



Audubon MARYLAND-DC

Important Bird Areas Program

Bird Blitz 2009: Mattawoman Creek

The Mattawoman Creek watershed, including areas along the Indian Head Rail Trail, Mattawoman NEA, and Myrtle Grove WMA, was among the highest priorities of our target candidate IBA sites this year. In April, Mattawoman Creek was ranked 4th among America's Most Endangered Rivers of 2009 due to its importance to the Chesapeake Bay watershed and threats of a proposed highway and development (see [American Rivers](#) and [Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#)). This summer there were 12 Bird Blitz surveys conducted by 6 volunteers. Site coverage was quite good with 47.2 km hiked during 36.1 hours of surveying (Table 1).

The results are summarized below in Table 2, with highlighted species representing those which matched or exceeded their state-level IBA thresholds. There were 7 at-risk species recorded with Prothonotary Warbler surpassing its IBA threshold of 30 pairs. Bird Blitz survey totals represent minimum population estimates of breeding pairs – actual populations are higher because not all the habitat was covered and because not all birds along a route were counted (if they were silent and hidden while observers passed by). These results also indicate that the area supports a relatively high diversity of Forest Interior-Dwelling Species (FIDS) with 18 recorded out of 24 possible on Maryland's Coastal Plain.

Also, one survey was done at Smallwood State Park. At-risk species recorded included 1 Red-headed Woodpecker, 1 Prothonotary Warbler, 1 Prairie Warbler, 1 Louisiana Waterthrush, and 6 Wood Thrush. This area may or may not be included with the Mattawoman Creek candidate IBA.

Thanks to all volunteers who conducted Bird Blitz surveys at this site: Gwen Brewer, George Jett, Ross Geredien, Dave Gillum, and Colin Hebert. Thanks to Jean Artes and Lynn Wheeler for their efforts at Smallwood State Park. These data will greatly assist our review of this area as a potential IBA later this year.

Table 1. Bird Blitz 2009 survey effort for Mattawoman Creek candidate IBA.*

Volunteers	Surveys	Distance (km)	Time (hr)
6	12	47.15	36.1

*Totals do not include Smallwood State Park surveys.

Table 2. Bird Blitz 2009 results for Mattawoman Creek candidate IBA.

Primary Targets – At-risk Species	Total	Assemblage
Bald Eagle	3	--
Red-headed Woodpecker	3	--
Wood Thrush	63	FIDS
Prairie Warbler	2	--
Prothonotary Warbler	40	FIDS
Kentucky Warbler	10	FIDS
Louisiana Waterthrush	13	FIDS
Secondary Target Species	Total	Assemblage
Red-shouldered Hawk	6	FIDS
Barred Owl	5	FIDS
Hairy Woodpecker	9	FIDS
Pileated Woodpecker	12	FIDS
Acadian Flycatcher*	3	FIDS
White-eyed Vireo	38	SHRUB
Red-eyed Vireo*	3	FIDS
Yellow-throated Vireo	24	FIDS
Brown Thrasher	7	SHRUB
Northern Parula	112	FIDS
Black-and-white Warbler	2	FIDS
American Redstart	23	FIDS
Ovenbird*	6	FIDS
Hooded Warbler	57	FIDS
Yellow-breasted Chat	5	SHRUB
Scarlet Tanager*	3	FIDS
Summer Tanager	7	FIDS
Eastern Towhee	5	SHRUB

*Species not formally counted due to wide distribution across Maryland.

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