The Tobeatic Sanctuary was created in 1927. At the time, it was considered to be one of the last parts of the province where beaver were found in significant numbers. Beaver were live-trapped here and in other parts of western Nova Scotia and reintroduced to parts of the province where they had been extirpated. In 1968 the sanctuary designation was changed to wildlife management area. This wildlife management area has been used for a variety of studies of wildlife and habitat. Since 1990 there has been a short hunting season each fall with muzzle loading firearms only. Other hunting and trapping are prohibited. In 1998 almost half of the management area became part of the Tobeatic Wilderness Area.
The total area of the wildlife management area is 46,027 hectares. Of this, 10,854 hectares are privately owned. The remainder is owned by the Province. There are 22,233 hectares that have a designation both as a wildlife management area and as a wilderness area. The Shelburne River, a Canadian Heritage River, forms the boundary for about 50 kilometres.

The wildlife management area includes 32,607 hectares of forested land. There are 6165 hectares of lakes and ponds, 3958 hectares of wetlands and 3284 hectares of barrens.