PREFACE

Stretching across 1.5 billion acres of Canada and Alaska, North America's boreal is the world's largest remaining intact primary forest. This vast ecosystem is one of the last global havens for large herds of migratory caribou and teems with moose, wolves, and grizzly bears. Uncountable pristine lakes, rivers, and wetlands harbor equally robust freshwater fisheries. And, not surprisingly, this vast refuge for nature provides critical habitat for billions of birds.

The majority of birds found in the boreal forests of Canada and Alaska migrate south after the breeding season, where they appear as seasonal visitors to millions of people across the United States, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. In order to preserve the spectacle and miracle of these annual sojourns, all nations along the migratory route must act as stewards of the passageway connecting their habitats.

Canada has taken important, world-leading steps in the effort to ensure that migrating birds will have ample and appropriate nesting and rearing habitat. Aboriginal governments and communities

throughout Canada have developed land-use plans specifically to protect habitat for birds and other wildlife. The provinces of Ontario and Quebec have pledged to work with First Nations to conserve hundreds of millions of acres of boreal habitat, and in the Northwest Territories, the federal government has worked with aboriginal communities to establish tens of millions of acres of protected areas.

Thanks to these visionary efforts, the future of the North American boreal forest looks promising, but Canada and the United States have more work to do, and to that end, we must continue to learn more about this great forest and its inhabitants. This book does much to advance our understanding of boreal bird biology and conservation. I hope that it will serve as a model in exploring new and interesting facets of the lives of the migratory birds that grace our hemisphere.

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