

Great news for birds in Connecticut!

Audubon Connecticut has recognized the Great Meadows, lush farmland and forested wetlands along an 8-mile stretch of the Connecticut River, as an Important Bird Area (IBA). The Great Meadows IBA includes Rocky Hill and Glastonbury Meadows, Wethersfield Cove and Crow Point in Wethersfield, and Keeney Point in Glastonbury and East Hartford.

This area provides important stopover habitat for several declining grassland bird species including Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Bobolink, Horned Larks, and Savannah Sparrow. It is also an important area for waterfowl, such as Canada Geese, American Black Duck, Mallard, Wood Duck, Common Merganser, and Green-winged Teal, particularly in spring migration. Bald Eagle nest at two locations within the IBA and 20 percent of the area is floodplain forest, a key habitat identified in the Connecticut's Wildlife Action Plan. Recognition of the Great Meadows as an IBA not only protects valuable habitat for birds but also helps preserve the health of the Connecticut River watershed and Long Island Sound estuary.

Great Meadows is a landscape-level Important Bird Area. "It is different from many previously recognized IBAs in its size, nearly 5,000 acres, and in the number of landowners," says, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Audubon Connecticut's IBA Program Coordinator. "Any landowners that are within the boundary of this landscape are eligible for the benefits of recognizing their properties as part of the IBA, including eligibility for IBA small grants or utilizing the IBA status as a way to bolster other grant applications.

"The Great Meadows Conservation Trust has been working to protect and preserve the Meadows since 1968." Explains President Tom Kehoe. "We are excited that Great Meadows has been recognized as an IBA and anticipate the designation will aid in the conservation of this incredible landscape."