



IBA Coordinator's Report

October, 2008

General: The big event this month was the Colonial Coast Bird and Nature Festival (CCBNF). Although a broken leg greatly limited what I could do, I was able to visit 2 IBAs, meet a lot of managers, birders and conservationists around the coast and inform a lot of people about the IBA. This month I've sent out a letter of interest (LOI) and have been researching which grant to apply for next. I visited one potential IBA. My visit to St. Catherine's was particularly useful as I think I have set up a good working relationship with resident naturalist Jen Hilburn, who is getting some data to me, and is planning some future monitoring efforts with my input. I will meet with her again November 17.

Website: Thanks to Jay, I learned that we have a lot of room available to us. So we will go ahead and start putting some GIS work on it as it comes in from the folks at UGA.

Fundraising & Donations:

Tellabs Foundation: We sent an LOI for a major grant. Their next board meeting is in January, at which time they will invite some LOI senders to submit full proposals.

Sapelo Island Foundation: Has not yet decided on which applicants' sites they wish to visit.

Donation box: Many visitors donate during the CCBNF.

www.goodsearch.com is a search engine which will make a small donation to the IBA program for every time someone uses it and selects us as their charity of choice. www.goodshop.com is an online marketplace that donates a percentage of your purchase to the Georgia IBA program. You can choose from hundreds of merchants. I will put together an announcement about these, to be distributed after it is accepted by Catharine Brockman Kuchar. Until then, committee members can feel free to look into it and use it.

EBird: As of Thursday, October 30, there have been 499 lists entered from Georgia. The state is now in the top 25 of states and provinces. We are continuing to encourage people to use this tool.

While I have had no role in this, it is important to note that the bird observation databases AviSys and Birdbase have recently released utilities which allow users to upload their

observations to EBird. Please help spread the word – get folks to send their info to EBird, so that scientists across the country have access to this information.

Programs:

I have presentations planned at: Coastal Audubon (November 18), Albany Audubon (January 8), Oxbow Meadows (Nov 14-15), and GOS winter meeting (Jan 16).

Tentatively planned presentations include: Ocmulgee Audubon (likely February), the Redbone Community Club in Lamar County (likely in November), and Friends of High Falls Lake (likely January 30).

Conservation Issues

Possible changes to Cumberland Island access: Although time prevented me from putting together a letter writing campaign as I did for Brawley Mountain, I did send a letter encouraging the Park Service to minimize the number of trips around the island, ensure adequate supervision of the increase visitation, and not provide trips to locations other than those mandated by the very unfortunate legislation that removed wilderness status from parts of the island.

Jekyll Island: The poor economy likely was an ally in the recent decision to greatly reduce the foot print of development. The Developer, Linger Longer, has accepted a development plan that will be much less harmful to the birds. We will continue to stay informed on this important issue.

Volunteer events

Red Knot/American Oystercatcher (AMOY) I will be meeting with Brad Winn during the American Oystercatcher Working Group meeting November 17-19. I have heard of a lot of interest in this project.

Native Warm Season Grass Approximately 15 people are signed up to help at both locations next weekend. I am receiving a lot of support from both Panola Mountain and Sprewell Bluff State Parks. At Panola they will waive the parking fee for volunteers and shuttle them in and out, as well as provide help and the bags.

Privet removal at Joe Kurz: I've still not heard back from Fred Granitz about this, though he has expressed a lot of interest. Hopefully DNR will provide the proper herbicide.

Visits

Colonial Coast Bird and Nature Festival: I met face-to-face with a number of folks I've emailed with, including members of the Coastal and Ogeechee Audubons. I was able to answer many of questions about the IBA program for the general public.

Jonathan Gray and Sarah Kohl did a nice job with the display board! I plan to set it up whenever I do presentations. It was not made with updates in mind, so I figure we'll get a year or two out of it. On Saturday he also set up a laptop with slide show of shrike banding.

On Friday there was a shrike outside the Rookery, on the side with all the windows, where the Swarovski scopes were set up. Tim Keyes helped me set up the trap. We caught the bird, with dozens of folks watching. I banded it at the IBA table with approximately 40 people crowded around, and then released it. It was pretty exciting, and I think some folks will remember the IBA just a bit more clearly.

The 4H center provided me free room for 2 nights.

I put a small donation box on the table but did not push the donation verbally at all.

I decided to use up the 163 old brochures I found, rather than recycling them and having new ones printed at this time (environmental and financial reasons) so we placed labels with current contact information over the old information, and put them out at the CCBNF. Over 3/4 were taken, so now I'll go ahead and get new ones printed. Once they are in, I'll recycle the rest of the old.

Cochran Shoals. This site has received much attention in recent weeks. Ken Blankenship (webmaster of the www.wingsoverga.com website) is working on a species checklist for NPS. He is convinced that the site meets IBA criteria and is working on nominating it. He and NPS personnel already have a signage plan in place, in the event that he IBA committee accepts it. I met Ken there for a tour of some of its more notable features.

Jared Fisher, who made the Google Earth map of IBAs on our website, is working on improving the way data are vetted on EBird. He and I met after my trip to Cochran Shoals, so that he could show me some of the ways to search the database, as well as some of the issues with the database - and their resolutions.

IBA Graduate Assistantship: With guidance from Bob Cooper, Nathan Klaus and myself, is zeroing in on his thesis study question. He is still considering the use of radio telemetry and stable radioisotope analysis. The former would give us a more detailed picture of shrike territories than we have been able to form based on our visual observations and banding. The latter will help determine with more certainty the ratio of birds which migrate into Georgia vs those which are resident. Very little work has been done on this, and most of it has been inconclusive.

IBA COMMITTEE:

Giff Beaton
Ken Blankenship
Mike Chapman
Bob Cooper
Jim Flynn
Jim Gilreath
Noel Holcomb
Myra Hundley

Chuck Hunter
Nathan Klaus
Vanessa Lane
Priscilla Marshall
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