Birding: Big Business in Parks
Great Lakes Park Training Institute
February 2005
Speaker- John Schaust

Workshop Description for Program:
Learn about the basics and benefits of incorporating bird and birder friendly experiences in your parks. We’ll include a few bird identifications tips as well.

Program Outline

INTRODUCTION
- Speaker’s Background and Experience
- Overview of Topic
- Benefits the program may have for audience

BIRDING BIG BUSINESS – STATISTICS
- USFWS Report – PowerPoint
- Economic Impacts

THE VALUE OF BIRDING TO PARKS / SOCIETY
- Educate Public about pressures facing birds / habitats
- Place more value on the importance of birds with local community
- Potential Value to Parks / Properties:
  - Increased Funding – Increase in local/national support for the protection of bird habitat and biodiversity (Potato Creek)
  - Resource Management Benefits – Birders are typically conservation minded, willing to volunteer to help. Birdwatching has less impact on resources than other forms of tourism
  - Land Acquisition – Can lead to the protection of unprotected areas favored by Birders (Gary – Migrant Trap, Goose Pond)
  - Public Relations/Education – Increases the value of local natural history expertise…recognized interpretive resource for visitors and media.
  - Research Support – Formal and informal research about population trends and management practices

WHAT THEY ARE CURRENTLY DOING IN THEIR PARKS?
Events, programs and activities that agencies have tried

INCORPORATING BIRDS AND BIRDERS FRIENDLY EXPERIENCES
- Birding Festivals
- Weekend Theme Interpretive Events
- Birding Trails
- Habitat Plantings, Nesting Box Trails and Feeding Stations
- Golf Course Habitat Enrichment
BIRDING FESTIVALS
- International Migratory Bird Day Festival Video
- Case histories and Regional examples
- ABA Birding Festival Organizational Manual
- International Migratory Bird Day Planning Guide
- Project Flying Wild Planning Guide

THEMED INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS
- Eagle Weekend
- Bluebird Festivals
- How to feed and house

BIRDING TRAILS
- Multi-property partnerships to promote birding
- Partnerships with organizations and business

NESTING BOX TRAILS, HABITAT PLANTINGS AND FEEDING STATIONS
- Bluebird trails
- Wildlife Plantings
- Birdfeeders and other nesting boxes

GOLF COURSE HABITAT ENRICHMENT
- CD Video
- Smock Golf Course
- Audubon International
- Kalamazoo Nature Center

A LITTLE BIRDING FUN TO WRAP-UP
Top 20 Feeder Birds in the Midwest
Birding: BIG Business in Parks

John Schaust
Chief Naturalist
Wild Birds Unlimited
National Birding Economics: Birding is Big Business

Bird watching and other wildlife-associated recreational activities are increasing dramatically, as are the economic opportunities they generate. According to a National Survey on Recreation and the Environment...

- An estimated 54.2 million Americans watch birds, a 155 percent increase since the early 1980s.
- Bird watching is the nation’s second fastest growing recreational activity, surpassed only by gardening.
Bird watching is BIG business!!!

When birdwatchers come to the Klamath Basin... and they will by the thousands... they will need a place to stay, a place to eat, and a list of other activities they might enjoy while they're here.

Have your name be right here to make it easy for visitors to find you!

Contact the Great Basin Visitor Association about how you can become Certified Birder Friendly. We train your staff, you have a medallion in your window certifying you Birder Friendly, and more! We have packages available to fit all budgets that include a web site banner on this page with a link to your web site or we can do a one-page web site for you to link to this page. Call us today!
Great Florida Birding Trail

Birding Economics

Your birder dollars, if recognized as such, are a vote for conservation. They lobby local communities to conserve their resources not only for the health of their environment, but for the health of their economy.

Did you know?

- Nationwide, birding is big business: 46 million people observed birds around home and on trips in 2001.
- Florida is second in the nation (behind California) in the amount of retail sales generated by non-consumptive bird use, which supports more than 19,000 jobs.
- Birders devote much time, effort and money to their hobby and they contribute significantly to local economies by spending money on everything from gasoline to hotel rooms.

A 2002-04 study found that birding is the Carolinas’ top non-traditional economic activity.
Bird Watching is Big Business in Louisiana

State Business

by Mindy Victores

America’s Wetland Birding Trail tracks Louisiana’s birdlife through state parks, state historic sites, state preservation areas, national wildlife refuges, wildlife management areas, and other state spots. The trail’s 115 points begin at the Texas border and travels through seven scenic byways and twenty-two counties along I-10 to the Mississippi border.

Louisiana’s coastal habitats include fresh and saltwater marshes, upland pines, riparian hardwood forests, open meadows, lagoons, canals, borrow pits and natural bayous. The Louisiana Office of Tourism, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, is developing the Louisiana Great Gulf Coast Birding Trail.

Sites throughout Louisiana have been recommended for inclusion in the trail.

The Louisiana Ornithological Society will have its winter meeting in Lafayette, February 18-20, 2005. Louisiana has over twelve yearly bird watching festivals throughout the state. It also has four local chapters of the National Audubon Society, located in Lafayette, Baton Rouge, Alexandria and Metairie. Birding is expected to have a $15-$20 million impact on Louisiana’s economy.
Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis

Addendum to the 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation
A “Birder”
(As defined by the USFWS)

- Anyone traveling over one mile primarily to observe birds
- Anyone closely observing /identifying birds at home
- 16 years of age and older
Birders - 2001

• 46 million birders in USA

• > 1 out of every 5 people

• 40 million “at home” Birders

• 18 million “away for home” Birders

(some do both activities)
What Birders Like to Watch

- Waterfowl: 78%
- Songbirds: 70%
- Birds of Prey: 68%
- Shorebirds: 56%
- Misc.: 43%

Percent of Bird Watchers
Participation by Age Groups

Participation by Age Groups

Percent of Age Group

Age of Birder

16/17 18/24 25/34 35/44 45/54 55/64 65+

Age of Birder

14 9 17 24 26 28 24

14 9 17 24 26 28 24

Percent of Age Group
Birders by Gender

Female 54%

Male 46%
Birder’s by Location of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Residence</th>
<th>Percent of Birders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation by Education

![Bar chart showing participation by education level. The chart compares the percent of birders by group, with the following data:
- College 5+: 33%
- College 4: 26%
- College 1-3: 23%
- High School 4: 19%
- High School 1-3: 14%]
Birders by State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent of Birders in Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Birders by State

residents and nonresidents [avg. 9%]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Birders (Millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Economic Impact of Birders: Selected States 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Travel (in Millions of Dollars)</th>
<th>Equipment (in Millions of Dollars)</th>
<th>Total (in Millions of Dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>$85</td>
<td>$240</td>
<td>$325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>$118</td>
<td>$216</td>
<td>$334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>$105</td>
<td>$154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>$282</td>
<td>$284</td>
<td>$566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>$130</td>
<td>$279</td>
<td>$408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amount that birders spent on all wildlife watching
Economic Impact of Birders: USA 2001

- Retail Sales: $32 billion
- Overall Impact: $85 billion
- Salary/Wages: $25 billion
- State Income Tax: $5 billion
- Federal Income Tax: $7 billion
- Jobs: 863,406

Amount that birders spent on all wildlife watching
Economic Impact of Birders:
Selective Product Categories USA 2001

- $3.1 billion on food for birds and other wildlife
- $733 million on bird houses and feeders
- $2.6 billion on cameras and associated photographic equipment
- $507 million on binoculars and spotting scopes
Summary

_Nationwide:_

- 66 million Americans actively participate in wildlife watching (USFWS 2001 data)

- 46 million Americans are birdwatchers

- Birdwatching is the fastest growing form of outdoor recreation-- a 236% increase in participation from 1982 to 2001, from 21 million to 71 million (National Survey on Recreation and the Environment 2000-01).
Summary

Adding revenues to local economies—

- Wildlife watchers spent $38.4 billion in 2001-- resulting in a $95.8 billion contribution to the nation’s economy and producing more than one million jobs.

- Birdwatchers spent $32 billion in 2001 that in turn generated $85 billion in economic benefits, produced $13 billion in tax revenues and 863,406 jobs (USFWS, 2001)
Other Potential Positive Impacts of Birdwatching

- **Increased Funding** – Increase in local/national support for the protection of bird habitat and biodiversity (Potato Creek)

- **Resource Management Benefits** - Birders are typically conservation minded, willing to volunteer to help. Birdwatching has less impact on resources than other forms of tourism

- **Land Acquisition** - Can lead to the protection of unprotected areas favored by Birders (Gary – Migrant Trap, Goose Pond)

- **Public Relations / Education** - Adds value to local natural history expertise...recognized interpretive resource for visitors and media.

- **Research Support** – Formal and informal research about population trends and management practices
How is Your Park or Agency Incorporating Bird or Birder Friendly Experiences?
Methods to Capture Birders at Your Park

- Birding Festivals
- Weekend Themed Interpretive Events
- Birding Trails
- Habitat Plantings, Nesting Box Trails and Feeding Stations
- Golf Course Habitat Enrichment
Birding Festivals

• Large, Medium and Small
• Festival Video
• International Migratory Bird Day
  May 14, 2005
• American Birding Association
• Flying Wild
Themed Interpretive Events

- Eagle Watch Weekend
- Lake Erie Wing Watch
- Mohican Wildlife Weekend
- The Southern Illinois 2005 Birding Fest
Birding Trails

- Birding Trails in North America
- Bird Watchers Digest
- Pine to Prairie Birding Trail
- John James Audubon Birding Trail
Nesting Box Trails, Habitat Plantings and Feeding Stations

- **Visitor Information – USI**
- **Bluebird Trails**
- **Trans-Kentucky Bluebird Trail**
Golf Course Habitat Enrichment

- Smock Golf Course
- Audubon International
- Kalamazoo Nature Center
Quiz Time!
**Brown-headed Cowbird**

**Regional Rank #20**
- Seen at 43% of feeders
- Average flock size = 4.1

**Continental Rank #25**

**Food Preferences**
- Mixed seed
Hairy Woodpecker

Regional Rank #19
  • Seen at 49% of feeders
  • Average flock size = 1.3

Continental Rank #16

Food Preferences
  • Suet
**White-throated Sparrow**

**Regional Rank #18**
- Seen at 51% of feeders
- Average flock size = 2.8

**Continental Rank #19**

**Food Preferences**
- Mixed seed
Song Sparrow

Regional Rank #17
• Seen at 53% of feeders
• Average flock size = 1.6

Continental Rank #17

Food Preferences
• Mixed seed
Carolina Wren

Regional Rank #16
- Seen at 55% of feeders
- Average flock size = 1.3

Continental Rank #20

Food Preferences
- Suet
Common Grackle

Regional Rank #15
- Seen at 57% of feeders
- Average flock size = 4.4

Continental Rank #18

Food Preferences
- Mixed seed
- Suet

Data from Project FeederWatch
Tufted Titmouse

Regional Rank #14
- Seen at 63% of feeders
- Average flock size = 2.0

Continental Rank #14

Food Preferences
- Striped sunflower seed
- Black-oil sunflower seed
American Robin

Regional Rank #13
• Seen at 70% of feeders
• Average flock size = 2.2

Continental Rank #12

Food Preferences
• Fresh and dried fruit
**White-breasted Nuthatch**

**Regional Rank #12**
- Seen at 72% of feeders
- Average flock size = 1.5

**Continental Rank #10**

Food Preferences
- Suet
- Sunflower seed
- Peanuts

*Data from Project Feeder Watch*
Red-bellied Woodpecker

Regional Rank #11
- Seen at 81% of feeders
- Average flock size = 1.2

Continental Rank #15

Food Preferences
- Suet

Data from Project FeederWatch
Blue Jay

Regional Rank #10
  • Seen at 83% of feeders
  • Average flock size = 2.4

Continental Rank #6

Food Preferences
  • Striped sunflower seed
  • Peanuts in shell
European Starling

Regional Rank #9
• Seen at 84% of feeders
• Average flock size = 5.5

Continental Rank #9

Food Preferences
• Suet

Data from Project FeederWatch
**House Sparrow**

Regional Rank #8
- Seen at 86% of feeders
- Average flock size = 10.3

Continental Rank #11

Food Preferences
- Mixed seed

Data from Project FeederWatch
Black-capped / Carolina Chickadee

Regional Rank #7
- Seen at 87% of feeders
- Average flock size = 2.2

Continental Rank #2

Food Preferences
- Sunflower seed
**Downy Woodpecker**

Regional Rank #6
- Seen at 88% of feeders
- Average flock size = 1.7

Continental Rank #3

Food Preferences
- Suet

[Map showing distribution of Downy Woodpeckers]

Data from Project FeederWatch

A. Topping
American Goldfinch

Regional Rank #5
- Seen at 89% of feeders
- Average flock size = 5.0

Continental Rank #5

Winter plumage

Summer male

Food Preferences
- Nyjer seed
- Black-oil sunflower seed

Map showing average group size across the United States with data from Project FeederWatch.
House Finch

Regional Rank #4
- Seen at 91% of feeders
- Average flock size = 4.8

Continental Rank #7

Food Preferences
- Black-oil sunflower seed
- Hulled sunflower seed

Data from Project FeederWatch
**Dark-eyed Junco**

**Regional Rank #3**
- Seen at 95% of feeders
- Average flock size = 5.0

**Continental Rank #1**

**Food Preferences**
- Mixed seed

Data from Project Feeder Watch
Mourning Dove

Regional Rank #2
- Seen at 96% of feeders
- Average flock size = 4.9

Continental Rank #4

Food Preferences
- Mixed seed
- Cracked corn

C. Johnson

Data from Project FeederWatch
Northern Cardinal

Regional Rank #1
- Seen at 98% of feeders
- Average flock size = 4.3

Continental Rank #8

Food Preferences
- Striped sunflower seed
- Black-oil sunflower seed
- Safflower seed