

Migratory Bird Sanctuaries ACROSS CANADA

► What are Migratory Bird Sanctuaries?

Birds migrate in the spring and fall, often travelling long distances. Each year, Canada welcomes back approximately 460 species of native birds. The majority of these are migratory birds and are protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act. The Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment and Climate Change Canada is responsible for the protection of migratory birds, as well as their eggs and nests. They do this by creating and managing Migratory Bird Sanctuaries (MBS), which are protected areas that provide safe refuge for migratory birds.

► Why are they important?

Habitat loss is one of the main causes of population decline among birds. These sanctuaries not only protect migratory birds from harm due to human activities but also preserve habitat that are essential to various stages of their lifecycle. This can include areas for:

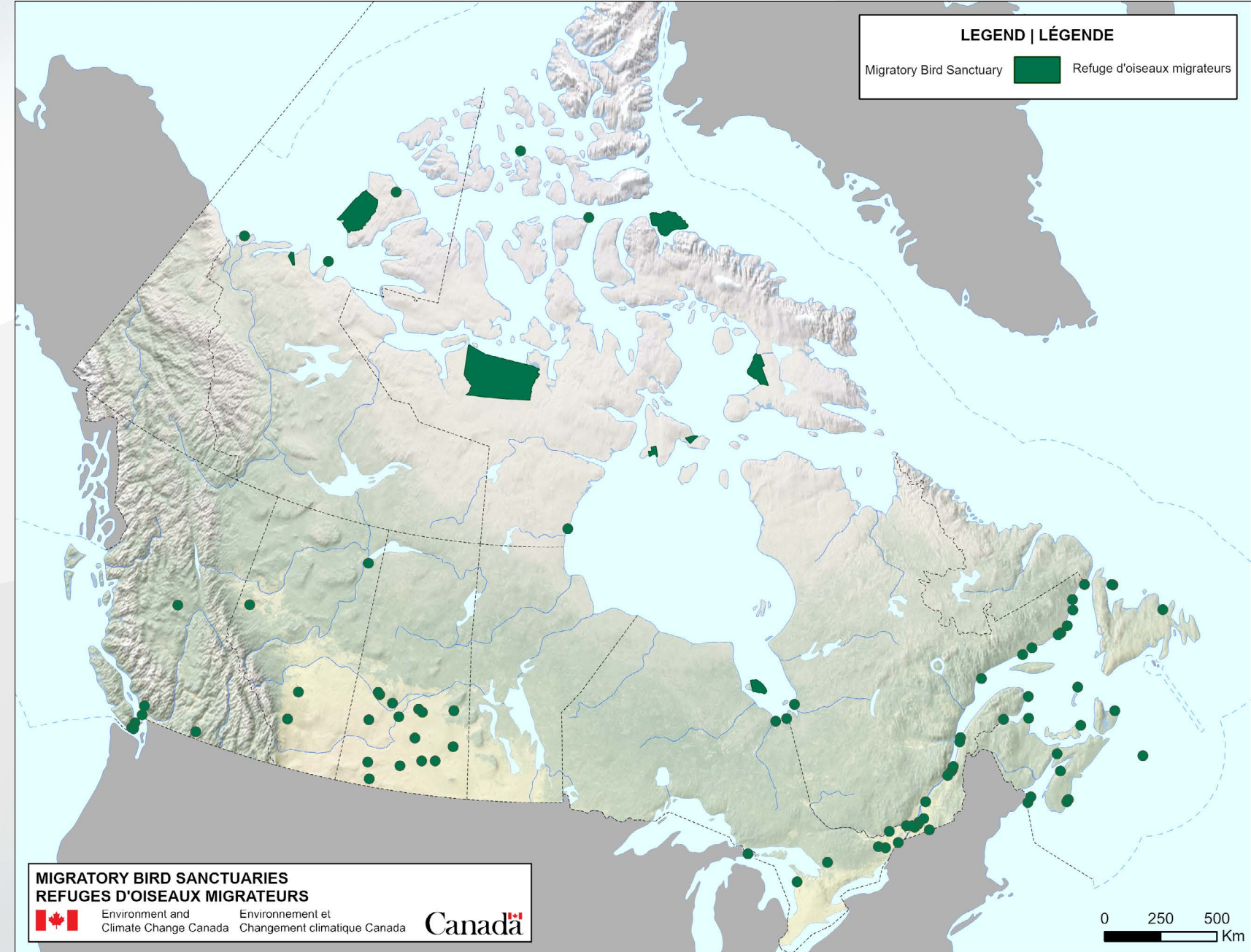
- nesting (where birds breed and raise young)
- moulting (where birds take time to shed old feathers, a process that can leave them vulnerable)
- staging or stopover (where birds gather to rest and eat in preparation for long flights)
- wintering (where birds go to escape harsh winter conditions)

► Where in Canada are they found?

From coastlines and marshes to tundra and grasslands, these sanctuaries span a wide range of habitats across Canada. They can be located on federal, provincial, or even private land.

► By the numbers:

- There are 92 MBS across Canada.
- They cover almost 11.5 million hectares of habitat for migratory birds — that's twice the size of Nova Scotia!



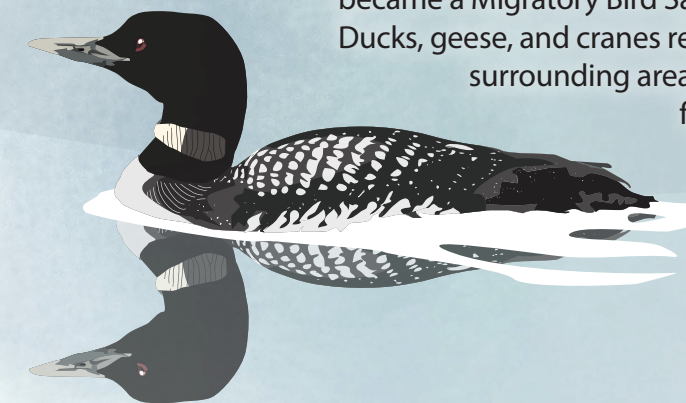
► How are they chosen?

For an area to become an MBS it has to meet one or more of the following requirements:

1. It supports bird populations that are **concentrated in an area** for any part of the year.
2. It is **vulnerable to specific threats** (e.g., hunting, urban development).
3. It supports bird populations that live in a restricted geographical area (e.g., areas that support **threatened, endangered, or rare species**).
4. It regularly supports **at least 1% of a population of one species or subspecies**.

► Sanctuary spotlight:

The first protected area established for the conservation of migratory birds in Canada (and in all of North America) was **Last Mountain Lake** in 1887, in southern Saskatchewan, which later became a Migratory Bird Sanctuary in 1921. Ducks, geese, and cranes rely on this lake and its surrounding area for their spring and fall migrations.



► Citizen science:

Want to support scientists in protecting native bird species? Take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, an annual 4-day event in February. Don't miss it — get outside with your binoculars and record your observations of the stunning birds passing through your part of the world!