

**REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION OF CRITICAL HABITAT
TECHNOPARC WETLANDS COMPLEX, SAINT-LAURENT QUEBEC.**

WHEREAS the Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) is designated as a threatened species by COSEWIC and is listed as such under Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* since 2003;

WHEREAS in application of *SARA*, the Government of Canada has adopted the 2014 *Recovery strategy for the Least Bittern (Ixobrychu exilis) in Canada (The Strategy)*;

WHEREAS the *Strategy* calls for the identification and protection of *critical habitat* for the preservation and recovery of the Least Bittern species in Canada;

WHEREAS the *Strategy* identifies critical habitat for the Least Bittern as corresponding to the following breeding activity:

- One record of confirmed breeding since 2001; OR
- Two records of probable breeding in any single year since 2001; OR
- One record of probable breeding in each of two separate years within a 5 year period

WHEREAS on July 14th 2017, breeding of the Least Bittern has been confirmed and documented for the second consecutive year (also on July 12th 2016) in the Technoparc Wetland Complex (*Marais Des Sources* and *Étang aux Hérons* locations). Please see attached summary of sightings of Least Bittern by professional ornithologists;

WHEREAS the Technoparc Wetlands Complex and the 500 meter minimal critical habitat protection zone is under direct threat of upcoming road and landfill work for the expansion of Technoparc Montreal's industrial park in September 2017;

WHEREAS the Technoparc Wetlands Complex conforms to all Suitability and Occupancy criteria in the *Strategy*;

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Biological Diversity* and the *Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in the United States (U.S.) and Canada* which crystalizes its obligation to undertake preservation measures to prevent irreversible damage that the Technoparc Montreal's Industrial Park expansion is threatening on the Least Bitterns' critical habitat;

WHEREAS Canadian courts have enforced the precautionary principle codified in *SARA* and put forward by these International Conventions;

WHEREAS part of the Technoparc Wetlands complex are also located on federal land rented to Aéroports de Montréal;

WHEREAS both Technoparc Montreal and Aéroports de Montréal, be it intentionally or not, have in the past conducted wildlife studies in the early spring and late fall effectively minimizing any record of Migratory Birds on their territory;

WHEREAS the Quebec provincial government offers no protection to designated threatened species in the Technoparc Wetlands Complex;

WHEREAS destruction and encroachment of the Least Bittern's critical habitat is imminent on both the federal and provincial lands of the Technoparc Wetlands Complex;

We, the undersigned therefore request that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada:

- 1- Proceed with the immediate protection of the Least Bittern's critical habitat in the Technoparc Wetlands complex;
- 2- Protect and designate as critical habitat the 500 meter radius around the "*Marais Des Sources*" marsh located on federal land;
- 3- Protect and designate as critical habitat the 500 meter radius around the "*Étang aux Hérons*" marsh located on provincial land;
- 4- Make an Emergency Order for the protection of the Least Bittern on provincial and federal lands in the Technoparc Wetlands Complex;

The Sierra Club of Quebec

Signed on this 18th day of July 2017.

Dimitri Roussopoulos, Co-Chair

Dimitri Roussopoulos

Dr. Isabelle-Anne Bisson, Co-chair



Information on Least Bittern sightings (>80 photos available upon request) in Technoparc Wetland Complex, Montreal:

2016

- **Total of 21 days of observations in one wetland** (May 28th to August 27th):
 - **4-6 individuals** observed at *Marais des Sources* on two different days;
 - **Nesting pair confirmed on 12 July**
- **Population** is estimated to be **the largest colony on the island of Montreal.**
- Number of eBird entries (separate observers) for Least Bittern sightings: **60**

2017 (up to 16 July)

- **Total of 34 days of** combined observations at two different wetlands – *Marais des Sources* and *Étang aux Hérons* (May 4th to July 16th);
 - **4-6 individuals** observed on two different days;
 - **Nesting confirmed on 14 July, with juveniles observed;**
- **Population** is **still** estimated to be **the largest colony on the island of Montreal.**
- Number of eBird entries (separate observers) for Least Bittern sightings: **80**