



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



An approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing 13 September 2012

National Survey Preliminary Findings Released *Some birding numbers revealed*



Since 1955, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has published its five-year National Survey on Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. Older editions emphasized the activities of Americans who hunted and fished, but the survey has expanded considerably, especially since the mid-1980s. The preliminary findings for the 2011 survey were released in mid-August. These findings constitute an overview, with a full report, including individual state breakdowns, available in November.

Still, the preliminary findings can tell us a lot about bird watching, its numbers, its growth, and its specific expenditures.

What we know is that watching birds - both at home and away from home - is still very popular. Total bird observers number 46.7 million. (That's down just 2% from 47.7 million in 2006.) The number of at-home bird observers is holding fast at 41.3 million (basically the same figure as 2006 of 41.2 million). Away-from-home birders now number 17.8 million according to the survey (down some from the 2006 number of 19.9 million). Waterfowl continues to be the largest subset of birds observed, photographed, or fed, with 13.3 million people engaging in that activity (down from 2006's 15.4 million).

While some of these birding participation numbers have slipped slightly since 2006 (perhaps a response to economic trends since 2006), *most numbers are up from 2001*. Moreover, expenditures for some important bird-watching items have gone up considerably since 2006. For example, since 2006, binocular and spotting scope expenditures have increased from \$654 million to \$919 million (up 40%). Also since 2006, bird food sales have increased from almost \$3.6 billion to almost \$4.1 billion (up 21%). At the same time, nest box, feeder, and bird bath expenditures combined have gone up from \$790 million to almost \$970 million (up 23%).

One of the quiet revelations of the survey is that while hunters and anglers continue to pay their way - through licenses, fees, stamps, and excise taxes - the more numerous wildlife watchers (including birders) do not. Quite simply, there is no requirement for wildlife watchers to do so. The category of "licenses, stamps, tags, and permits" in the survey's tables refers to hunters and anglers only, and is absent altogether for wildlife watchers. (For more on "Wildlife watchers watch for free," see the 1 September column by Scott Shalaway, from the Charleston (WV) *Gazette-Mail*, [here](#).)

You can read through the 20-page preliminary USFWS report yourself. It can be found [here](#).

Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest Live-Streamed Ogden, Utah: 28-29 September



The Federal Duck Stamp Art Competition will be held shortly, on 28-29 September 2012, at Weber State University (WSU) in Ogden, Utah. The winning design, of course, will be made into the 2013-2014 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp.

Not only does this display great bird art, the stamp itself (costing \$15) is perhaps the single simplest thing anyone can do to support a legacy

of wetland and grassland conservation for birds. Almost all the stamp proceeds go to help secure valuable Refuge System habitats. In fact, since its creation in 1934, the "Duck Stamp" has raised over \$850 million to contribute to 5.5 million acres of habitat conservation in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Sales of the stamp are mainly sustained by waterfowl hunters, but the popularity of the stamp beyond the waterfowl community seems to be on the increase.

For this year's art contest, the eligible species that can be portrayed by participating artists are the following: Brant, Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Canada Goose, and Common Goldeneye. You can pick out your favorite art submissions by viewing all 192 of them [here](#).

You can get additional details - as they become available - on the contest and related activities [here](#). What's more, anyone can watch the judging live-streamed on the Internet. (Hint: the Saturday judging in particular can be very interesting.) The live-streaming can be accessed from the homepage of the [Federal Duck Stamp Office](#).

For other ways to promote, preserve, expand, and appreciate the stamp, see the website of the [Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp](#).

Birding Diversity Meeting Set for Next Month *Bloomington, Minnesota: 13 October*

Last October, over 100 bird educators and bird conservationists met at the first "Focus on Diversity - Changing the Face of American Birding" event in Philadelphia, at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge.

"Focus on Diversity II" is set for a month from now, 13 October at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, just south of Minneapolis.

The purpose of this event is to perfect effective outreach methods to diverse audiences using a message of birding and nature-study opportunities, outdoor recreation, and a conservation ethic.



Based on the U.S. 2010 census, more than 35% of the American population falls into the categories of Hispanic, African-American, Asian, and Native-American. Yet, these groups make up significantly less than 10 percent of the birding community. The effort to attract an expanded audience - one that really "looks more like America" - to birding will benefit those new birders, the general birding community, the broader environment, and, ultimately, the birds.

The registration deadline for this diversity meeting is 30 September.

If you are curious about building a broader, more welcoming, representative, and stronger birding community for everyone, see details [here](#).

Victory Energy Bonds *An old concept retooled for a modern America*

On 2 August, a "Clean Energy Victory Bond" bill was introduced in the U.S. Congress.

Just like World War II era victory bonds enabled ordinary Americans to raise billions of dollars for the war effort, these new Clean Energy Victory Bonds are projected to raise enough money to generate 1.7 million new jobs manufacturing, deploying, and maintaining renewable energy projects.

These bonds would support both the research and manufacturing of such energy innovations as the following:

- Solar (panels and other related technologies)
- Wind (turbines)
- Geothermal (drilling water or steam wells to access earth's heat)
- Second generation biofuels (switchgrass and agricultural waste)
- Electric vehicles (motors powered by rechargeable batteries) and charging stations

This bill, H.R. 6275, may not move in the current Congress, but it is clearly a creative marker for the next Congress.

In any case, a campaign is growing to get the public to pledge to buy the bonds. For more details, see [here](#).

Words to Consider:

"But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach you."

- *Book of Job 12-7*

GBP Bulletin Archives

Great Birding Projects is a vehicle to promote a creative approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing. GBP functions as a bridge to an innovative engagement between people and birds. You can access all previous issues of the *GBP* bulletin on the GBP website [here](#).

