



Georgia Important Bird Area Coordinator's Report

December, 2008

General:

I participated in 7 Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) this year, including three IBAs: Piedmont NWR, Eufaula NWR, Cohutta Wilderness WMA in Chattahoochee NF. CBCs, while not set up for statistical purposes, are one of the most important tools we have to monitor population trends of many bird species. In January I will be helping out with sparrow work at Paulk's Pasture and also with the annual shorebird count.

Our first season of fall banding at Joe Kurz WMA went well, and we hope winter will be just as successful. You should already have received the annual banding report; if you have not, please contact me.

I have completed 3 online courses necessary to obtain a red card so I can assist in controlled burns, and will have conduct my field work the last week of January. Thus, I'll be able to assist with prescribed fires on any of our IBAs. Georgia DNR has provided me the course and all the equipment at no cost, provided I assist with a minimum of 4 burns in 2009 and again in 2010.

I would like to congratulate Noel Holcomb on his upcoming retirement. The conservation community will surely miss his voice and leadership at DNR. Thanks for all you have done.

Ed Dericho is now the official species data entry volunteer for the IBA program. He and I spent several hours at Judy's house on December 4. She was gracious enough to train us and offer lots of insight from her 8 years of valuable service. Ed seems eager to go and I think he'll do a wonderful job! He has already entered a lot of data from past shorebird counts.

Website: No major changes this month

Global IBAs: With my help, Ian Hartzler has officially nominated as Global IBAs.

Fundraising & Donations:

I am having a very difficult time finding grant money. While we have received a good deal of in-kind contributions (lodging, meals, etc) it seems that cash is hard to come by in this sour economy. The good news is that AAS is working hard to get ready for an audit. Unfortunately,

this hard work will not result in our ability to apply for many grants for 3-4 more years. If you have any suggestions, I'd love to hear them.

Disney: Our LOI for a major grant application was turned down without comment.

Tellabs Foundation: We are still waiting for the results of their January board meeting decision to see if they will invite us to submit a full proposal.

www.goodsearch.com and www.goodshop.com: We are signed up and at least a handful of people are using this search engine. They send out checks annually to groups who have "earned" at least \$10. Since we receive approximately \$0.01 per search, we likely did not meet that this year. I hope that folks will remember this while Christmas shopping. Please consider using these services! I use them and so far have been pleased.

Programs:

I did not present to any groups during December. Most groups do not meet, or have a party in lieu of their regular meetings. I spent a good deal of time with CBCs and trying to coordinate monitoring efforts.

I will present to Albany Audubon on January 8, GOS at the Tybee Island meeting January 16-19 and Atlanta Audubon on February 22. I am still waiting for confirmation of speaking at High Falls Lake Association and the Redbone Community Club.

Conservation Issues

Spewell Bluff State Park: I received several requests to re-print a note I sent to the GABO listserv. I modified my letter (which was aimed at birders) for the general public and it ran in several newspapers and newsletters. Members of my local community have stopped me in my travels to thank me. Several informed me that this spurred them to write letters of their own. I took this opportunity to inform them of the IBA program.

Flint River Dam: My US Congressman replied to my letter on this subject by saying that he supports the dam. I am sharing this letter with members of my community, to urge them to take action.

Joe Kurz WMA Update: The Barn Owl box is still up, indicating the installation methods were successful. We have identified 2 other locations in Joe Kurz and received permission for installation once boxes are available. The 2008 fall banding went well despite unforgiving weather. As this is the first time banding has been conducted here in the fall, we were very happy with the results. We have recaptured several birds which were banded during the breeding season, which indicates we will have a great opportunity to monitor these apparently non-migratory individuals. We did not know what to expect since even non-migratory species such as Northern Cardinals do often move locally with the seasons.

Phinizy Swamp: I have received questions regarding some new management practices at this location. Apparently a large amount of emergent vegetation has been removed with the goal of reducing bird populations, which is perceived as a method of reducing the hazard of airplane collisions. I am investigating the matter with help of others and may comment or

request a meeting with the managers to see if there is a way to prevent human tragedy without devastating bird populations.

Volunteer events

Bird Island: We have tentatively planned Saturday March 14 as the day to remove invasive woody plants from this new shorebird nesting/roosting area in the river off Brunswick. I have received a great deal of interest in this project.

IBA Graduate Assistantship: Jonathan has recently sent a grant application to GOS, asking them to fund a radio telemetry study of Loggerhead Shrikes (LOSH). I then sent a letter of recommendation to GOS. In the grant, Jonathan states "Our primary objective is to monitor LOSH in both agricultural and managed habitat for the 2009 breeding season." This will give us a better idea of how LOSH use these very different habitats, which will thus give us insight into the limiting factors of LOSH, and allow us to better work to conserve them. If he receives funding, I will assist Jonathan in his work.

IBA COMMITTEE:

Giff Beaton
Ken Blankenship
Mike Chapman
Bob Cooper
Jim Flynn
Jim Gilreath
Jim Wilson
Brad Winn

Noel Holcomb
Myra Hundley
Chuck Hunter
Nathan Klaus
Vanessa Lane
Priscilla Marshall

Charlie Muise
Debbie Sue Mumford
Bob Sargent
Georgann Schmalz
Lois Stacey
Steve Wagner