

## MINNESOTA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS Nomination Form

The Minnesota Important Bird Areas (IBA) program is an effort to identify, conserve, and monitor sites that provide essential habitat for bird populations. Sites that are nominated must meet *at least one* of the IBA criteria in order to be considered by the Minnesota IBA Technical Committee. Please refer to the accompanying criteria when filling out this form. Completed forms should be sent to: [mmartell@audubon.org](mailto:mmartell@audubon.org) or: Mark Martell, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Minnesota, 2357 Ventura Drive, Suite 106, St. Paul, MN 55125. If you have questions please email or call Mark at: (651) 739-9332. **THANK YOU!**

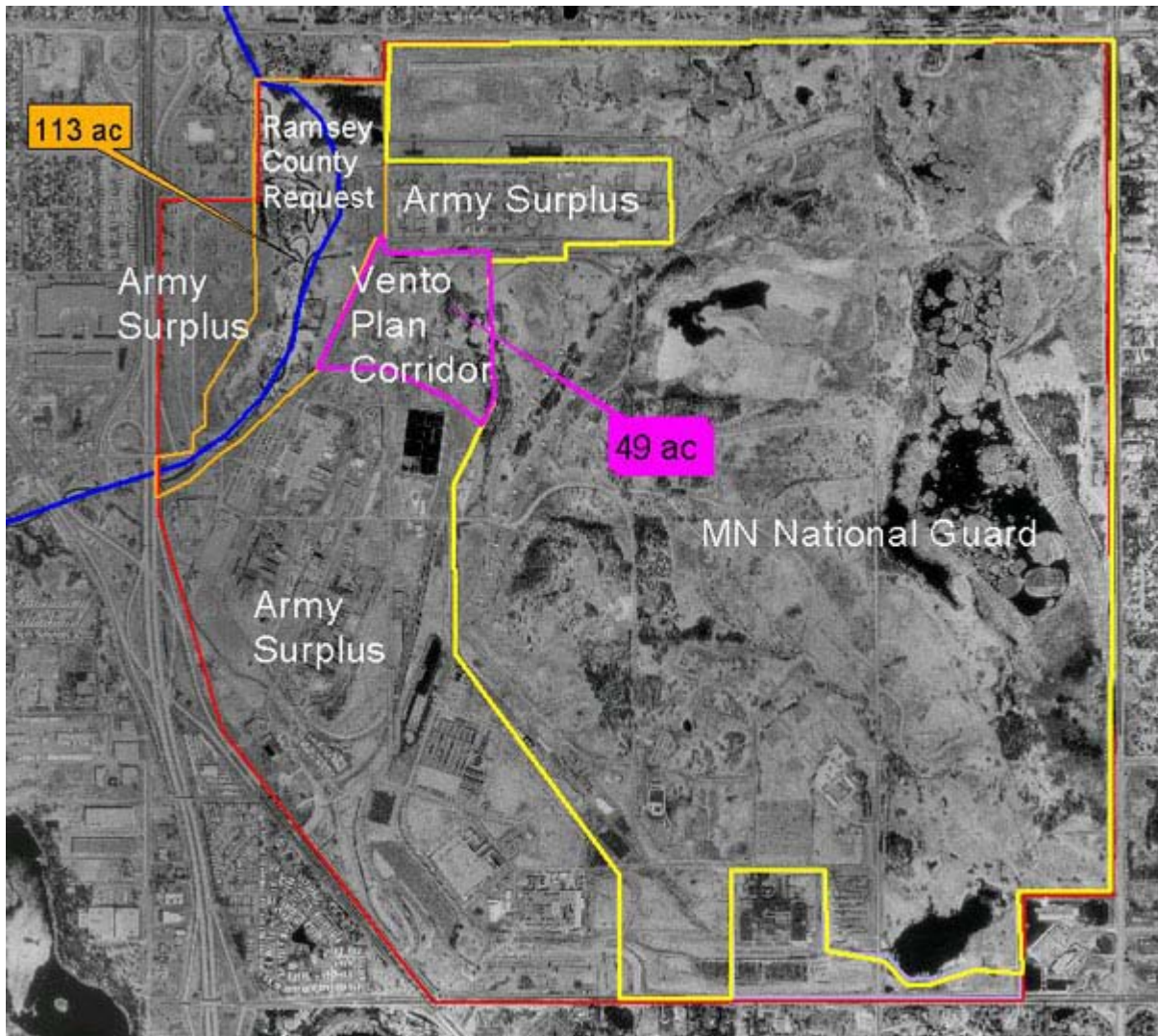
### SITE INFORMATION

<b>Site Name: Arden Hills Army Training Site IBA</b>		
<b>County (Primary): Ramsey</b>		<b>Townships: Arden Hills</b>
<b>County (Other):</b>		<b>Townships:</b>
<b>Approximate Size (hectares): or acres: 1500</b>		<b>Accuracy of Acreage: Good</b> <small>(good, medium, poor unknown)</small>
<b>Central Coordinates:</b>	<b>Latitude: T30N</b>	<b>Longitude: R23W</b>
<b>Elevation (max - min): 1,097-880 ft</b>		

**Please give a general description of the site (including directions, habitat, location, prominent features, and any other helpful information); attach additional sheets if needed. Please attach a USGS map that clearly delineates the boundaries of the site.**

The Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS) comprises approximately 1500 acres in northern Ramsey County that are maintained and used by the Minnesota National Guard. It represents more than half of the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP). **See Map below.** TCAAP was originally farmland purchased by the U.S. Army in August 1941 for the production and testing of small arms ammunition and grenades. The western part of TCAAP (630 acres) is managed by the Army and in the southern part contains many buildings, paved roads and parking lots. A corridor of 49 acres is situated in the northeastern part of the Army site. The northwestern Army section (113 acres) was purchased by Arden Hills for development. TCAAP is bounded on the north by County Rd. I, on the east by Lexington Ave., the south by MN Highway 96, on the southwest by U.S. Highway 10, and on the west by U.S. Highway 35W. The AHATS section lies due east of the Army part of TCAAP.

AHATS has a unique and varied habitat. Much of the northern, central and eastern parts consist of marsh, grassland, and woods that support sizeable populations of birds and other animals. Except for clay in the southeastern part, the soil is sand that was deposited at the retreat of the last glaciers.



**Significant natural features:**

- Grasslands. Extensive grasslands cover much of the central AHATS from north to south.
- Wet prairie and prairie potholes exist on the furthest south and north, respectively.
- Marsden Lake and Marsh are located on the east side of AHATS.
- Sunfish Lake. Located in the southeastern part, this lake is mostly open water, with a small cattail marsh at its northeastern end.
- Glacial Kames. These hills are located in the center of AHATS from the gravel pit southward.

- The Gravel Pit. Dug into the northern kame, the pit is surrounded by steep sand walls. The bottom is covered by shallow water that has been pumped from underground and filtered. (Past practices resulted in contamination of ground water beneath the TCAAP). This purified water is being returned to the underground aquifer.
- Woodlands. The most significant woodlands consist primarily of mature pin oak, red oak, and white oak, and are located on the kames and on the east side of Marsden Lake. Stands of bur oak, cottonwood, and box elder are located in various parts of the site. In some places, stands of spruce and pine have been planted.

### **SITE** **JUSTIFICATION**

**Why is this site important for Minnesota's birds? Please provide a detailed written explanation for each category checked below. Attach additional sheets if necessary.**

The AHATS site is important because it contains unique bird and other animal habitat in an urban setting and is fenced off from the surrounding community. The varied habitat and large size of the site is quite different from the surrounding urban area. AHATS is maintained by the National Guard, and volunteers from St. Paul Audubon Society help with its maintenance.

AHATS satisfies this application's **Criterion MN-1e** in that it supports an **exceptional diversity (162 species)** of bird species and possesses **important habitat** for both shorebirds and waterfowl.

This site also satisfies **Criterion MN-4b**. It is a natural area of **over 100 acres** in an **urban landscape** with **162 species** of birds. Situated in the center of a densely populated area, it offers a unique opportunity for many birders in the Twin Cities. Below is the AHATS Species List. Various observers cited in the references are responsible for drawing up this list (refs. 1,2 and 3). **Long-term avian research and monitoring have gone on over the years.**

Craig Andresen, the current president of the St. Paul Audubon Society, installed over 350 bluebird and other larger nest boxes on the site in the early '90s. Since then he has been monitoring nests for species and number of offspring. The overall probable or possible bird breeding has been evaluated on the basis of behaviors such as pair formation, nest defense, and fledglings. In the Species List below, species for which breeding has been confirmed are marked with an asterisk.

In addition to species diversity, AHATS hosts species of special concern. Trumpeter Swans with their young have been observed repeatedly and a small number of Forster Terns and Red-shouldered Hawks have been seen.

**Species List**

Common Loon  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Red-necked Grebe  
Double-crested Cormorant  
American Bittern  
Least Bittern  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Green Heron  
Black-crowned Night Heron  
Trumpeter Swan\*  
Canada Goose\*  
Wood Duck\*  
Green-winged Teal  
Mallard\*  
American Wigeon  
Blue-winged Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
Gadwall  
Ring-necked Duck\*  
Lesser Scaup  
Common Goldeneye  
Bufflehead  
Hooded Merganser  
Common Merganser  
Turkey Vulture  
Osprey  
Northern Harrier  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Cooper's Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk\*  
Broad-winged hawk  
American Kestrel  
Ring-necked Pheasant  
Ruffed Grouse  
Virginia Rail  
Sora  
American Coot  
Killdeer  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Wilson's Snipe  
American Woodcock

Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Common Tern  
Forster's Tern  
Black Tern  
Caspian Tern  
Rock Pigeon  
Mourning Dove\*  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
Black-billed Cuckoo  
Great Horned Owl  
Barred Owl  
Common Nighthawk  
Ruby-throated hummingbird  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
Olive-sided Flycatcher  
Eastern Wood-Pewee  
Least Flycatcher  
Willow Flycatcher  
Eastern Phoebe  
Great Crested Flycatcher  
Eastern Kingbird  
Horned Lark  
Purple Martin  
Tree Swallow\*  
Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
Bank Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
Barn Swallow\*  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Common Raven  
Black-capped Chickadee\*  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
Brown Creeper  
House Wren\*  
Winter Wren  
Sedge Wren  
Marsh Wren

Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
Eastern Bluebird\*  
Veery  
Hermit Thrush  
Swainson's Thrush  
Wood Thrush  
Gray-cheeked Thrush  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Brown Thrasher  
Cedar Waxwing  
Northern Shrike  
European Starling  
Solitary Vireo  
Philadelphia Vireo  
Yellow-throated Vireo  
Warbling Vireo\*  
Red-eyed Vireo\*  
Nashville Warbler  
Northern Parula  
Yellow Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Magnolia Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Blackburnian Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Bay-breasted Warbler  
Blackpoll Warbler  
Black and White Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
American Redstart  
Ovenbird  
Common Yellowthroat  
Wilson's Warbler  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Connecticut Warbler  
Northern Waterthrush  
Northern Cardinal  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Dickcissel  
Eastern Towhee  
American Tree Sparrow  
Chipping Sparrow\*

Clay-colored Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Grasshopper Sparrow  
Fox Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
Song Sparrow\*  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Lark Sparrow\*  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Snow Bunting  
Bobolink  
Red-winged Blackbird\*  
Brewer's Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Western Meadowlark  
Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Common Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Baltimore Oriole\*  
House Finch  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

**162 Species**

**IBA SITE CRITERIA** - Check all that apply. Please read [criteria](#) before completing this section.

	MN-1. Significant concentrations of breeding, migrating or wintering:
	(a) waterfowl
	(b) shorebirds
	(c) waterbirds
	(d) migratory raptors or cranes
X	(e) species diversity
	(f) significant numbers
	MN-2a. Endangered, threatened or species of special concern
	MN-2b. Species of conservation concern
	MN-3. Rare, threatened, or unique habitat assemblages
X	MN-4. Long-term research, monitoring or urban value

:

**SPECIES OF IMPORTANCE** - Please list the criteria (from previous table) you are providing data for, the species this site is important for, the season (s), the maximum daily or seasonal numbers, the year (s) these counts occurred, the accuracy of the counts and references for the data. For criteria MN-3 please indicate the habitat type as well as the species or species assemblages. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

CRITERIA	SPECIES	SEASON <sup>1</sup>	MAX. NUMBERS (Specify daily or seasonal)	YEAR(S)	ACCURACY <sup>2</sup>	REFERENCES <sup>3</sup>
MN-1e	A total of 162	Summer, FM, W Summer, SM	Seasonal Seasonal	1996 1997	A A.	1. 1.
MN-4b	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above	A.	1.

<sup>1</sup>Season (on which quantitative data are based): B=Breeding, W=Winter, SM=Spring Migration, FM=Fall Migration.

<sup>2</sup>Accuracy: R=Rough Estimate, G=Good Estimate, A= Accurate Count or Estimate

<sup>3</sup>Cite references by number listed below.

**REFERENCES** - Please list the references used to substantiate the data above. Use the reference number below to fill in reference column above. Give full citation including year, author, source and page number where appropriate. Examples of references would include; Breeding Bird Survey, Christmas Bird Count, articles from the Loon or other ornithological journals, Agency report or data, personal observation.

1	Sellers, J. 1997. The Birds of TCAAP; Results of a Year-long Survey of Birds at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant, June, 1996 to June, 1997. pgs 1-5.
2	Oehlenschlager, R.J., Vanderbosch, N.J. and Jannett, F.J., Jr. 1997. Bird Observations at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP), Arden Hills 1995 and 1996. The Loon 69:57-61.
3	Minnesota Army National Guard. 2001 Final Integrated natural Resources Management Plan And Environmental Assessment. pgs 131-135.

### **HABITAT AND LAND USE**

<b>Major Habitat Types:</b> Please indicate approx. % of the total area for all major habitat types and with an X for minor habitat types.		<b>Major Land Uses:</b> Please indicate all major land uses with an X.	
22.1%	Upland Deciduous Forest (e.g. Maple-basswood, oak, aspen, birch, northern hardwoods)		Agriculture
	Lowland Deciduous Forest (includes floodplain forest, ash swamp)		Fisheries/Aquaculture
	Upland Mixed Deciduous/Conifer Forest		Forestry
	Lowland Mixed Deciduous/Conifer Forest	X	Hunting/Fishing-open to bow hunting
1%	Upland Coniferous Forest	X	Military- all owned by the National Guard
	Lowland Coniferous Forest (includes tamarack, black spruce, and white cedar swamps)		Nature Conservation/Research
	Open bog/poor fen	X	Tourism/Recreation-limited
	Rich fen (narrow-leaved sedges)		Industrial/Transport Urban/
4.1%	Shrub Swamp	X	Water management-gravel pit lake and water tower - reservoir
.2%	Lowland (wet) Native Prairie		Livestock

1.8%	Wet Meadows (broad-leaved sedges)	X	Mining- gravel pit
6.4%	Marsh (cattail/mixed emergent)		
	Upland Native Prairie (includes dry, mesic, and brush prairie)	<b>Land Ownership/Management:</b> check all that apply	
	Upland Savanna (includes jack pine savanna, oak savanna, and aspen openings)	X	State – on lease from the Federal Gov.
48,3%	Grassland (non-native, planted)	X	Federal- on lease to the state
	Agriculture		Municipal
	Cliff/Talus		County
	River/Stream (includes river shore)		Private
8.9%	Lake (includes lake shore)		Non-profit
	Sewage Pond		Other (explain)

### **CONSERVATION AND THREATS**

Please note all threats to the site and if it is of Low, Medium, High, or Unknown importance.

	<b>THREAT</b>		<b>THREAT</b>
L	Abandonment/ reduction of land management	M	Invasive or non-native plants
	Agricultural intensification/ expansion		Natural pests/disease
	Aquaculture/ fisheries (overfishing)		Overgrazing
	Cellular/Wind Towers/Power Lines		Predators
	Construction/ impact of dike/ dam		Pesticides
	Deforestation		Recreation/ tourism
	Disturbance to birds		Selective logging/ cutting
	Drainage		Succession
	Extraction industry		Unsustainable exploitation
	Groundwater		Wetland loss

	abstraction		
H	Industrialization/ urbanization	M	Other
	Introduced animals or feral pets		Unknown

**Please describe the extent of these threats, their seriousness, and any steps being taken to address them. Attach additional sheets if necessary.**

Land management - Currently AHATS is maintained by the National Guard and by St. Paul Audubon volunteers. The Guard clears the roads and oversees the grounds. Prescribed burns are used to enhance degraded prairie remnants, and prairie replants have been done by Craig Andresen. The burns have been conducted with the prodding of Audubon members over the last 12 years. Some years, funding for the burns has been provided by the U.S. Army or the Minnesota National Guard. Craig Andresen has acquired some Minnesota DNR grants, and other years the prescribed burning has been done pro bono by Andresen and his firm. The future of management activities at the site is precarious without Audubon's encouragement. There is the risk that the burns, because they are done on a volunteer basis, may not be continued indefinitely.

Urbanization – Due to its size and location, there is always the threat of development. Ramsey County has purchased a 113-acre northwest parcel of TCAAP from the Army and is planning some kind of development for it. Whether there will be future requests for further development of TCAAP is unknown at this time, but there are plans for this on the Arden Hills city web site. The Arden Hills community is working with the National Guard to protect the open space of AHATS.

Invasive plants – There is a continued need for clearing buckthorn, excessive small tree growth, and other invasive species from the site. This is being carried out on a volunteer basis.

Ground water and other contamination - Due to the operations conducted by the U.S. Army over the years, contaminated water in the aquifer is continually filtered and purified. The U.S. Army is conducting this process. There are also contaminated sites that are marked and left untouched by users of the site.

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

**Nonavian Flora and Fauna: List important, rare, or unusual plant and animal species and their significance at this site. Information for some sites can be obtained from the MN DNR Natural Heritage Database (contact Mark Martell or Sarah Hoffmann sarah.Hoffmann@dnr.state.mn.us for request form).**

Blanding's turtles are commonly seen in AHATS, and are known to traverse the connection between the Rice Creek corridor to the north and AHATS. The Plains Pocket Mouse, a threatened species, also resides on the site.

There are some rare native plant species on the site as well.

**Please describe any social, cultural, economic, or historic issues associated with this site.**

The late Congressman Bruce Vento and the Reuse Committee worked out a detailed plan for TCAAP, known as the Vento Plan, in 1995. This plan is available on the Arden Hills city web site.

## NOMINATOR

### INFORMATION

<b>NAME:</b> Ben G. Zimmerman, with participation from Craig Andresen, Julian Sellers, and Joan Galli.	<b>ADDRESS:</b> 2225 Folwell Ave.
<b>CITY:</b> Falcon Heights	<b>STATE, ZIP:</b> MN 55108
<b>EMAIL:</b> zimme003@umn.edu	<b>AFFILIATION:</b> All individuals named are members of the St. Paul Audubon Society.
<b>PHONE:</b> 651 645 1662	<b>FAX:</b>

### LANDOWNER/MANAGER CONTACTS

<b>Name/Group:</b> Lt. Colonel Rich Weaver/Dave Hamernick/MN Army National Guard	<b>Name/Group:</b>
<b>Address:</b> 15,000 Highway 115 No., Camp Ripley, /Arden Hills City Hall, W. Highway 96	<b>Address:</b>
<b>City/State/Zip:</b> 15000 Highway 115 No., Little Falls, MN, /Arden Hills, MN, 55112	<b>City/State/Zip:</b>
<b>Phone:</b> Dave Hamernick's cell, 651 775 5017	<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<b>Email:</b>

Have you discussed the nomination of this site with the landowner/manager? Y

Does the landowner/manager agree to the nomination of this site as an IBA? Y

### LOCAL GROUPS WITH A CONSERVATION INTEREST IN THIS SITE

<b>Name/Group:</b> St. Paul Audubon Society	<b>Name/Group:</b> Sierra Club
<b>Website Address:</b> www.saintpaulaudubon.net	<b>Address:</b> Franklin Ave.
<b>City/State/Zip:</b>	<b>City/State/Zip:</b> Mpls., MN 55455
<b>Phone:</b> 651 291 2596	<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<b>Email:</b>

Other remarks or comments:

***Thank You For Your Help***