

# The Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture:



*"Working together to maintain, enhance, restore and manage habitat for the benefit of wildlife and people in the Canadian Intermountain"*

The Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture (CIJV) is part of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative<sup>1</sup> (NABCI), a coordinated effort between Canada, the United States and Mexico focused on maintaining the diversity and abundance of all North American birds. In order to enable coordinate conservation efforts, the natural habitats of North America have been mapped into 66 Bird Conservation Regions (figure 1). These regions bear no relation to political boundaries, but are ecologically based units with similar physical features, vegetation, bird communities and habitat-related issues.

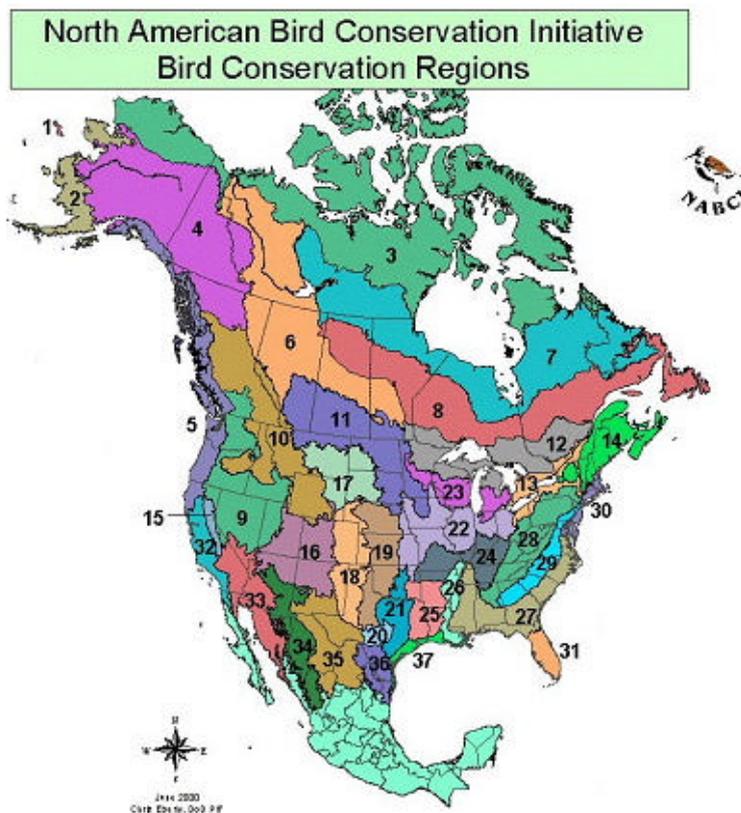


Figure 1. Bird Conservation Regions

<sup>1</sup>North American conservationists are embracing a cooperative approach to conserve the continent's birds. In June of 1999, in Banff, Alberta, government leaders from Canada, the United States and Mexico signed an agreement that encourages international cooperation to conserve the continent's bird species, thereby launching the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. [http://www.ews-scf.ec.gc.ca/birds/nabci\\_e.cfm](http://www.ews-scf.ec.gc.ca/birds/nabci_e.cfm)

The CIJV is comprised of the Canadian portions of Bird Conservation Regions #10 (the Northern Rockies) and #9 (the Great Basin).

The Canadian Intermountain region is located in the south and central interior of British Columbia and the Rocky Mountains of Alberta (Figure 2). It encompasses over 480,000 sq. km, including several of Canada's National Parks. It is a landscape of widely varying elevation and climatic conditions resulting in a broad range of habitat types, including desert, wetlands, lakes, rivers, grasslands, forests and alpine tundra. These highly diverse ecosystems provide very important habitat for breeding, migrating and wintering birds.

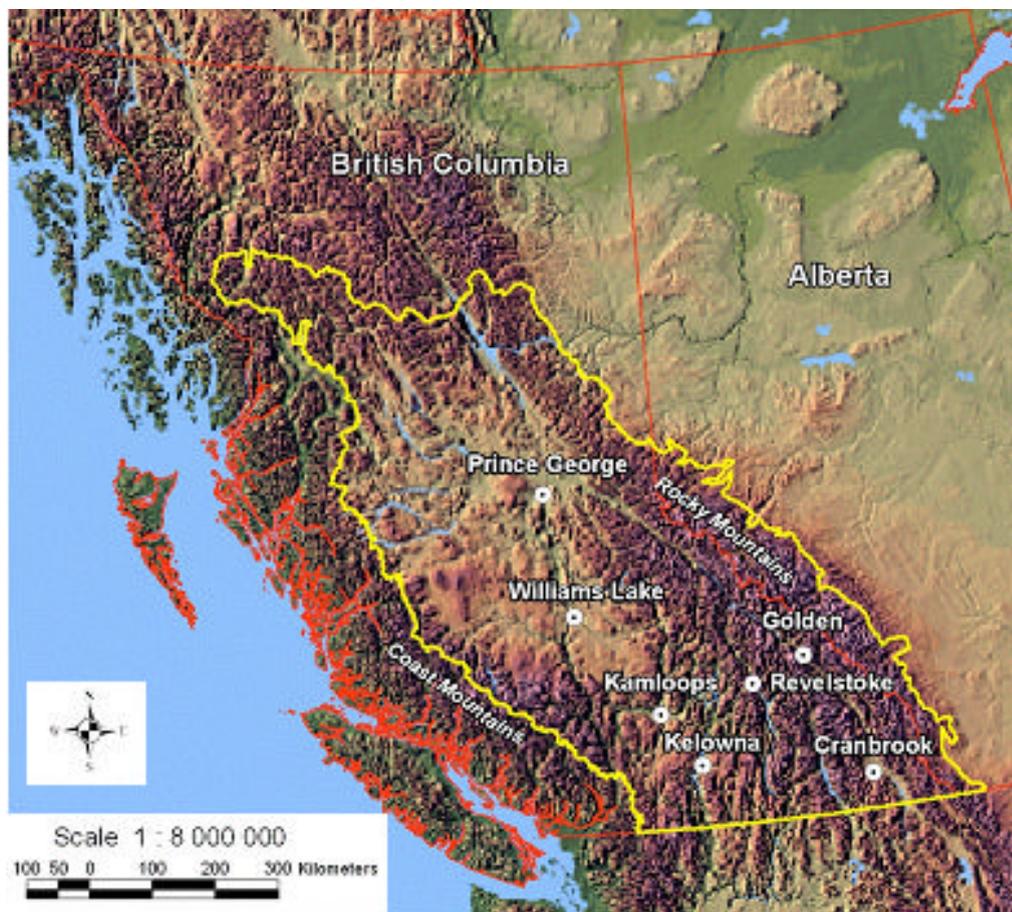


Figure 2. Yellow line indicates the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture boundary.

With 373 bird species recorded thus far, the Canadian Intermountain has one of the most diverse bird faunas of any Canadian region. The intermountain contains important breeding habitat for 26 species of waterfowl. It provides habitat for more than 60% of the world's population of Barrow's Goldeneye. The area also has the highest owl, woodpecker, swift and hummingbird diversity of any ecozone in Canada and contains the

entire British Columbia populations of 11 provincially endangered bird species (Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Burrowing Owl, Williamson's Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Sage Thrasher, Yellow-breasted Chat, Brewer's Sparrow (subspecies *breweri*), Lark Sparrow and Grasshopper Sparrow).

The Canadian Intermountain also supports a growing human population and extensive resource-based industries, including ranching, forestry, mining, agriculture, hydroelectric power generation, tourism and recreation. While these activities sustain the Canadian Intermountain economies, they can also pose a threat to bird habitats and have a profound influence on bird populations, particularly in the valley bottoms where human settlements are constantly expanding.

The CIJV was officially launched in November 2003 to address the challenges of sustaining healthy populations of birds and other wildlife while at the same time ensuring the viability of other uses of the landscape such as resource-based industries. It is the most recent of a series of joint ventures across Canada focusing on implementing the goals and objectives of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.

The objectives of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative are to ensure that populations and habitats of North America's birds are protected, restored and enhanced through coordinated efforts at international, national, regional and local levels. NABCI is designed to increase the effectiveness of existing and new initiatives through effective coordination, building on regional partnerships, such as the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture.

The CIJV is a partnership of British Columbia-based resource industries, government agencies, First Nations, conservation organizations, and academia and is directed by a management board consisting of representatives from the following agencies and organizations.

**Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture Partners:**

BC Cattlemen's Association	BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
BC Field Ornithologists	BC Hydro
Ducks Unlimited Canada	Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service)
Federation of BC Naturalists	Grasslands Conservation Council of BC
Ktunaxa-Kinbasket Tribal Council	The Land Conservancy of BC
Riverside Forest Products Ltd.	The Nature Conservancy of Canada
The Nature Trust of BC	Parks Canada Agency
East Kootenay Conservation Program	Teck Cominco Limited
University of British Columbia Centre for Applied Conservation Research	South Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Program

The CIJV complements, augments and facilitates existing conservation initiatives and partnerships. Activities of the CIJV include:

- Securement of high priority habitat areas through purchase, lease, donation, easement/covenant, land transfer, or legislation
- Site-specific restoration, enhancement and management of habitats to improve carrying capacity for birds
- Influencing legislation, policy, habitat protection and planning
- Stewardship and extension within and among resource sectors
- Education and outreach

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) provides matching grants to organizations that have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. In 2003 the CIJV received \$7,000,000 from NAWCA and partners for the acquisition of high-priority valley-bottom wetland and upland habitat in the Tunkwa watershed near Kamloops British Columbia, as well as a large-scale wetland restoration project. The wetlands play a significant role in providing important habitat for waterfowl. This project addresses range-management practices and water supply management by integrating the diverse needs of a wide array of land users, including ranching, forestry, angling and outdoor recreation; all rely upon the water and wetlands within the Tunkwa watershed. Future projects of the CIJV will continue to focus on critical habitat for acquisitions and conservation covenants, in addition to enhancement, stewardship, outreach and educational activities. An emphasis on stewardship and working effectively with industry partners will be key to effecting positive change across this expansive and diverse landscape.

The CIJV provides an opportunity to celebrate our conservation successes, use our existing resources more efficiently and join forces to address the habitat conservation challenges ahead. CIJV partners invite other agencies or groups having interests in bird conservation, resource management and use of the working landscape in the Canadian Intermountain region to participate in this exciting new initiative.

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