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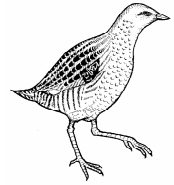
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# *Newsletter of the Douglas Marsh Important Bird Area*

*Box 455 Douglas, MB R0K 0R0*

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Issue 1 ♦ March 2002

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## *Background*

In the winter of 1999, a group of interested participants met to learn about the **Important Bird Area (IBA)** program. It was decided to see if the Douglas community would be interested in such a program. An information meeting was held in April at Douglas School to explain the IBA program and the implications to the local community. At this time a working group was formed to develop and implement a Conservation Plan taking the community's input into consideration.

## *IBA - What is it?*

IBA stands for the Important Bird Area. The Important Bird Area Program was established by **Canadian Birdlife Partners**, the **Canadian Nature Federation**, and **Bird Studies Canada**, as part of an international effort to identify and conserve sites important to all bird species worldwide. In Manitoba the program is being delivered by the **Manitoba Naturalists Society**.

The working group is open to anyone who wishes to give input or a helping hand.

Should you wish to participate please contact:

Louise McInnes (763-8987)

or Dave Clayton (729-3511).



*The Working Group*

## *Issues*

The major concerns identified from the various stakeholders included the following:

- Trampling of the birds, nests and rare plants.
- Trespassing on private land without permission
- Safety hazard caused by people parking on the side of the highway.
- Flooding of Yellow Rail habitat resulting from beavers holding back water
- Possible habitat destruction if proposed highway relocation goes through.
- Lack of knowledge of distribution and densities of Yellow Rails throughout Douglas Marsh.
- Some sort of compensation to landowners should be considered in order to preserve habitat in the long term.

We are very proud of the efforts of all the students, as it was an extremely difficult choice for the judges.

*Congratulations to all participants*

### *Out My Bedroom Window*

I look out my bedroom window, and onto the ground below.  
The winter months will soon arrive, and with them, the snow  
The birds will soon have migrated south, but, without fail,  
I hear the sound of two rocks colliding; the song of the Yellow Rail.

I look out my bedroom window, the landscape is quite bare,  
yet a certain sense of beauty tingles through the air.  
The snow sparkles in the moonlight, the ice shimmers, it seems, just  
for me.

- Education is an important part of habitat preservation, if people are to understand the value of wildlife and native habitat to society.

The working group would like to address the above issues while at the same time not discourage ecotourism.

## *Douglas School Activities*

Douglas School students are beginning to develop an appreciation of nature and its importance to societies by using Douglas Marsh as an outdoor classroom. The binoculars, field books and interactive CD donated to the school by the IBA are helping the students to learn more about plants, animals and ecology.

The Grade 7 and 8 class of Douglas School held a contest to develop a Logo, Brochure and poetry to be used for the Douglas Marsh IBA Community Conservation Working Group. A wonderful array of logos and brochures were created and three volunteers from the Ducks Unlimited office chose the winners. You can look for our new Information Brochure - coming soon to Douglas Store and Douglas School, as well as other interested businesses.

*see over . . . . .*

In the distance a coyote howls.  
If only YOU could see what I see.

I look  
out my  
bedroom  
window,  
the  
grass  
sways  
like silk  
just  
spun.  
Anticipation fills  
my  
mind,

**Be Sure To Join Us for  
our**

**DEDICATION**

**on June 8, 2002!**

**Celebrate our  
accomplishments!**

**We'll meet  
at the Douglas Store  
at 2:00pm**

**Everyone Welcome**

springtime has begun.

Chirps of joy fill my ears; the birds are here to stay.

My heart is filled with a grateful love for the beautiful month of May.

I look out my bedroom window, the summer air flows through my veins  
and lifts my burdens off of my chest, erases all my pain.

Once more the click of two stones colliding catches my ready ear,  
and the song of our marshes pride is all that I hear.

I look out my bedroom window, at the wonder nature has let use see,  
and a question surfaces in my mind, one that's always puzzled me.

When we have been permitted to see such beauty, why,  
do we take it for granted, why don't we open our minds?

I turn away from my bedroom window, and tears fill my eyes.

I realize that a key, I possess, for me a wondrous land lies . . . .

The land of the Douglas Marsh, home of the Yellow Rail.

To save this slice of heaven, we must not, CAN NOT, fail.

by Alyssa Fraser, Age 12

***Did you know?***

Douglas Marsh is internationally known for its accessible population of Yellow Rails. In fact this marsh may contain one of the larger concentrations of Yellow Rails in Prairie Canada

***Rail Tales***

Did you know that wetlands, like Douglas Marsh, not only provide homes for plants and animals but also acts as a natural filter to help to remove pollutants and purify surface water.

Water which eventually finds its way into our wells and homes.

## *Accomplishments and Work in Progress*

The working group has applied for four different grants of which three were approved. The grants required the working group to match the funds through donations or In-kind work. The grants have been used to accomplish the following. Not all funds have been spent and work continues on addressing identified issues.

- Ecotourism groups have been contacted to let them know of some of the communities' concerns.
  - A bird and vegetation survey was conducted in 2000.
  - An interpretive sign has been produced with a second currently in production. Both are planned to be put on site in Spring of 2002.
  - The working group purchased six pairs of binoculars, six field books and a CD on Birds of North America and donated them to the Douglas School for the conservation component of their program.
  - "No Trespassing" signs were purchased and made available to erect on lands where trespassing was of concern.
- A working relationship has been developed with Manitoba Highways, so that concerns such as habitat destruction and safety can be addressed should road re-routing proceed.
  - Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation has agreed to work with landowners in the area to see if programs can be implemented which will protect the Yellow Rail habitat, while hopefully provide them with some compensation.
  - Beaver pond levelers are currently being made and are planned to be installed in 2002 to help stop the backing up of water and flooding of Yellow Rail habitat.



## *Acknowledgements*

The Douglas Marsh IBA Community Conservation Working Group would like to thank the funding agencies for funding this project and all those members of the community who have provided input and support for this conservation plan.

Funding agencies are: Birdlife International, Bird Studies Canada, Canadian Nature Federation, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, Manitoba Naturalists, Murphy Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Natural Legacy 2000, Sustainable Development Innovations Fund.

*Drawn by  
Douglas School student  
for*



## *New Logo*

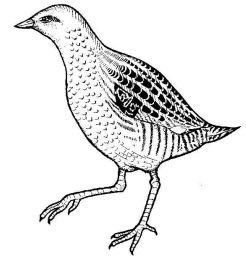
### *Rail Tales - Did You Know?*

The Yellow Rail is one of the ten most sought after species on the North American birders' lists.



Environment  
Canada

Environnement  
Canada



Canada



*Douglas Marsh*

**IMPORTANT BIRD  
AREAS OF CANADA**



**LES ZONES IMPORTANTES  
POUR LA CONSERVATION  
DES OISEAUX AU CANADA**

*Important Bird Area*



**Manitoba  
Conservation**

