



**Ecology  
Action  
Centre**

## **Media Release**

**For immediate release  
July 23, 2019**

### **Shelburne County, Nova Scotia Clearcut Would Violate *Migratory Bird Convention Act***

*Lockeport, NS* - A survey of birds in a forest on public land slated to be clearcut found 31 species, 25 of which are migratory species protected under the *Migratory Bird Convention Act*. Birds identified included warblers, vireos, thrushes and finches.

"Nova Scotia's Minister of Lands and Forestry, Iain Rankin has told us we need to produce scientific information to protect this forest," stated Shelly Hipson of the People for Ecological Forestry in Southwest Nova Scotia. "We identified numerous migratory birds that are likely breeding in this area approved for cutting. If this forest was cut, hundreds of nests and young would be destroyed."

According to protocols produced by the Maritimes [Breeding Bird Atlas: Guide for Atlasers](#), singing birds are a "possible" sign of breeding. Birds carrying food are a "confirmed" sign of breeding. The surveyors, who included birders with a cumulative birding expertise of over 160 years, found signs of both. The birders identified birds such as the magnolia warbler, hermit thrush, gray jay, and the blue-headed vireo.

"I wrote to Minister Rankin in May highlighting the section of the Migratory Birds Convention Act relating to disturbance and harm of breeding birds, their eggs, and nests and asked that harvesting plans be halted. I also alerted him to the guidance provided by the Canadian Wildlife Service with regard to protecting breeding birds," states Chris Curry, local resident and amateur birdwatcher. "So far there has been no response, so we had to gather the information ourselves."

"There is nothing in place that would have stopped this forest from being cut any day now, in clear contravention of Canada's obligation to protect these birds," states Gretchen Fitzgerald, National Program Director of Sierra Club Canada Foundation. "We are calling on the federal and provincial governments to intervene to protect these birds and others that are threatened by clearcutting."

The groups have sent a letter to Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, Catherine McKenna, Minister of Lands and Forestry, Iain Rankin and the Canadian Wildlife

Service which oversees the MCBA. The letter, prepared by Ecojustice, requests that the Ministers protect the breeding birds. The survey results are attached to the letter (and also to this press release).

“I don’t think most Canadians realize that clearcutting operations that occur between April and August are invariably destroying the nests and young of migratory birds,” observes Mark Butler, long-time birder and Policy Director with Ecology Action Centre. “These are birds that are also losing habitat on their wintering grounds in Central and South America.”

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[Attachment: letter](#)

For more information, please contact

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