



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



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

21 August 2013

Boomer Expectations

Off the beaten path

Twice a year, Destination Analysts, a marketing and research company based in San Francisco, releases a short summary of their most recent findings. In July, their most recent "State of the American Traveler" came out where they compared some generational travel traits and preferences. Destination Analysts examined differences between three key generations: Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers.

For our purposes, the Boomers, that generation born between 1946 and 1964, deserves a close scrutiny. It's a huge cohort, numbering over 77 million Americans, and although it is not uniform in travel trends, it is distinct in a number of ways.

The figures from "The State of the American Traveler" indicate that Baby Boomers show a real tendency for exploring and also for connecting with the great outdoors on leisure trips. The group rated highest on their "Explorer Index," showing an openness in off-the-beaten-path attractions. Their "Back to Nature Meter" also rated the highest, at 66 percent.



Only a quarter of the Boomers preferred visiting large cities, a far lower number than the 40-48 percent interviewed in the other two reviewed generational categories. Not surprisingly, these Boomers are also the least uncomfortable group when temporarily out of touch from email or text.

You can view last month's "State of the American Traveler" [here](#).

Other studies have indicated that many Boomers will seek to recapture past outdoor experiences from youth, ones that may have had to put on hold while building families and careers. Many of them will have memories of idyllic times outdoors, in travel, and with some wondrous aspect of nature.

The ways to introduce them - or re-introduce them - to these opportunities are varied, but they also include on the local and regional level as Master Naturalists, park or refuge Friends, even Elderhostels (now called Road Scholar).

Carbon Offset Birding Project at MBS *Midwest Birding Symposium takes the lead again*



Two years ago, the Midwest Birding Symposium, held in Lakeside, Ohio, experimented with a "Carbon Offset Bird Project" (COBP) to encourage traveling birders to offset their birding-related carbon emissions with a local bird conservation project. The GBP newsletter reported on it [here](#).

The effort to mitigate a birding carbon footprint went to preserve wetland habitat a mere three miles from Lakeside, at Meadowbrook Marsh. It was a real success.

Next month's [Midwest Birding Symposium](#) (19-22 September) is set to revisit the COBP approach again. This time, the funds from this project will be

used to help restore 15 acres of valuable bird habitat at nearby Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, a location called "the Boss Unit." This important restoration will include a transition area with sedge meadow, a zone of native warm-season grass, as well as trees and shrubs for wind-break and added bird habitat.

Just last month, Laura Kammermeier wrote about this opportunity on her [Nature Travel Network](#), emphasizing how birders could conserve habitat with offset donations for birding travel.

The MBS/COBP project for the Boss Unit at Ottawa NWR is fully described [here](#), with history, background information, and the summary of goals.

Meanwhile, at the recent [Tucson Birding and Nature Festival](#) (14-18 August), a related carbon-offset feature was part of the event, in cooperation with [The Local Trust](#). Here, the carbon offset collection went to urban habitat for birds with native trees and plants that favor specific regional WatchList birds like Gilded Flicker, Costa's Hummingbird, and Lucy's Warbler.

If the Midwest Birding Symposium appeal to its birding participants is as successful as anticipated, the COBP approach may continue to serve as a model for other festivals in the coming year. Goodness knows, it's needed.



Green Markets, Green Shopping *Some recent observations*

The very start of the bird protection movement, led by our birding foremothers to stop the feather-trade, is the classic example of a consumer movement with deep social consequences. It was, essentially, "green" before the word was ever used in such a manner. These women aligned a shift in values with a shift in

consumption and a call for the banning of the feather-trade. We are all the better for it.

We've touched on the modern issue of "green" intentions, practice, gender-balance, and motivation before, including in [March](#). But here we look a little deeper into what consumers want. For bird watchers, this might cover a broad set of issues as varied as buying shade-grown coffee or eco-friendly rice, buying a "Duck Stamp," buying a birdfeeder made of recycled products, reducing reflections in deadly glass buildings, and/or engaging in carbon-offset birding.

Environmental campaigns have attempted to convince our fellow Americans to live and buy "greener" in many ways, but mostly motivated by economics (cost cutting) and moralizing (often leading to guilt-tripping). Twenty years ago a study of lightbulb consumption indicated that "saving the earth" was not a primary consideration by consumers, while long-lasting convenience was what they wanted. While values have shifted in the past two decades, a "[green marketing myopia](#)" - focusing on product greenness over what's in it for the consumer - continues. Although consumers might *care* about the environment, they often are reluctant to *act* on it because they perceive green products as being inferior, too costly, or not aligned with their values.

Some observers estimate that environmentally conscious consumer purchasing accounts for no more than five percent of the market, essentially a small niche. But it's still making a difference. Witness the recent growth in organic, local, fair-trade, sweatshop-free, nontoxic, hybrid, and energy efficient products. If green consumer action was not aligned with consumer values in the past, the values are shifting.

In a recent [article](#) by Edwin Stafford and Cathy Hartman on lessons in green marketing, several compelling benefits were listed in broadening consumer appeal in environmentally preferable products:

- cost and energy savings
- convenience
- health and safety
- better performance
- status and prestige
- "bundling" the product (connecting with a bonus related product or feel-good charity)

All of these are important, and the issues of status, prestige, and bundling should not be discounted. Clearly, guilt is not an effective motivator here. It is *positive shopping* that really counts.

While *we can't shop our way to sustainability*, connecting consumers with realigning values is essential to the process.

Notes of Interest

A selection of some interesting developments

Here are three short items of interest, each of which deserves special consideration whether you are interested in bird education, conservation optics, avitourism, and/or the important issue of birder access.



BIRDNOTE: This is an engaging daily two-minute radio show that combines bird sounds and entertaining stories. *BirdNote* has an remarkable radio reach, and it is presently broadcast over 157 public radio stations. If you are unfamiliar with *BirdNote*, you can sample their splendid broadcast [archives](#), with close to 1,200 stories. And if you know organizations or blogs that would be interested and suitable sites for a *BirdNote* widget, you can find widget designs and instructions [here](#). (Yes, the widget is on the [GBP homepage](#).)



BIRD STAMP: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will run the next Federal Duck Stamp Art Competition at Maumee Bay State Park Conference Center in Oregon, Ohio. The art contest will be held on September 27-28. Regular updated details, including how to watch the event being livestreamed, will be posted on this [site](#).

Also concerning the stamp is a recent development from Carl Zeiss Sports Optics. The company announced in July that as part of its "Field Days," from 19 July though 11 September, it would offer a free Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp and an accompanying holder to anyone who bought one of the company's "Conquest HD" binoculars. Details on the consumer offer can be found [here](#).



PATON PROJECT: An American birding landmark recently came on the market: The Paton's Birder Haven. This property, in Patagonia, Arizona, was the project of Wally and Marion Paton for more than 35 years. Over the years, the Patons welcomed tens of thousands of birders to see Arizona's outstanding hummingbird diversity. The property has passed on to the children of the Patons, and they would like to honor their parents' work by continuing the access to this famous birders' stop. In partnership with Tucson Audubon Society and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, the American Bird Conservancy has entered into a contract with the Paton family to acquire the property as a hummingbird sanctuary. A third of the \$300,000 has already been raised; the rest is due by 15 October. Once acquired, Tucson Audubon Society will assume long-term ownership and management of the property. Find more details, including a way to contribute, [here](#).

Words to Consider:

"Did you ever chance to hear the midnight flight of birds passing through the air and darkness overhead, in countless armies, changing their early or late summer habitat? It is something not to be forgotten."

- Walt Whitman, (1881)

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](#).

