



Audubon MARYLAND-DC

Important Bird Areas Program

Bird Blitz 2010-2011: Elk Neck, Cecil County

Elk Neck Peninsula is located in central Cecil County and is bordered on the west by the Chesapeake Bay and North East River and on the east by the Elk River. Elk Neck Peninsula is well-known as a migration corridor for both raptors and songbirds. Its cone shape especially concentrates southbound birds in the autumn before they continue across the Chesapeake Bay. The Peninsula is mostly forested with substantial portions protected as Elk Neck State Park and State Forest. Surveys focused on the Peninsula's forest core in Elk Neck State Forest. The State Forest consists of four separate tracts comprising about 1,335 ha (3,300 acres) of primarily oak-gum-cypress forest with smaller areas of loblolly-shortleaf pine and oak-hickory forest as well. Given that Elk Neck is heavily forested, 2010-2011 Bird Blitz surveys targeted birds of the Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) assemblage, or species listed by Maryland DNR as requiring large areas of intact forest to breed successfully, and particularly those FIDS considered at-risk in the state. All totaled, 10 surveys, including a nightjar survey, were conducted by 8 volunteers covering a distance of nearly 29 km of transects during more than 21 survey hours (Table 1).

The results of these surveys are summarized below in Table 2, with highlighted species representing those which matched or exceeded their state-level IBA thresholds. It is important to note that Bird Blitz survey totals represent minimum population estimates of breeding pairs. Actual populations are higher because not all available habitat was covered and because some birds along a route may not be counted (if they were silent and/or hidden while observers passed by). There were 3 at-risk species recorded at Elk Neck, including Eastern Whip-poor-will, Wood Thrush, and Worm-eating Warbler. Eastern Whip-poor-will exceeded its state-level IBA threshold of 10 pairs. Bird Blitz also recorded a total of 14 Forest Interior-Dwelling Species (FIDS).

Thanks to all the volunteers who conducted Bird Blitz surveys at this site: MaryAnne Dolan, Ken Drier, Parke John, Kylie McCandless, Sean McCandless, Pat Valdata, David Francis, and Bob Ketcham. These data will greatly assist our review of this site as a potential IBA.

Table 1. Bird Blitz 2010-2011 survey effort for the Elk Neck candidate IBA.

Year	Participants	Surveys	Distance (km)	Time (hr)
2010	6	3	15.6	8.3
2011	6	7	13.0	13.4
2010-2011	8	10	28.6	21.7

Table 2. Bird Blitz 2010-2011 results for the Elk Neck candidate IBA.

Primary Targets – At-risk Species	Total	Assemblage
Eastern Whip-poor-will	13	FIDS
Wood Thrush	66	FIDS
Worm-eating Warbler	23	FIDS
Secondary Target Species	Total	Assemblage
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	FIDS
Barred Owl	5	FIDS
Hairy Woodpecker	2	FIDS
Pileated Woodpecker	7	FIDS
Acadian Flycatcher	34	FIDS
Red-eyed Vireo	83	FIDS
Northern Parula	3	FIDS
Black-and-white Warbler	19	FIDS
Ovenbird	173	FIDS
Hooded Warbler	13	FIDS
Scarlet Tanager	29	FIDS
Eastern Towhee	17	Shrubland

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