

Fall 2020 Georgia Shorebird Alliance Meeting Virtual End-of-Season Wrap Up Notes

TIMESTAMPS FOR EACH AGENDA ITEM CORRESPOND TO THE ZOOM RECORDING, AVAILABLE BY REQUEST AND ON THE GSA WEBSITE))

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions (Timestamp- 1:30)

- Attendees (31 at max): Abby Sterling (host), Tim Keyes (co-host), Pam Smith, Alice Keyes, Alice Van Zoeren, Bill Wikoff, Chris Coppola, Elizabeth and Barrett King, Fletcher Smith, Jim Ozier, Brad Winn, Kate Tweedy, Scott Coleman, Katie Higgins, Lydia Thompson, Mary Lou Dickson, Russell Regnery, Sergio Sabat-Bonilla, Stacia Hendricks, Susan Inman, Sydney Fye, Trish McMillan, Walker Golder, Walt Bowman, Yank Moore, Deb Berraro, +2 unknown
- Zoom details and recording permissions.

Nesting Season

- LSSI (Scott Coleman and Kate Tweedy) (Timestamp-17:54)
 - Great success for AMOY, 17 pairs were monitored and produced record breaking 18 fledged chicks
 - Monitored a subset of WIPL nests
 - Successful Black Skimmer colony, survived overwash. Few Least Terns
 - Credit great success to intensive predator removal.
- Gould's (Lydia Thompson) (Timestamp-37:39)
 - Largest colony of Least Terns in the states, estimated 50 adults and ~100 fledged chicks
 - 8 pairs of WIPL nesting, estimated ~12 chicks.
 - Volunteers contributed to maintaining the rope line so, despite COVID restrictions that restricted steward capacity, we were able to maintain a presence on the beach.
- Jekyll (Yank Moore) (Timestamp-55:55)
 - WIPL nesting surveys 1/week, 19 nests, 11 hatched, 10-12 chicks
 - Great success working with GASTC in monitoring chicks with reflectors, and increasing communication
- DNR Summary (Tim Keyes) (Timestamp-1:07:02)
 - CUIS- AMOY were successful at nests with "electric" (not live) fencing around them- 3 fenced nests fledged 4 chicks. No unfenced nests hatched
 - Bird Dredge Spoil Island had an estimated 9149 Royal terns nesting this year
 - St. Catherines bar had productivity for the first time in 6 years, enough sand has built up to provide good nesting habitat
 - ROTÉ banding effort last summer, was cancelled this summer due to COVID. Banded 1492 chicks in 2019, (white with black alphanumerics-keep an eye out).
 - NestStory
 - Some benefits to using a digital app for storing data- potential to be sharing info easily and summarizing it quickly.
 - Problems and challenges include the mapping feature and not having adequate internet coverage.
 - Next Steps- will form a data group to talk about data collection and other related topics.

Project Updates

- Disturbance Project (Abby Sterling) (Timestamp- 1:30:05)
 - Focused on public access beaches in partnership with National Audubon, Virginia Tech, and NFWF

- Study sites include Jekyll Island, SSI, Tybee and Ft Pulaski
- Current work has been gathering pre outreach campaign data and building program to address recreational disturbance
- Horseshoe Crab Updates (Abby Sterling) (Timestamp- 1:41:57)
 - Horseshoe crab are harvested in South Carolina for biomedical industry, and GA is of critical importance.
 - Coast-wide Horseshoe Crab Recovery Coalition is address HSC recovery from multiple angles
 - Recent letter to FDA was signed by Georgia Shorebird Alliance, OHM and other non-profits
 - Website is at: <https://hscrabrecovery.org/the-coalition/>
- ISS updates (Abby Sterling) (Timestamp- 1:50:23)
 - eBird is providing ISS organizers at Manomet the opportunity to incorporate new covariates into data collection platform
 - Mapping Tool- created by Manomet's Lisa Schibley, is more useful than ever before! Check it out at: <https://www.manomet.org/iss-map-instructions/>
 - Addressing site names and creating polygons for all survey areas is coming soon
- Restoration Project (Tim Keyes) (Timestamp- 2:14:50)
 - Pelican Spit- which is melding with Sea Island's beach, is being reworked with help from Sea Island to increase elevation and create a channel to keep people and dogs from accessing. Failed as a nest site this year.
 - New dredge spoil island in the works in the mouth of the Altamaha- hit a snag due to possible critical sturgeon habitat- ongoing discussions with ACOE
 - Possible use of dredge spoil to build up scarps on Bird Island
- Ecotourism Project (Katie Higgins) (Timestamp- 2:29:50)
 - Working with Coastal Incentive Grant Program through DNR CRD, partnership between UGA Marine Extension and GA Sea Grant, GA DNR and Manomet, we are building an educational certification program to engage ecotourism providers to protect habitat and reduce shorebird disturbance
 - CARE (Coastal Awareness and Responsible Ecotourism) certificate will be online due to COVID, with the first cohort expected in February
 - Current work includes building a ecotourism community database, surveys of outfitters and the public, logo and marketing, and content creation with assistance from a stakeholder steering committee.
- Guidebook (Tim Keyes) (Timestamp- 2:48:30)
 - Part of the CARE certification will be providing guides with laminated, accessible guidebooks detailing common species, maps, rules and regulations, and information about disturbance
 - Currently being designed by H2O Designs in Brunswick.
- Whimbrel surveys (Abby Sterling/ Fletcher Smith) (Timestamp- 2:54:00)
 - Nighttime roost surveys were conducted in GA and SC in 2019 and 2020 to locate all night roosts and assess accessibility to use as bench mark sites for repeated counts to estimate regional populations
 - Future work will include aerial daytime survey and tagging project that will be similar to ongoing work in South Carolina
- Tybee Island Marine Science Center Update (Sydney Fye) (Timestamp- 3:10:00)
 - Expected data for opening in January, will be state of the art facility

- Working on bird exhibits, moving to exhibit planning stage now that construction has largely concluded
- Ft Pulaski Monitoring (Pam Smith) (Timestamp- 3:21:10)
 - Exciting new ways for visualizing AMOY resight data using band database and resights
 - Can see patterns of birds staying together throughout the winter, and can look at ages of individuals
 - Working closely with Ft Pulaski, ISS surveys every 10 days, great data for better understanding use

Next Year

- Red Knot Project (Fletcher Smith) (Timestamp- 3:30:45)
 - Graduate research project using band resights and other techniques to understand how REKN use the GA/SC coasts
 - Any large groups of REKN should be reported to Fletcher, using resights and banded/unbanded ratios to assess duration, habitat use and population
 - Already has a considerable amount of information, but this project will help us more fully understand how birds use habitat and food in Georgia
 - Southeast REKN Working Group has been meeting since 2018 annually to discuss goals, objectives and collaborations
- GSA Website (Abby Sterling) (Timestamp- 3:48:00)
 - Will be working on completing this during the winter, will serve as a repository for protocols, papers, information and as a public facing way to highlight the work of the group
 - Website: <https://www.gashorebird.com/>
- GA Bight Shorebird Plan (Abby Sterling) (Timestamp- 3:48:50)
 - Creating a consolidated shorebird plan for the region, will seek information from partners
 - Collaborations with other Shorebird Alliance groups
- Specific Site Needs (Tim Keyes) (Timestamp- 3:49:20)
 - Contact Tim with requests for signs/posts/rope. Will follow up this winter.
- Other projects? (Tim Keyes) (Timestamp- 3:50:00)
 - Golden Ray- GADNR will continue to monitor as clean-up and removal are slated to occur this October.
- Data Collection Subgroup Call (Tim Keyes) (Timestamp- 3:52:01)
 - Based on struggles with NestStory we want to think this through.
 - Focus on data collection, storage, analysis and visualization

Interest in joining this subgroup? Email Abby at asterling@manomet.org