



Important Bird Areas Program

Bird Blitz 2010: Nanjemoy Northeast

In 2009, excellent Bird Blitz survey efforts in southwestern Charles County led to the identification of the Nanjemoy Important Bird Area (IBA). This area is known as the “green thumb” of Charles County and contains an extensive area of contiguous forest with high biodiversity. Nanjemoy IBA includes Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and federal Bureau of Land Management tracts of the Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area, Purse State Park, Doncaster State Forest, The Nature Conservancy’s Nanjemoy Preserve, and numerous adjacent forested parcels. Nanjemoy was identified as a state-level IBA because it supports significant populations of 6 at-risk species: Bald Eagle, Whip-poor-will, Worm-eating Warbler, Wood Thrush, Prairie Warbler, and Prothonotary Warbler, in addition to having a high diversity of Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) of birds – those species listed by Maryland DNR as requiring large intact areas of forest to breed successfully.

Forests of the Nanjemoy Northeast area were excluded from the IBA identification because bird population data for this area was lacking. To determine whether this area should be included in the Nanjemoy IBA, 2010 Bird Blitz surveys targeted at-risk species and FIDS in the Nanjemoy Northeast forested block. This area is bounded by Bicknell and Poor House Roads in the north, Annapolis-Woods Road in the east, Smallwood Church and Bowie Roads in the west, and Friendship Landing Rd and Nanjemoy Creek in the south. All totaled, 5 volunteers and one Audubon staff member conducted 8 surveys in Nanjemoy Northeast covering more than 54 km which were hiked and kayaked during nearly 22 survey hours (Table 1).

The results of these surveys are summarized below in Table 2, with highlighted species representing those which have significant state-level populations in the Nanjemoy IBA. 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 6 at-risk species recorded, including 5 of the species for which Nanjemoy IBA was identified. Wood Thrush and Prairie Warbler, in particular, had good numbers recorded in Nanjemoy Northeast (Table 2). These results also indicate that the area supports a moderate diversity of Forest Interior-Dwelling Species (FIDS) with 17 FIDS recorded out of 25 possible on Maryland’s Coastal Plain (Table 2).

Thanks go out to all the volunteers who conducted Bird Blitz surveys at this site: James Moore, Warren and Lisa Strobel, Leslie Starr, and Joe Turner. These data will greatly assist our review of this area as a potential addition to the Nanjemoy IBA.

Table 1. Bird Blitz 2010 survey effort for Nanjemoy Northeast.

Participants	Surveys	Distance (km)	Time (hr)
6	8	54.4	21.7

Table 2. Bird Blitz 2010 survey results for Nanjemoy Northeast.

Primary Target Species	Total	Assemblage
Whip-poor-will	2	FIDS
Wood Thrush	23	FIDS
Prairie Warbler	10	Shrubland
Prothonotary Warbler	1	FIDS
Worm-eating Warbler	2	FIDS
Louisiana Waterthrush	1	FIDS
Secondary Target Species	Total	FIDS
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	FIDS
Barred Owl	2	FIDS
Pileated Woodpecker	3	FIDS
Acadian Flycatcher	36	FIDS
White-eyed Vireo	12	Shrubland
Red-eyed Vireo	75	FIDS
Yellow-throated Vireo	5	FIDS
Brown Thrasher	5	Shrubland
Northern Parula	41	FIDS
Black-and-white Warbler	6	FIDS
American Redstart	3	FIDS
Ovenbird	36	FIDS
Hooded Warbler	12	FIDS
Yellow-breasted Chat	3	Shrubland
Scarlet Tanager	10	FIDS
Eastern Towhee	13	Shrubland
Field Sparrow	1	Shrubland

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