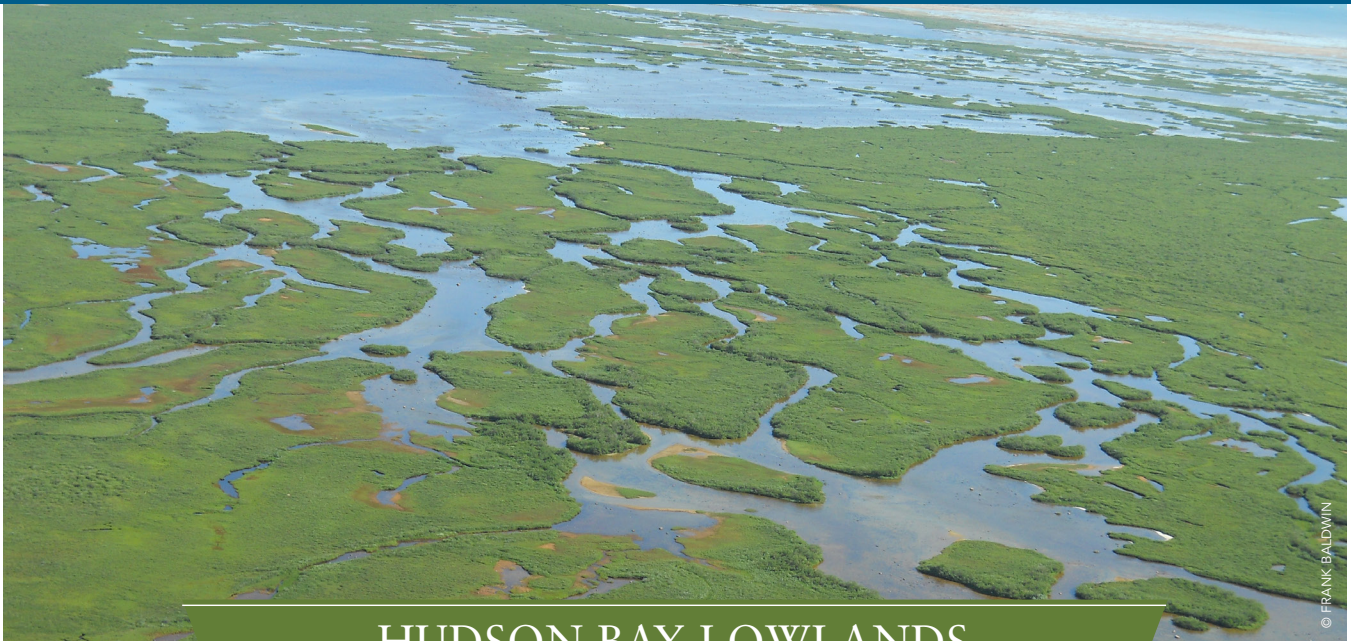


Manitoba's Blue Mosaic

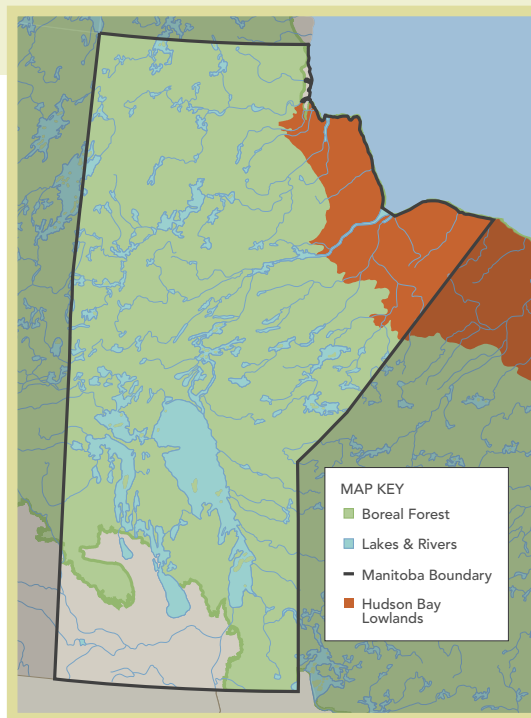


HUDSON BAY LOWLANDS

The Hudson Bay Lowlands region, which stretches from just north of Churchill and hugs the Hudson Bay coastland all the way down into Ontario, is one of the largest and truly unique wetland ecosystems anywhere in the world.

When joined with its Ontario and Quebec counterparts, the Hudson Bay Lowlands form the third largest wetland network and single largest peatland system on Earth. These peatlands make the region one of the most carbon-dense terrestrial ecosystems on the planet.

The abundance of wetlands and waterways throughout the region provide habitat for a rich and unique combination of wildlife, particularly birds. The productive marine coastline supports exceptional concentrations of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. Species like Hudsonian Godwit and Red Knot feed here to fuel journeys to wintering grounds in southern South America. Black Scoters, Lesser Snow Geese, and a host of other waterfowl are also highly reliant on the shoreline habitats here for refueling before making shorter migrations to winter homes in the United States.



Restricted-range species like Harris's Sparrow and Smith's Longspur reach their southeastern limits here, and species such as the Palm Warbler thrive in the vast peatland expanses across the region. The region's long stretches of coastal marshes are a stronghold for the mysterious and rarely seen Yellow Rail. The rivers and wetlands of the region provide a critical role in purifying and adding nutrients to water draining into Hudson Bay. The estuaries of Manitoba's major boreal rivers, particularly the Churchill, provide critical support during the calving stages of the iconic beluga whale. They also support remarkable populations of the ringed seal,

which comprise the majority of the diet for the polar bears that have put Churchill on the map as an internationally renowned tourist destination.



This fact sheet was derived from a subsection in *Manitoba's Blue Mosaic: Six Aquatic Strongholds of Manitoba's Boreal Forest*, a comprehensive report summarizing the vast aquatic values of Manitoba's boreal forest. For more information and literature cited, please refer to the full report.

Wells, J., D. Childs, C. Smith, S.M. Siegers, and P. Badiou. 2014. *Manitoba's Blue Mosaic: Six Aquatic Strongholds of Manitoba's Boreal Forest*. Boreal Songbird Initiative, Seattle, Washington, and Ducks Unlimited Canada, Stonewall, Manitoba.

The report is also viewable online at:
<http://borealbirds.org/sites/default/files/pubs/mb-report.pdf>

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