

## **Important Bird Areas Program**

### **Bird Blitz 2009: The Glades**

Peatlands are wetlands with soils composed of partially decayed plant material (peat) and can range from acidic, rain-fed, sphagnum moss-dominated bogs to basic, groundwater-fed, species rich fens. Peatlands require specific hydrologic, topographic, and climatic conditions to occur, and in Maryland, these conditions are only met in the high elevations of the Allegheny Mountain section. As a result of their unique environments, Maryland peatlands support a high diversity of plant and animal species – including a number of state rare, threatened, and endangered species. The Glades is a 601 acre tract that contains one of Maryland’s finest examples of mountain peatland, and is one of several preserves owned and managed by the MD/DC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Garrett County. The Glades supports the full range of peatland types including open sphagnum bog, sedge/grass wet meadow, and shrub wetlands. In recent years, TNC has undertaken habitat restoration efforts to reestablish red spruce conifers and to mitigate the effects of acid mine drainage. The area under consideration extends onto adjacent land owned by the Rock Lodge Trust (RLT), and lands owned by both TNC and the RLT were surveyed with permission during Bird Blitz 2009. This area received adequate survey coverage, with 2 volunteers and one Audubon staff member conducting 3 surveys. All totaled, nearly 19 km of transects were surveyed during 11.5 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). Bird Blitz surveys recorded 13 at-risk species, with three species exceeding their state-level IBA thresholds. The highly at-risk Alder Flycatcher exceeded its state-level threshold of 5 pairs, and Northern Waterthrush exceeded its state-level threshold of 10 pairs. Also, the severely at-risk Henslow’s Sparrow exceeded its state-level threshold of 5 pairs. Two other highly at-risk species, Golden-winged Warbler and Nashville Warbler, had high counts that were just below state-level thresholds of 5 pairs. Not only did The Glades have a high diversity of at-risk species, but also more than one species assemblage was well-represented at the site. There were 7 grassland species recorded out of 13 possible in the Appalachian Mountains region of Maryland (Table 2). Even more remarkable was that 5 mountain peatland species were recorded out of the 6 possible in this assemblage (Table 2), giving further evidence for the significance of this area.

Thanks goes out to the volunteers who conducted Bird Blitz surveys at this site: Fran Pope and Bill Pope. 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 The Glades candidate IBA.

Participants	Surveys	Distance (km)	Time (hr)
3	3	18.6	11.5

**Table 2.** Bird Blitz 2009 results for The Glades candidate IBA.

Primary Targets – At-risk Species	Total	Assemblage
American Black Duck	9	Freshwater Marsh
American Woodcock	2	Shrubland
Black-billed Cuckoo	2	FIDS
Willow Flycatcher	4	Shrubland
<b>Alder Flycatcher</b>	<b>16</b>	Mountain Peatland
Wood Thrush	10	FIDS
Golden-winged Warbler	4	Shrubland
Nashville Warbler	4	Mountain Peatland
<b>Northern Waterthrush</b>	<b>13</b>	Mountain Peatland
Canada Warbler	3	Mountain Peatland/FIDS
Kentucky Warbler	1	FIDS
Grasshopper Sparrow	6	Grassland
<b>Henslow's Sparrow</b>	<b>8</b>	Grassland
Secondary Target Species	Total	Assemblage
American Kestrel	1	Grassland
Barred Owl	1	FIDS
Hairy Woodpecker	7	FIDS
Blue-headed Vireo	1	FIDS
Common Raven	4	FIDS
Veery	11	FIDS
Hermit Thrush	13	FIDS
Chestnut-sided Warbler	10	Shrubland
Magnolia Warbler	3	FIDS
Ovenbird*	1	FIDS
Hooded Warbler	1	FIDS
Scarlet Tanager*	3	FIDS
Eastern Towhee	26	Shrubland
Field Sparrow	9	Shrubland
Savannah Sparrow	5	Grassland
Vesper Sparrow	4	Grassland
Swamp Sparrow	66	Mountain Peatland
Eastern Meadowlark	14	Grassland
Bobolink	19	Grassland

\*Species present, but not targeted by Bird Blitz surveys due to their wide distribution across Maryland.

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