



Georgia Important Bird Area Coordinator's Report

January, 2009

General:

I've been helping spread the word about the Rusty Blackbird Blitz, which is a regional effort to document where this species is spending the winter, and collect information about the habitat of those locations.

As part of the preparation for the Blitz, I gleaned all reports of RUBL from the GABO listserv and sent them to Russ Greenberg of NAS.

National Geographic photographer David Liittschwager and shot birds at Joe Kurz WMA, Panola Mountain SP, and my house. He sought photos of several specific species for a story which is due to be published in December. He donated to the IBA in thanks for our help.

I passed the physical and written tests to obtain my "red card" so now I can help with prescribed fire on any of our IBAs. The class fee was waived by DNR, who also donated all the necessary gear, with the understanding that I assist with at least 4 fires.

The banding site at Joe Kurz was successfully burned on January 25. The next day we caught 45 birds in a shortened session – evidence that burning does not drive away birds.

I've been asked to write an article on bird banding for the next issue of the GOS journal *the Oriole*. The article, due the first week of February,

Website: We have a new, easier-to-remember and type URL:
<http://www.atlantaudubon.org/iba/> Thanks to Jim Flynn for getting this done for us.

Global IBAs: Okefenokee NWR, Fort Stewart Military Reservation, Phinizy Swamp, and Piedmont NWR were accepted. Altamaha has been put on hold as we are unable to verify numbers of Painted Buntings there. If you know of anyone who has actual records, to go along with our estimates, please put me in touch with him or her.

Fundraising & Donations:

The Director of the Sapelo Foundation was kind enough to chat with me on the phone recently. She explained that the Foundation is giving no new grants at this time, and has had to pare down on existing grants, due to the current financial atmosphere. She wished us luck and encouraged us to apply again when the economy improves.

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.

Please don't forget about using www.goodsearch.com and www.goodshop.com. When you sign up, choose Audubon Atlanta, and all proceeds will go to the IBA program. I could not sign up as "Georgia IBA" because the name had to match the 501(c)(3) number which they require.

I am nearly finished with a grant proposal to AGL Private Foundation.

I will soon be working on a grant to GOS, due in March.

Programs:

I presented "How to Identify Sparrows", followed by an update on the IBA program for Albany Audubon. It went very well, as determined by good turnout, lots of questions, and statements by group officers. Several members were kind enough to give me a tour of Swamp of Toa. Several participants filled the donation box and the club later mailed us a check

I will attend National Audubon's Eastern Initiative conference at Jekyll Island Feb 11-13. Christa Frangiamore of Jekyll Island Authority arranged to have my lodging donated by the Jekyll Island Hotel, thus making the cost of this trip reasonable. The initiative has asked me to give the group a 10 minute update on the Georgia IBA program.

I will speak about Burrowing Owl research to Atlanta Audubon on February 22. I am still waiting for confirmation of speaking engagements at High Falls Lake Association and the Redbone Community Club. Each group has expressed an interest in my speaking, but neither has committed.

I am interested in speaking with any group that is interested in birds. Feel free to send me contacts, or give my information to groups that may want me to present to them. I have several programs including bird banding, dragonflies, citizen science, burrowing owls, and sparrow identification I do not charge a fee, but happily accept donations to the IBA program, and also request permission to put out a donation box.

Conservation Issues

I have been invited to a meeting to discuss possible management for Golden-winged Warblers in Chattahoochee National Forest. This meeting, scheduled for February 18, was originally requested by some trail groups, which are very vocally opposed to the management. Recall that I instigated a number of letters and emails in support of the management just prior to a deadline for comments. The Southern Environmental Law Center has been hired to fight the management for this sharply declining species. They are trying to prevent "too many bird

people” from attending this meeting, so it is possible my invitation will be rescinded. While the comment period is over, I encourage all experts to continue to express their opinions regarding this work. The opposing groups continue to have some incorrect information on their websites regarding the age and quality of the forest, the status of Golden-winged Warbler, etc.

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.

Privet eradication at Joe Kurz: On Saturday, April 18 we will wage war with privet from 1pm until we are tired. This will occur at my study site, which was burned at the end of January. We will focus on several shrub islands as well as at the southwest corner of the field, which is starting to be invaded by both native and non-native woody plants.

IBA Graduate Assisntantship:

Jonathan continues to make good strides in his education and on his work to determine the status of Loggerhead Shrike (LOSH) populations. He should learn whether GOS has funded his proposal for radio telemetry work in the next month. He has also managed to find a way to get some Stable Radioisotope Analysis performed at no cost. These 2 studies will help us determine the seasonal movement patterns of LOSH in Georgia, and also help determine the difference in populations between agricultural and non-agricultural areas. In turn, this information will guide us in our conservation efforts for LOSH.

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

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