McNay et al. 2022). The creation of Old Growth Management Areas and Wildlife Habitat Areas has supported the protection of old growth forests that are critical to caribou habitat, comprised of species such as [Subalpine Fir](#) (*Abies lasiocarpa*), [Engelmann Spruce](#) (*Picea engelmannii*), Hybrid [White Spruce](#) (*P. glauca x engelmannii*), and [Lodgepole Pine](#) (*Pinus contorta*) (McNay et al. 2022).



Blue Grey Taildropper © Liam Ragan

UNDER THE HOOD

THE BIODIVERSITY DATA AND EXPERTISE FUELING KBA IDENTIFICATION

KBA identification cannot happen without the best data and expertise across Canada. Much of the scoping work on new KBAs depends on the shared GIS database and workspace maintained by NatureServe Canada. In 2024, the EBAR-KBA database of spatial biodiversity information has grown to over 36 million observation points, 5.2 million polygons and 1600 lines, from over 270 data providers. The NatureServe Canada Ecosystem-based Automated Range (EBAR) team continues to submit yearly requests for Canadian Conservation Data Centre Element Occurrences, Source Features and observation data in order to keep the EBAR-KBA database up to date. In 2023, the EBAR-KBA database was expanded to handle other initiatives such as the Hudson Bay- James Bay Lowlands data mining

work NatureServe Canada is doing for ECCC and Parks Canada, an example of how KBA Canada investments in biodiversity data and expertise are being leveraged by other biodiversity science and conservation projects. The [NatureCounts database](#), a warehouse of data gathered by volunteers and researchers hosted by Birds Canada, is an invaluable resource in the transition of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas to KBAs.

This year, Birds Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada released the [State of Canada's Birds](#); a summary report and individual species summaries for all birds that regularly occur in Canada. Using over 50 years of bird monitoring data and expert input, the State of

Canada's Birds provides updated population estimates and trends for birds in Canada, all available on the NatureCounts website. These data have been invaluable in assessing KBAs for birds, and have allowed us to recognize sites for species that were previously lacking information. Beyond databases, expert input

forms the real backbone of the KBA program, with every KBA proposal requiring technical peer-review by experts familiar with the site and species being assessed. There were 335 expert reviews of sites completed in 2024, representing hundreds of hours from experts across Canada.

LAG DE LA FALAISE KBA

Quebec | The Mi'gmaq (Micmac) Nation of Gespeg | the Gespe'gewa'gi (Gespeg-Conseil 2024) | Peace and Friendship Treaties in Québec (ATRIS 2023)



Québec Rockcress © Étienne Léveillé Bourret

Criteria Met: Global - Threatened species and Geographically-restricted species

Biodiversity Element Trigger(s): Québec Rockcress (*Boechera Québecensis*)

Site Description: Québec Rockcress is a short, herbaceous annual or short-term perennial plant only found on limestone cliffs and escarpments of the Gaspé Peninsula, in eastern Québec. Located on the Gaspé Peninsula in eastern Québec, in the Appalachian Mountains, Lac de la Falaise KBA is found in a mainly coniferous forest (MRNF 2024) and consists of two escarpments separated by a narrow plateau. The site hosts approximately 25% of the world population of the Québec Rockcress, an Endangered species endemic to the area (COSEWIC 2017), making it exceptionally important for the global persistence of this species. The escarpments that Québec Rockcress inhabits are quasi-vertical walls of dolomitic limestone (COSEWIC 2017; MELCCFP 2024).

ECOSYSTEM-BASED AUTOMATED RANGE (EBAR) MAPPING PROJECT

The NatureServe Canada led EBAR mapping initiative started in 2019 with mapping KBA priority species for KBA Canada. In 2021, the EBAR initiative expanded to include Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) priority species such as SARA listed species, COSEWIC assessed, and to-be-assessed species. EBAR work continued in 2024, with new totals of 270 experts having contributed in-kind as reviewers of EBAR maps, and 760 maps published on the EBAR webpage, 594 of which focus on KBA priority species.

ECOSYSTEM KBAS

Identifying ecosystem KBAs requires information on an ecosystem’s type and characteristics (i.e. “classification”) as well as spatial data on where that ecosystem occurs, both at sites of interest and across its full range (i.e. “mapping”). Although Canada does not yet have a nationally cohesive classification or map of ecosystems produced at a level that would allow KBA identification, several provinces do maintain their own classification and map databases for certain ecosystem types. In partnership with Nova Scotia’s provincial Ecosystems and Habitats Program, the KBA Canada team is using regional data to assess if and how provincial information can be used to facilitate ecosystem KBA identification in Nova Scotia. This work will lead to the identification of new KBAs for rare and threatened forests, beaches, dunes, and barrenlands, and the KBA team plans to conduct similar assessments in other provinces in the coming year. The continued progress of the NatureServe Canada led [Canadian National Vegetation Classification](#) and [Canadian Terrestrial Ecological Framework projects](#) (and associated map products) are exciting developments that will in time enable the delineation of KBAs of more threatened ecosystem types, including grasslands and parklands in the Canadian prairies. The push to complete this national classification system has been driven in part by the KBA program’s need for cohesive, country-wide data on ecosystems, which will fill information gaps necessary for ecosystem-based conservation across Canada.

FRONTENAC FORESTS KBA

Ontario | Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee | Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg | Dish with One Spoon Territory | The Métis



Criteria Met: Global: A1 - Threatened species (fungi and lichens).

National: A1 - Threatened species (amphibians and reptiles, birds); B1 - Individual geographically restricted species (amphibians and reptiles, birds)

Biodiversity Element Trigger(s): Blanding’s Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii* pop. 2), Gray Ratsnake (*Pantherophis spiloides* pop. 1), Northern Map Turtle (*Graptemys geographica*), Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*).

Site Description: The Frontenac Forests KBA is an extensive area of rich deciduous and mixed forest interspersed with numerous small wetlands, lakes, and rocky outcrops. The area is situated in the heart of the Frontenac Arch World Biosphere Reserve. The Arch is a southward extension of the Canadian Shield to the Adirondack Mountains; it connects the boreal forest of the Canadian Shield to the richer deciduous forests of the south, making it one of the last largely intact wildlife corridors in southern Ontario. The Frontenac Forests KBA is centred on two key properties – Frontenac Provincial Park and Queen’s University Biological Station – and also includes the intervening and surrounding forested lands, as these are important for maintaining the values of the KBA and may represent future breeding sites for forest species at risk.

ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY AND CRITERION C KBAS

Work continues to move forward on identifying areas of outstanding global ecological integrity (or ecosystem health) that may qualify as Criterion C KBAs. A key step is understanding the factors that indicate the health of land, water, species, and communities and how these vary spatially. WCS Canada's KBA team is reviewing literature and data to understand what has been documented about biophysical and biocultural indicators in high-integrity regions (areas with minimal industrial footprint previously identified in a collaborative national exercise). These data are being used in an [analytical framework](#) to assess and compare ecological and cultural health across landscapes, highlighting areas with exceptional integrity that could become Criterion C KBAs or serve as targets for restoration and alternative management and stewardship approaches.

Considering local perspectives on what is important is essential, as cultural practices and values are linked to the land and local communities have a key role to play in the conservation and stewardship of these areas. The KBA Canada team has been exploring video as a medium for Indigenous Peoples to share stories about the health of their lands and culture in a way that supports their own conservation and stewardship goals while helping identify areas of high integrity. This summer, a collaboration with Foothills Ojibway First Nation provided equipment, training, and technical and financial support for community members to create a short film highlighting the ecological and cultural significance of their traditional territory.

The project has helped the participants develop skills in video production and has fostered connections among community members, especially between Elders and youth. The KBA team plans to expand the project in the coming years through new partnerships with communities.

Understanding the interrelated indicators of ecological and cultural health in high-integrity regions across spatial scales and using different knowledge systems is a slow, careful process, and integrating these pieces of information into a single framework is challenging. However, this deliberate approach ensures local perspectives are valued alongside broader data, enhancing our understanding of ecological integrity and efforts to identify and conserve Criterion C KBAs that benefit both nature and culture.





COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGING PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES AROUND KBAS

To date, thousands of individuals have participated in KBA Canada's efforts to identify KBAs, although tracking exact numbers is challenging due to activities occurring across all regions of the country. Engaging stakeholders, rightsholders, and communities is a significant aspect of KBA Canada's efforts and is crucial for the collaborative identification of KBAs and ensuring that as many potential end-users are informed about KBA information as possible. The KBA Canada Secretariat demonstrated its dedication to this mission in 2024 through a range of initiatives, including working again with Canadian Wildlife Federation to promote visiting urban KBAs during the 2024 City Nature Challenge. This year, the collaboration included a bioblitz event in the Lac Deschênes-Ottawa River Candidate KBA and sampling by participants in many other urban and semi-urban KBAs across the country. The 2nd Annual KBA Photo Contest was also a huge success in engaging the broader public and showcasing some incredible images of KBAs across KBA. This year's Photo Contest had over double the number of submissions from last year (230 in total!) from over 60 participants.

KBA workshops and in-person events remain an important part of this outreach and relationship-building. Events this year hosted by the KBA team included a workshop on the Eastern Georgian Bay Shoreline Candidate KBA with several First Nations, a workshop on KBAs and Species at Risk assessment and consultation for First Nations in Ontario, and an interactive session on KBA values and conservation priorities at the North American Congress for Conservation Biology meeting in Vancouver. The KBA team at WCS Canada and Birds Canada also supported Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (COTTFN) in organizing a youth-centered bioblitz and biodiversity learning event in the Deshkan Ziibi - Thames River KBA this fall.

SUPPORTING KBA IDENTIFICATION, MONITORING AND STEWARDSHIP IN BC

BC Nature continues to champion KBAs in British Columbia by bringing together diverse stakeholder partnerships centred on the organization's network of local naturalist clubs and Caretakers. Relying on place-based insights and support from partners such as WCS Canada and Birds Canada, we've continued through 2024 to encourage effective KBA monitoring, education, and stewardship. A few examples from this past year include;

- Working with the Tsal'alh First Nation and Lillooet Naturalist Society to help identify spawning grounds and increase public awareness of the endemic, winter-spawning Gwenis black Kokanee salmon, one of 4 salmon stocks for which the Anderson-Seton Lakes system is being nominated as a KBA.
- Supporting first-of-their-kind surveys to demonstrate the disproportionate global significance of the Nass and Skeena oolichan runs to global biodiversity, particularly of migratory seabirds, made possible by support from the Nisga'a and Kitsumkalum First Nations and the Prince George Naturalists Club.
- Engaging with local stakeholders and Indigenous representatives at community led events, in locations ranging from Malcolm Island to the Cowichan Valley to the Kootenays to Haida Gwaii.



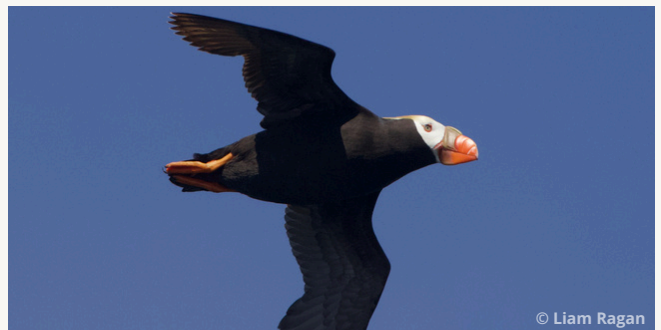
A Gwenis, or black kokanee, sits on the shore of the proposed Anderson-Seton Lake KBA. This species plays a critical role as winter protein for the local community, both human and otherwise.



Members of the public come down to the dock to learn about the Tofino Mudflats KBA as part of the Tofino Shorebird Festival, hosted by our long-term partners, the Raincoast Education Society.



Caretakers and volunteers from the Galiano Conservancy and UVic Birdwatching Club dry off after a wet winter survey of thousands of Bonaparte's Gulls and Pacific Loons drawn to the turbulent waters of Porlier Pass.



A Tufted Puffin flies past Triangle Island, where over 70,000 puffins are thought to breed.

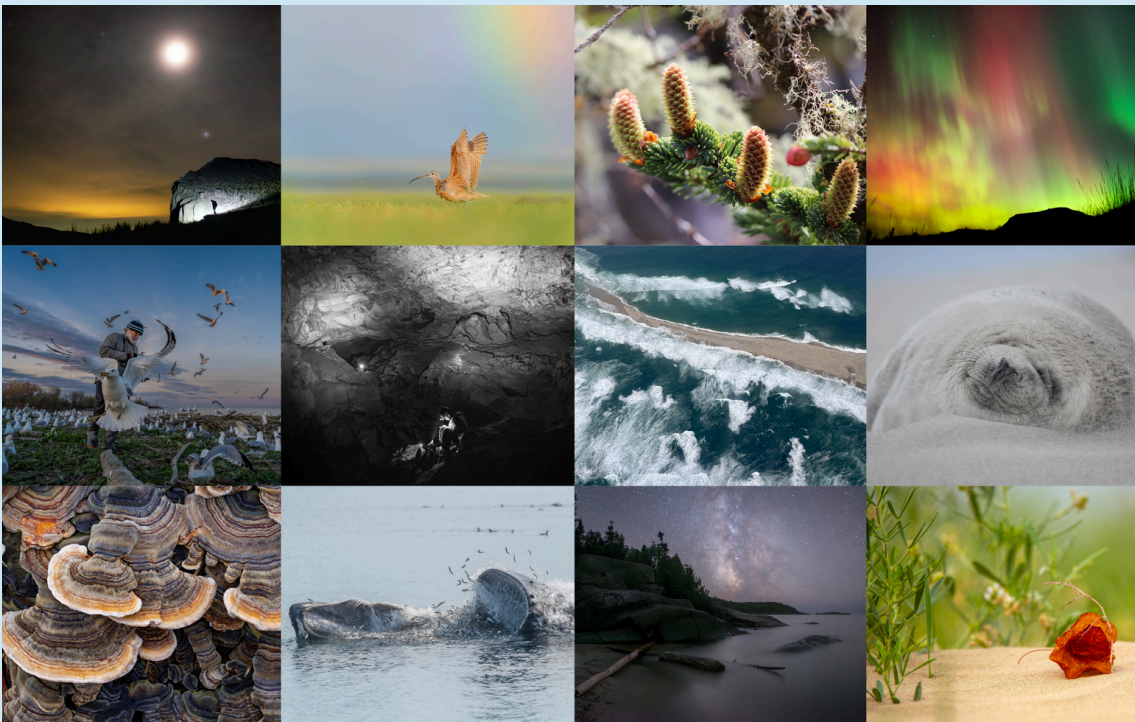
COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Stories featuring KBAs were published in 60 news articles in 2024, reaching an estimated 28.4 million people, and representing a small increase from 2023. Many of the stories on KBAs highlighted excitement around the recognition of new sites, like these stories featuring [Witty's Beach KBA](#) in BC, [Lake Utopia Complex KBA](#) in New Brunswick, or [Quttinirpaag National Park – Tanquary Fiord KBA](#) in Nunavut. Other stories referenced KBAs and KBA information for other purposes, for example, to explain why [ranching has a vital role in Prairie conservation](#) (citing the overlap between KBAs and private lands in the prairies), and as [examples of why conservation in urban and semi-urban areas is so important](#).

There was increasing attention and engagement across KBA Canada's other communications channels as well. The KBA Canada newsletter ended 2024 with over 130 new subscribers

compared to its peak in 2023, representing a 27% increase and showing the accelerating interest in KBAs as more sites are published. On social media, the #30DaysOfKBAs campaign in May achieved remarkable results, significantly boosting engagement and followers across platforms as information about a new KBA site was published every day of the month. Throughout the campaign, [Instagram](#) engagement soared by 493% and followers increased by 48%, while on [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), engagement rose by 225%, with a 1.5% uptick in followers. The campaign garnered active participation from the KBA Global team, and widespread engagement from KBA Canada partners, including WCS Canada, Birds Canada, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, showcasing a collective desire to raise awareness about Key Biodiversity Areas.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 KBA PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS!



The Winners

(left to right, top to bottom):

- Jason Headley
- Cairang Jia
- Abigail Hyde
- Nicohlas Ypelaar
- Patricia Homonylo
- Jason Headley
- Nicole Harrington
- Nicole Harrington
- Steve Rasmussen
- Ken Langelier
- Liam Brennan
- Lauren Pitt

BEYOND KBA IDENTIFICATION: A TOOL FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

While KBA identification has taken up a lot of time and attention over the past five years, KBAs are ultimately a tool for supporting the conservation of biodiversity. Through targeted outreach, and by including many people and organizations in the KBA Canada initiative, KBAs are starting to be known and taken up into policies, plans and programs aimed at conservation and stewardship. KBAs are recognized as high quality places to focus attention and resources to avoid biodiversity loss in Canada, as they contain important concentrations of wildlife that are key to the persistence of species and ecosystems. KBAs are currently being used in Canada to:

- focus protected area planning, at the federal level on public lands, and through land trusts that conserve private lands (e.g. in [ECCC's Protected Area strategic plan](#))
- focus conservation funding, where foundations are targeting funding programs at places of importance for biodiversity, naming KBAs specifically (Weston Foundation, BC Parks Foundation)
- focus data collection on rare and threatened species, through bio-blitzes and government efforts inside KBAs (e.g. [Cardinale Divide bioblitz](#), Cypress Hills data gathering)
- characterize biodiversity within specific lands and waters, drawing attention to KBAs within planning regions in reports (e.g. [Humber River Watershed Characterization Report](#))
- inform conservation and land use planning (e.g. in Swan River First Nation, Sinixt Confederacy and other First Nations who KBA Canada have shared KBA data and information with)
- land acquisitions by land trusts (e.g. land acquired by Nature Conservancy of Canada in [Skookumchuck Prairie KBA](#))
- support community stewardship activities, including monitoring, restoration and education (e.g. in a number of KBAs where a caretaker program is in place, like [South Shore-Roseway to Baccaro KBA or Machias Seal Island KBA](#))

USING KBA INFORMATION TO TRACK HOW CANADA IS SAFEGUARDING BIODIVERSITY

There is currently no national database or collection of information to be able to easily assess how different forms of stewardship affect the persistence of biodiversity in Canada. This is a challenge that a range of conservation actors are trying to address. KBA Canada is beginning to contribute to tracking trends in the protection of vulnerable biodiversity by analyzing how KBAs are being managed across Canada. KBAs in Canada have been recognized as an important indicator of how well Canada is conserving biodiversity, for example by tracking the proportion or number of KBAs that are protected in some form, including through national and subnational protected areas, but also through other stewardship mechanisms like Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs). [Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy: Halting and Reversing Biodiversity Loss in Canada](#) points to KBAs as an indicator for tracking progress towards achieving commitments associated with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).

KBAS AND THE KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK (KMGBF)

The KMGBF consists of 4 goals and 23 targets that together aim to achieve a halt to biodiversity loss by 2050. Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy is a 10-year plan to implement actions to achieve the KMGBF goals and targets. KBAs can support actions at the national and regional level by feeding into spatial planning for biodiversity (Target 1), targeting where restoration will have significant benefits (Target 2) and targeting where to expand protected and conserved areas (Target 3). KBAs are relevant to many other targets as well and can be used to track their progress. Many of the actions required to safeguard biodiversity will be taken at Provincial and Territorial scales, by Indigenous governments, and by local stakeholders and rights holders, and this is why actors at all levels should be aware of the availability of KBA information.

GRASSLANDS NATIONAL PARK AND AREA KBA

Saskatchewan | Historic territories of the A'aninin (Gros Ventre), | Nakoda (Assiniboine) | Nehiyawak (Plains Cree) | Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) | Dakota and Lakota (Sioux) | and the Métis.



Sunset at Grassland National Park © Liam Brennan

Criteria Met: National: A1 - Threatened species (amphibians and reptiles, birds, fishes, fungi and lichens, invertebrates, mammals, vascular plants); B1 - Individual geographically restricted species (amphibians and reptiles, birds, fishes, fungi and lichens, invertebrates, mammals, vascular plants)

Biodiversity Element Trigger(s): Eastern Yellow-bellied Racer (*Coluber constrictor flaviventris*), Greater Sage-Grouse (*urophasianus subspecies*), Plains Minnow (*Hybognathus placitus*), Brain Scale Lichen (*Psora cerebriformis*), Mormon Metalmark Prairie population (*Apodemia mormo pop. 2*), Plains Bison (*Bison bison bison*), Opposite-leaved Bahia (*Picradeniopsis oppositifolia*), and 9 other taxa meeting criteria.

Site Description: The Grasslands National Park KBA is located within the Great Plains of North America and comprises temperate grasslands, shrublands, and badlands within the Milk River Watershed in southern Saskatchewan. Glaciation formed much of the geography of the area including the Frenchman River Valley, the Killdeer Badlands, and the Wood Mountain Plateau. The lands and waters of this KBA have been culturally significant to Indigenous peoples for centuries. Grasslands National Park contains thousands of archaeological areas, making it one of the largest concentrations of undisturbed pre-contact cultural resources in Canada (Parks Canada 2023).

LOOKING AHEAD & THANK YOU!

LOOKING AHEAD: NEXT STEPS

The focus of the first phase of the Canadian KBA initiative was to identify a comprehensive set of KBAs, but also to put in place the structures needed to implement the KBA program effectively in the long term, to raise awareness of KBAs among user groups, and to generally lay the foundation for KBAs to be an effective and trusted tool for informing conservation decisions in Canada. The second phase of the work of KBA Canada will now focus on stewardship and monitoring of KBAs. With this in mind, the KBA Canada Secretariat has developed a draft national strategy for KBAs that will be refined with partners and released in 2025. This strategy, which is consistent with a global KBA strategic plan with similar ambition (also to be released in 2025) and will align with KMGBF goals and targets, will provide a roadmap for how Canada can use KBAs to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and effectively steward and honour the incredible biodiversity across our lands and waters.

In 2025, KBA Canada will convene organizations and governments interested in strategizing about the conservation of biodiversity in and around KBA. On the agenda for these discussions:

- Refining a vision and priority actions for the effective conservation of biodiversity in and around KBAs
- Planning for the long-term maintenance of high quality KBA information in Canada
- Identifying target audiences for outreach to achieve specific conservation outcomes, which may include regional governments, industry groups and particular communities (e.g. impact assessment experts)
- Discussing an effective and efficient caretaker network for community stewardship and monitoring of KBAs, and providing tools to support this network

Our work in the coming year will also focus on the final stages of publishing the remaining set of KBAs that have been identified but are still undergoing quality control checks and stakeholder/rights holder review. It is key to get as much data and information as possible quickly into the hands of everyone working to make a difference for biodiversity in Canada.

BRIER ISLAND AND OFFSHORE WATERS KBA

Nova Scotia | Mi'kmaq People part of Wabanaki (Dawnland) Confederacy | Treaties of Peace and Friendship | Acadia First Nations Yarmouth Reserve | Bear River First Nation



Criteria Met: Global: B1 - Individual geographically restricted species (vascular plants)

National: A1 - Threatened species (fungi and lichens); D1 - Demographic aggregations (birds)

Biodiversity Element Trigger(s): Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*), Hairy-spined Shield Lichen (*Hypotrachyna horrescens*), Eastern Mountain Avens (*Geum peckii*)

Site Description: Brier Island is at the extreme western end of Nova Scotia, approximately 50 kilometers southwest of the town of Digby. The site includes Brier Island, Long Island, Peter Island, and the surrounding marine waters. Two parallel ridges run across the island, with lowlands such as bogs and ponds in between. Numerous underwater shoals are found near Brier Island. Due to its location at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, this area experiences oceanic conditions and large tidal swings (6 to 7 meters). These tides and conditions interact with underwater shoals to create upwelling areas off the southern and western coasts of Brier Island.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all organizations, communities, Indigenous Nations, governments and individuals that have participated in KBA work, to the KBA Steering Committee and expert advisors, and to the committed staff leading KBA identification and outreach work.

Visit the KBACanada.org website to learn more about who is involved, and don't hesitate to [contact us](#) if you would like to collaborate or learn more.

Our Funders

The KBA Canada Secretariat at Birds Canada, NatureServe Canada and WCS Canada would like to thank our supporters for their generosity and commitment to conservation:

- Alan and Patricia Koval Foundation
- Alberta Ecotrust Foundation
- The Chawkers Foundation
- Clean Foundation via Government of Canada, Department of Environment and Climate Change
- Colleges and Institutes Canada via Government of Canada, Department of Environment and Climate Change
- Consecon Foundation
- Earth Rangers
- ECO Canada via Government of Canada, Department of Environment and Climate Change
- ECHO Foundation
- Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
- Government of Canada, Department of Environment and Climate Change
- The Gosling Foundation
- Greenbelt Foundation
- Hewitt Foundation
- Max Bell Foundation
- Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables
- Palmer Family Foundation
- RBC Foundation
- The Rossy Foundation
- Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc.
- Salamander Foundation
- Schad Foundation
- Sitka Foundation
- The Winnipeg Foundation
- Weston Family Foundation

The KBA Canada team would also like to thank the many anonymous and private donors who have contributed to the Secretariat organizations and supported their work on KBAs.

Appendices

These appendices provide comprehensive details on Canada's KBAs, including tables on published and candidate KBAs, species being assessed, species and sites requiring additional data and expertise, and stakeholder and rightsholder organizations involved. For questions or additional information on KBAs, contact the [KBA Canada Secretariat](#).

Appendix 1. List of all published and candidate KBAs

This dataset includes details on all published and in-progress (candidate) KBAs that are being actively worked on by the KBA Canada Secretariat. Information includes site names, jurisdictions, global or national KBA criteria met at site, KBA level, site status, and species and ecosystems meeting criteria at the site. [Access Appendix 1 here](#)

Appendix 2. List of all species meeting KBA criteria

This dataset includes details on all species currently known to meet KBA criteria at published or in-progress (candidate) KBAs. Information includes Scientific name, Common name, taxonomic information, recorded distribution, global and national conservation ranks, and KBAs where species meet criteria. [Access Appendix 2 here](#)

Appendix 3. List of potential KBAs that require more information

This dataset lists the affectionately called “MayBAs”, which are potential sites that might meet KBA criteria in the future, but are not being pursued at this time because of some lack of information. Sites here are prime candidates for targeted surveys or monitoring. Contact the KBA Canada Secretariat for more information about any site listed here. Information includes site names, jurisdictions, and notes from regional KBA Coordinators. [Access Appendix 3 here](#)

Appendix 4. List of species that need more information

This appendix lists species that have been identified as likely to meet KBA criteria in one or more places, but which were not able to be assessed because of a lack of knowledge. Many of these rare and/or threatened species would benefit from targeted monitoring or surveys at specific sites or generally within their range. Contact the KBA Canada Secretariat for more information about any site listed here. Information includes site names, jurisdictions, and notes from regional KBA Coordinators. Information includes Scientific name, Common name, taxonomic information, recorded distribution, global and national conservation ranks, and notes from regional coordinators. [Access Appendix 4 here.](#)



Bearded Seal, Tallurutiup Imanga Candidate KBA © Erin Isaac



www.KBACanada.org



[E-news signup](#)



[@KBACanada](#)



[@kbacanada](#)