



Georgia Important Bird Area Coordinator's Report

February 2010

General:

The weather has played havoc on banding this year. Lots of cancelled days, rearranged schedules and banding on less-than ideal days, which resulted in very low capture rates. We were able to get in 2 days at each station.

I am putting together a collection of issues of the Oriole for the IBA program. I received several promises after posting a request on GABO. So far I've received most issues from the last decade, plus indices 1940-2000 from GOS, via John Swiderski. I expect that I will receive duplicates of many issues, and plan to inventory and offer them to Georgia's Audubon chapters or other organizations that could use them.

In the coming months Ken Blankenship and I will jointly construct an index for the Oriole for the years 2000-current.

Monitoring:

I Participated in the annual winter shorebird count on Saturday, February 6 (it was postponed a day, due to weather). Like last year, I counted the south end of Jekyll Island. High winds caused the low tide to be unusually high (it looked like high tide) which prevented birds from using the south point as they usually do. Many observers had unusually high or low counts, depending on their location. This demonstrates the need for such all-coast coordinated counts.

I checked 2 sites for Rusty Blackbirds as part of the blitz, but did not see any. This seems to be a difficult year to find this species in Georgia.

I will help Nathan Klaus with radio telemetry of Loggerhead Shrikes (LOSH) this breeding season. We can use some help. He can also use help for a similar project with American Kestrels. I helped Tall Timbers Research Station staff trap LOSH at a 4,800 acre preserve in Thomas County February 27-March 1. It is wonderful to see LOSH in expansive old growth longleaf pine savannah. It is also much more of a challenge to capture them in this natural habitat.

Wayne Shaffner heard two males Bachman's Sparrows singing at Swamp of Toa in late February. He will commence weekly monitoring on March 6.

There are tentative plans for a May survey of Wilson's Plover and American Oystercatcher along the entire GA coast.

Habitat Management:

I helped with a prescribed fire in Taylor County on February 7. This private property with a conservation easement features a nice stand of Eastern White Cedar. It also happens to be along a Breeding Bird Survey route that I have run for 3 years. The property owners are very interested in conservation and happy that the Georgia prescribed fire team could help them with this important management component. I later sent them the species list for their stop on my route for the last 3 years.

We have received the chainsaw, 3 weed wrenches, and 2 loppers, which were funded by a grant from Georgia Ornithological Society. All items have been tested and are working fine. The wrenches are remarkably effective at pulling privet by the roots. They will be put to use at the first Volunteer Conservation Day of the year, April 2 at Joe Kurz WMA.

Fundraising & Donations:

Southern Wings made a donation for my presentation to them. Additionally, I sold several bags of coffee and some cash was put in the donation box.

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.

Programs:

- I taught the “bird watching” component of the Master Naturalist class at Chattahoochee Nature Center on February 4. It was a cold, blustery day with threat of precipitation, but the students were good natured and we got some great looks at some nice birds. I taught a bit about bird identification, bird feeders and optics.

- My presentation to Southern Wings on February 8 went extremely well. They are a very receptive, interested group of people who are eager to learn and have good questions.

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

Volunteer Conservation Days

April 2: privet pull at Joe Kurz WMA in Meriwether County. Beginning at 2pm. Volunteers can come early to watch bird banding.

April 10: trail clearing around Ansley Hodges Impoundment at Altamaha WMA in McIntosh County. Beginning at 9am. Volunteers are welcome to join me at the Butler Island refuge tower to watch sunrise.

Linda Lamb is seeking volunteers to help construct a Living Shoreline on Sapelo Island in March. Contact her at lindalamb@dorientel.net 912-437-1234 >

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
Debbie Sue Mumford

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