

The Powwow Pond Important Bird Area

The New Hampshire Important Bird Area Program is part of a national and international effort to identify areas that provide critical habitat to birds during some stage of their annual cycle. In New Hampshire the program is a partnership of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, and the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. IBAs are identified based on strict scientific criteria, including 1) the presence of threatened or endangered species, 2) other species and habitats of conservation concern, and 3) areas where birds congregate during breeding, migration, or winter. It is hoped that recognition of IBAs can help guide future conservation and research efforts at areas that meet these criteria.

Powwow Pond meets category 3 of the IBA criteria, as follows:

3) Congregatory species

Powwow Pond is famous for its spring concentrations of Ring-necked Ducks. Between mid-March and mid-April, flocks regularly surpass 150 birds, placing Powwow Pond in the top 2 or 3 locations in the state for this species. Other waterfowl occasionally join the Ring-necks, including mergansers, bufflehead, and some dabblers, but these rarely occur in high numbers. During fall migration, Ring-necked Ducks are far less common (<100), but three other waterbird species use the pond in consistently high numbers. These three species are Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, and American Coot, which are often seen in groups of ten or more. Although ten Ruddy Ducks may not seem like that many, in the statewide context this is a species that is often not reported at all, and when it is there may be only 1 or 2 birds. For coots this comparison is even more extreme. Flocks of over 50 have been reported from Powwow, and there are literally no other locations in New Hampshire where one can expect to see this many coots at any time during the year.



For the purposes of the NH IBA Program, the Powwow Pond IBA is defined as Powwow Pond itself plus a 250 foot buffer as described in the Shoreland Protection Act. The wetlands along the Powwow River to the southwest have been identified by The Nature Conservancy as unique habitats, but there are currently no bird data to support their inclusion in the IBA. Conservation issues facing Powwow Pond are poorly understood, but certain include invasive aquatic plants, shoreline development, and disturbance by people. The south shore of the pond is dominated by camps and the pond itself is heavily used by boaters during the summer. However, neither of these activities is likely to affect the birds for which this IBA was identified, since they generally occur here in early spring or late fall.

For more information on the New Hampshire Important Bird Area Program, contact:

Pam Hunt
Audubon Society of New Hampshire
3 Silk Farm Road
Concord, NH 03301

(603) 224-9909 extension 328

email: phunt@nhaudubon.org



More details on the IBA Program are also available on the N.H. Audubon web site.