

National Wildlife Areas IN CANADA

► What is a National Wildlife Area?

National Wildlife Areas (NWAs) are places across Canada created to protect wildlife and their habitats. These areas are managed by Environment and Climate Change Canada and are protected under the **Canada Wildlife Act**.

► How do National Wildlife Areas work?

National Wildlife Areas focus on places that are important for plants and animals. These areas may be selected because they are safe stops for migratory birds, provide habitat for species at risk, are used for feeding and breeding grounds, or contain important ecosystems such as wetlands or native prairie grassland. Once an area has been selected as an NWA by the Government of Canada, rules are put in place to reduce human impact on the area.

► Fast Facts

- There are 64 National Wildlife Areas across Canada
- They protect more than 3.5 million hectares of land and water - That's like six Prince Edward Islands!
- Almost half include marine or coastal environments

► Who lives in an NWA?

National Wildlife Areas protect a wide variety of species, including:

- Migratory birds, such as Canada geese, snow geese, and tundra swans
- Species at risk, like the piping plover and the wood bison
- Mammals, such as beavers, caribou, and seals
- Fish and marine life, like the beluga whale and Atlantic cod

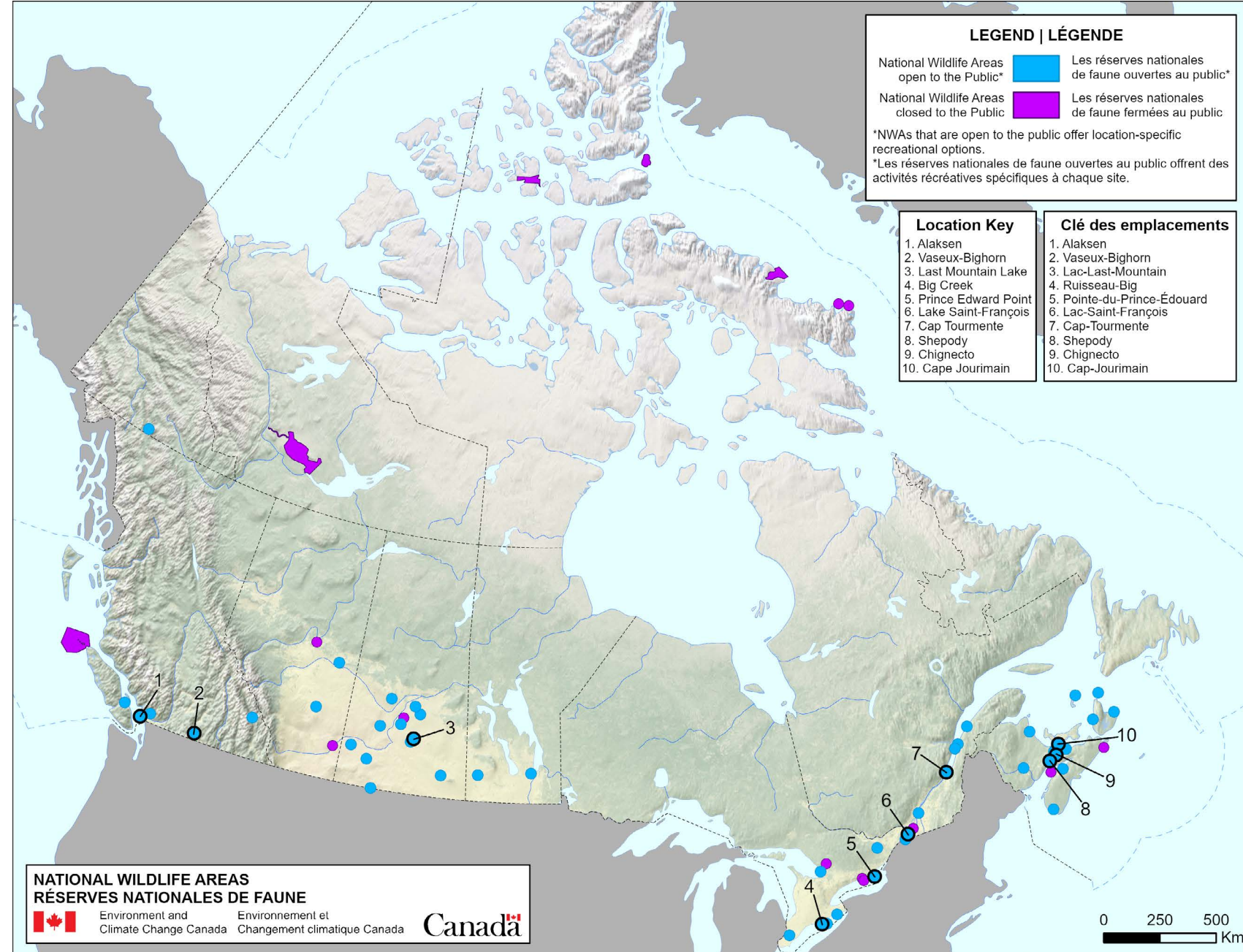
Why are these places protected?

Wildlife depends on specific places to survive, especially for feeding, breeding, and migration. National Wildlife Areas protect habitats that are essential for these life cycle stages.

Many of these areas support migratory birds, which travel long distances each year and rely on specific stopovers for safe places to rest and feed along the way. Others provide habitat for species at risk, helping protect populations that may be declining.

In nature, everything is connected. Protecting one habitat can support many species at once, helping to maintain biodiversity.

As environments change over time, including through climate change and human activities, these areas become even more important. They also provide places where scientists can monitor wildlife and study how ecosystems are changing.



► What does the map show?

This map shows the approximate locations of NWAs across Canada. Different colours and symbols are used to show how each area is managed. Blue dots represent NWAs that are open to the public for certain activities, while purple dots represent NWAs that are closed to the public. Smaller areas are shown as points, while larger areas are shown using boundaries.

► Think about it

- Where are most National Wildlife Areas located? What patterns do you notice?
- Why might some National Wildlife Areas be closed or have limited access for people?
- How might protecting one habitat support many different species?