



Audubon MARYLAND-DC

Important Bird Areas Program

Bird Blitz 2009: Zekiah Swamp

Zekiah Swamp is located in eastern Charles County and includes more than 25 km of braided streams stretching southwest from Cedarville State Forest to Allen's Fresh Run and the Zekiah Swamp Natural Environment Area. The majority of the land in this area is privately owned and remains intact and undeveloped. The area's name derives from the Algonquin word *Sacaya*, meaning a dense thicket, and accurately describes the shrub wetlands supported by Zekiah Run. Other significant habitats in the area include oak-hickory floodplain forests, adjacent upland forests, as well as snag-filled pockets of herbaceous wetlands – resulting from beaver activity. This summer, Audubon staff conducted 3 Bird Blitz surveys at Zekiah Swamp, likely covering less than 10% of the total area of these habitats. Approximately 27.3 km of transects were traversed during 19.25 survey hours (Table 1).

The results are summarized below in Table 2; highlighted species are those which matched or exceeded their state-level IBA thresholds. 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). There were 7 at-risk species recorded, with Prothonotary Warbler surpassing its IBA threshold of 30 pairs. Other at-risk species with notable counts below their IBA thresholds were Red-headed Woodpecker, Kentucky Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Wood Thrush. The survey results also indicate that the area supports a good diversity of Forest Interior-Dwelling Species (FIDS) with 17 recorded out of 24 possible on Maryland's Coastal Plain. 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 Zekiah Swamp candidate IBA.

Audubon Staff	Surveys	Distance (km)	Time (hr)
2	3	27.3	19.25

Table 2. Bird Blitz 2009 results for Zekiah Swamp candidate IBA.

Primary Targets – At-risk Species	Total	Assemblage
Bald Eagle	1	--
Red-headed Woodpecker	5	--
Wood Thrush	24	FIDS
Prairie Warbler	1	--
Prothonotary Warbler	52	FIDS
Kentucky Warbler	11	FIDS
Louisiana Waterthrush	8	FIDS
Secondary Target Species	Total	Assemblage
Red-shouldered Hawk	6	FIDS
Barred Owl	4	FIDS
Hairy Woodpecker	7	FIDS
Pileated Woodpecker	8	FIDS
Acadian Flycatcher*	18	FIDS
White-eyed Vireo	10	SHRUB
Red-eyed Vireo*	10	FIDS
Yellow-throated Vireo	17	FIDS
Northern Parula	60	FIDS
American Redstart	54	FIDS
Ovenbird*	10	FIDS
Hooded Warbler	11	FIDS
Yellow-breasted Chat	4	SHRUB
Scarlet Tanager*	8	FIDS
Summer Tanager	5	FIDS

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

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