



Georgia Important Bird Area Coordinator's Report

August, 2009

General:

We recently received 500 copies of the new brochure – they look great! They were printed by Copy Prep in Atlanta on 100% post-consumer recycled paper. Thanks to the several of you who donated towards this.

Joel McNeal completed Georgia's eBird filters, which were started by Jared Fischer. They were implemented during the last week of August, and an announcement was made on GABO. These should greatly improve the quality of the database. We anticipate some growing pains as many old records (some of which are obvious mistakes) will be flagged. Joel will review all the flags, and if he needs help, I'll work with him and we'll also ask experts from different areas of the state.

Alison's Huff has been busy in the NAS IBA database again. She has made a lot of important updates. I have done very little with that database in the last year, so this work was badly needed. Thank you Alison!

Monitoring:

I spent August 4, 7, 14, 18, 19, and 21 helping with vegetation work on cane plots at Joe Kurz WMA in Meriwether County, Oconee WMA in Hancock County and Rum Creek WMA in Monroe County.

You should have received my report on the 2009 MAPS banding season at Joe Kurz. If not, or if you have any questions, please let me know. I would love it if any of you could visit us one day and see our work.

Habitat Management:

The study field at Joe Kurz has some native grasses and forbs germinating! But there are also some patches of Bermuda which we missed and will have to re-treat before too long. Due to the tilling (which the manager did against biologist recommendations) there are problems with *Lespedeza bicolor* and Coffee Weed. We have been working on these by hand and with small sprayers. I have a couple of volunteers who will soon be trained to assist in that. We'll have another Volunteer Work Day there to work on some of the remaining privet and other invasives.

The WMA manager sprayed the other field with Arsenal, so the big patches of Bermuda are now big patches of dirt. It will be interesting to see how that field develops.

Fundraising & Donations:

We've received several shipments from TogetherGreen – a banner to hang at Volunteer Conservation Day events, a box of tee-shirts and a box of cloth bags to give to participants.

Roger Givens, who donated matted prints for a fundraiser, has also asked me to identify a number of hummingbird pictures he took out west, in return for a donation to IBA.

Several people have recently asked me how to donate to IBA. All one needs to do is send a check to my address, made out to "AAS" with "IBA" in the subject line.

Please encourage friends and family to use www.goodsearch.com and www.goodshop.com. When you sign up, choose Audubon Society – Atlanta. For each use they will make a donation to the IBA program. I could not sign up as "Georgia IBA" because the name had to match the 501(c)(3) number.

Nominations:

To my knowledge, people are still working on 2 nominations. One is for Sandy Creek Nature Center, Sandy Creek Park and the trail connecting them, all in Clarke County. The other is for Oconee WMA and Rock Hawk. If you would like more information on either of these, I would be happy to put you in touch with the people doing the work.

Programs:

Upcoming plans include:

- speak to Ogeechee Audubon (Savannah) Society on September 15.
- help with Atlanta Audubon's Master Birder classes. I will be leading 3 components, plus a field day in October.
- conduct 2 educational banding demonstrations in upcoming months; Saturday, November 14 at Callaway Gardens, and another on an as-yet undetermined date in Chattahoochee National Forest.
- speak again to Southern Wings in October or March.
- run a 2-day sparrow workshop in November or December. I'll lead one evening in the classroom and one day in the field.
- due to a wedding in the family, I cannot be at the CCBNF, but have some volunteer willing to run the IBA booth.

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 id. 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

Fort Benning – You will recall that the proposed “Maneuver Center of Excellence” to be added to the fort would have caused the removal of dozens of RCW clusters on hundreds of acres. US Fish and wildlife issued a “Jeopardy” verdict. The Record of Decision was supposedly signed. On August 4, but I’m still waiting to obtain a copy. At this point it appears that there is some strange delay in publishing it.

Brawley Mountain: the appeal period ends September 11. As of July 28, there were no appeals.

Volunteer events

Marking and painting RCW cavity trees at Piedmont NWR: We will meet at NWR headquarters at 9am on Saturday, September 26, which is National Public Lands Day. I have registered this event with the National Public Lands Day web site. So far we have 14 people registered.

Woody plant removal: We will work on “Bird Island” off the coast of Brunswick on September 12, with a backup day of the 13th. So far we have 11 people registered.

Phil Delestrez will lead a group of volunteer seed collectors at Pickett’s Mill State Park near Atlanta. We have not yet confirmed a date, but the first Saturday in November is possible.

October 24, Grass seed collection at Spirewell Bluff State Park (Upson County)

October 31, Grass seed collection at Panola Mountain State Park after bird banding.

IBA Assistantship update:

Jonathan, Bob Cooper, Nathan Klaus and I met via conference call to work out a plan for the future of the shrike work, as Jonathan is converting to a non-thesis degree. We agreed upon a plan which would result in the IBA program receiving a good deal of quality work from Jonathan in exchange for funding his assistantship through the end of June, 2010. While Jonathan will not conduct another field season, he will finish analyzing the data from this past full season. He will also coordinate efforts by Tall Timbers interns (overseen by Jim Cox) to help us with a second season, and act as a consultant to Nathan and I as we conduct a second season in Lamar and Monroe Counties.

With our guidance, Jonathan will write a LOSH management plan similar to those he is in the process of completing for Red Knot and American Oystercatcher. This plan will use past research as well as our data after a second field season of data is collected. This management plan will be a document that private landowners as well as public land managers can use to manage for LOSH. This document may also be used in the future to develop public outreach materials to educate the public on LOSH management.

Due to the timing and need for a second field season, Jonathan realizes that his work on this project will necessarily continue beyond the June, 2010 completion of IBA financial obligations.

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
Charlie Muise
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Bob Sargent
Georgann Schmalz
Lois Stacey
Steve Wagner
Jim Wentworth
Jim Wilson
Brad Winn