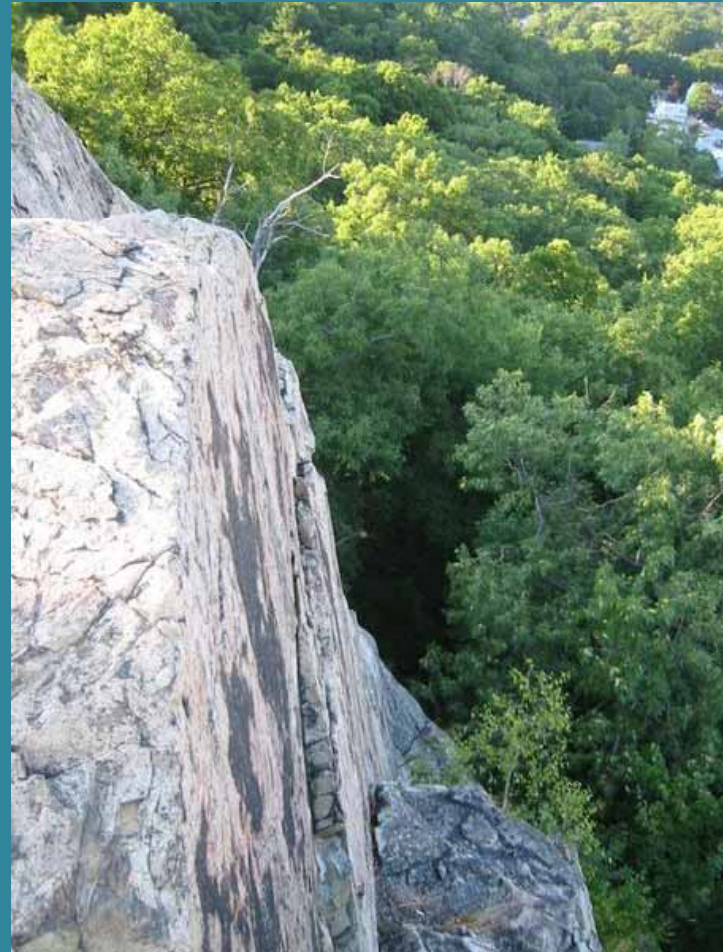


# The Middlesex Fells:

*A site for all seasons...*



## In 1879...

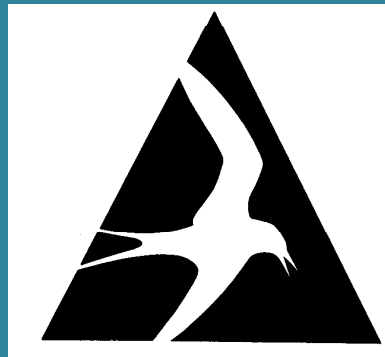
*“Something like five miles northerly from Boston lies a great tract of country, all stony hills and table-lands, almost uninhabited, and of wonderful picturesqueness, and wild rugged beauty.”* Sylvester Baxter, *Boston Herald Supplement*

- **Today DCR seeks** *“to protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources,” including the 2575 acres of diverse habitats that comprise the Middlesex Fells.*



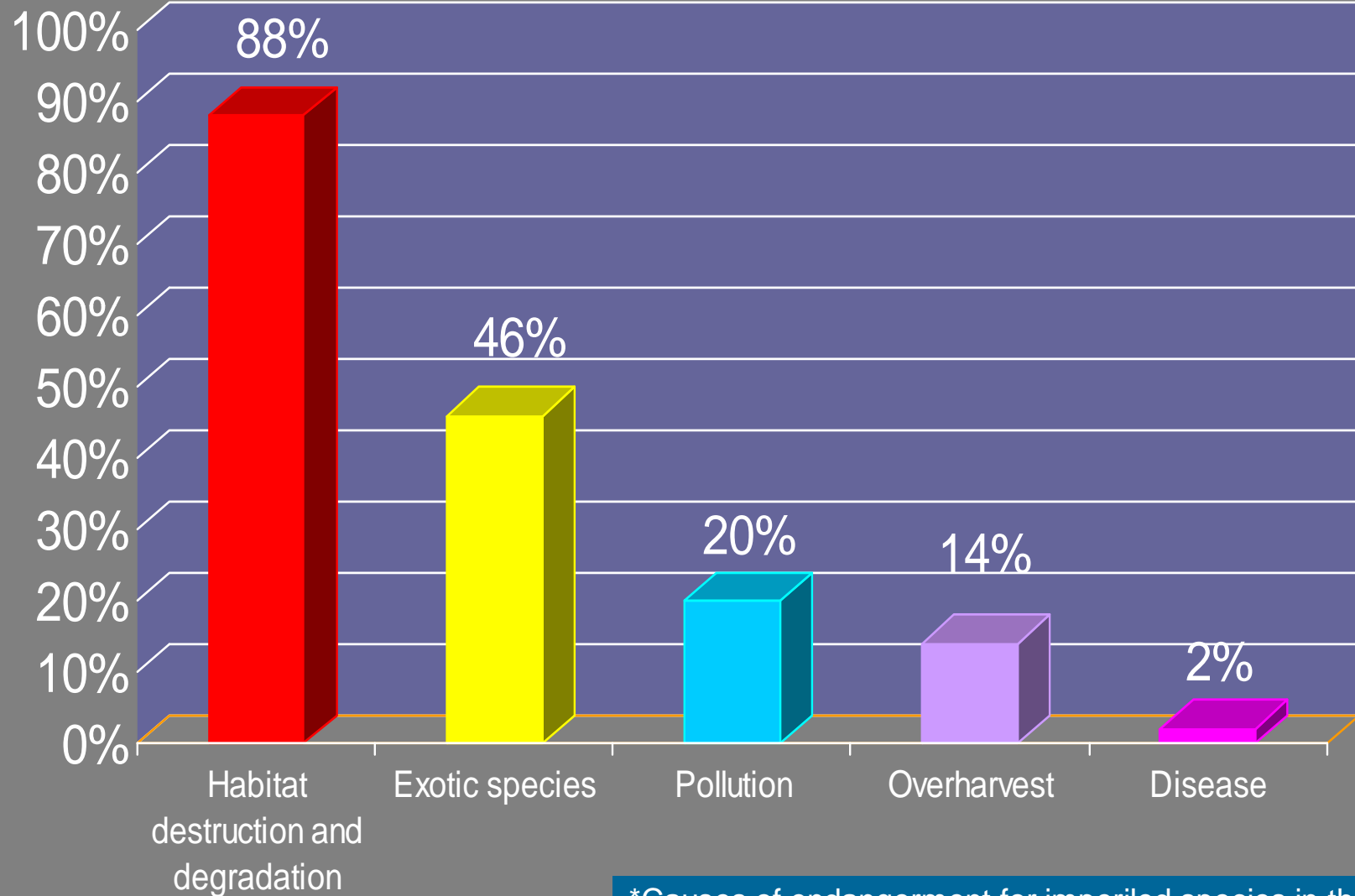
# IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

*Saving Birds and their Habitats*



Massachusetts Audubon Society

# Why Focus on Sites?



\*Causes of endangerment for imperiled species in the U.S.  
Source: Environmental Defense Fund

# IBAs are:

- *Sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species*
- *Include sites for breeding, wintering, or migrating birds*
- *May be a few acres or thousands of acres in size*
- *May be public or private, protected or unprotected*



# IBA Criteria based on vulnerabilities, or sites that provide avian habitat

- *Species with a restricted range*
- *Species of conservation concern*
- *Species in unique habitats*
- *Species occurring in high densities*



# Fells Features...

- *Fells comprised of 2575 acres of diverse habitat including oak/conifer forest, early successional scrubland, cultural grassland, and several wetland habitat types.*
- *Designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) because of its extensive, relatively unfragmented character and its significance as a stopover site for migratory landbirds (e.g., warblers).*

# Selected Threats to Birds in New England

- *Fragmentation and loss of habitat \**
- *Invasive species \**
- *Natural succession \**
- *Glass and tall lighted structures*
- *Towers, wind farms, and related obstacles*
- *Cats and human camp followers*
- *White-tailed Deer and over-grazing in forests*

# Habitat fragmentation



# MIDDLESEX FELLS RESERVATION



# Natural succession



# Shrubland specialists threatened by succession...



*Brown Thrasher*

*Prairie Warbler*

*Field Sparrow*

# Invasive species (Buckthorn)




# Native Viburnum



# Management Planning Considerations

- *Identify existing avian habitat needs and threats*
- *Create a plan for maintaining or restoring these habitat needs wherever possible*
- *Consider long-term options for managing, restoring, or enhancing existing habitats*
- *Initiate avian monitoring program to evaluate success over time*



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## Massachusetts Important Bird Areas



### What is an IBA?

An IBA (Important Bird Area) is a site providing essential habitat to one or more species of breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. The primary goals of the IBA program are:

- To identify, nominate, and designate key sites that contribute to the preservation of significant bird populations or communities.
- To provide information that will help land managers evaluate areas for habitat management and/or land acquisition.
- To activate public and private participation in bird conservation efforts.
- To provide public education and community outreach opportunities.

**i** New: [View site descriptions and downloadable maps for each IBA](#)

The Massachusetts Important Bird Area Program (IBA) is carried out cooperatively by staff from Mass Audubon, a volunteer Technical Committee and various partner organizations

The IBA concept was developed by BirdLife International in 1985 as a model for bird conservation. By 2000, BirdLife and its European partners identified 3,400 IBA sites in



IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

IB A

This site is part of a global network of places recognized for their outstanding value to bird conservation.



Mass Audubon

*Protecting the Nature of Massachusetts*

This program is conducted in partnership with the National Audubon Society.