

Whitewater Lake Wildlife Management Area

Background

- Whitewater Lake is one of Manitoba's most productive wetlands. It is a large shallow terminal basin with no outlet. It has dried up completely during extended periods of drought and expanded considerably during prolonged wet periods. This variation in water levels is critical to maintaining its productivity.
- The remaining Crown-owned lands and waters of Whitewater Lake were reserved from sale or settlement and designated as a Public Shooting Ground by the federal government in 1925.
- In 1974 Whitewater Lake was also designated as a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) by the provincial Government. The Whitewater Lake WMA is approximately 8,500 hectares in size.
- Ducks Unlimited Canada developed a managed marsh at the east end of the lake in 1989 and later added another smaller cell for wildlife viewing facilities.
- Whitewater Lake is identified as a Candidate Heritage Marsh under the Manitoba Heritage Marsh Program.



- Bird Studies Canada and Nature Canada, the Canadian co-partners of BirdLife International recognize Whitewater Lake as an Important Bird Area that is globally significant for colonial nesting species, waterfowl and shore bird species.

- Critical nesting area for Franklin's Gulls, a species of high concern for conservation. Believed to be the largest breeding colony of Franklin's Gulls in Canada, if not the world, with an estimated population of 184,000 breeding adults recorded in 2007.
- Important breeding area for Cattle Egrets, White-Faced Ibis, Snowy Egret and Great Egret. These species are considered extremely rare in Manitoba.
- Important breeding area for Black Crowned Night Herons.
- Important area for grebe species including Pied Billed, Horned, Eared, Red-necked, Western and Clarkes.
- Important habitat for the endangered Piping Plover in low water cycles.
- Shoreline and upland habitat utilized by various threatened and endangered grassland birds including, Baird's Sparrow, Sprague's Pippit, Ferruginous Hawk, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Loggerhead Shrike and Bobolink.

Summary

The solution to the current situation of excess water in and around Whitewater Lake needs to consider an integrated approach to recognize the ecological values of the lake, as well as human needs and engineering options.