



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



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

30 March 2015

Recent Rice-and-Bird Developments

More evidence accumulates



Louisiana Rice

If you have ever watched an expansive flock of Snow Geese or Mallards take off from a rice field, you've witnessed the connection between birds and rice.

Indeed, the irrefutable evidence continues to accumulate. There is no doubt whatsoever that the most important bird-friendly mass-produced crop in the United States is rice. These agricultural lands replicate natural wetlands with astounding accuracy. Frankly, the birds can't tell the difference.

Late last year, there was yet another study that illustrated that flooded rice fields serve well as surrogate wetlands for waterfowl, shorebirds, long-legged waders, and many other birds. It was an examination of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) efforts through the Waterbird Habitat Enhancement Program (WHEP) in California. That California Rice Commission report, was prepared by the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership, a cooperative effort of Audubon California, The Nature Conservancy, and Point Blue Conservation Science. The study showed how WHEP enrollment by rice farmers can advance large-scale conservation for migratory birds. You can access that report [here](#).

On a closely related theme, the Rice Foundation and Ducks Unlimited just released a highly detailed report on the contributions that U.S. rice habitats make in supporting waterfowl populations. With a focus on three areas - California's Central Valley, the Lower Mississippi Valley, and the Gulf Coast- the study examines how rice production holds current and potential conservation importance for wetland-dependent birds. The study, titled "Estimating the Biological and Economic Contributions that Rice Habitats Make in Support of North American Waterfowl Populations," focuses mainly on waterfowl, but the implications for other birds are obvious. For the full report, visit [here](#).

There is a shorter executive summary of the report also available, "Evaluating Contributions to North American Waterfowl from U.S. Ricelands." You can read it [here](#).

These sorts of reports often deal with crucial variables, depending on the region, such as drought, water rights, land prices, Farm Bill elements, and trade potential. At the same time, there has been little in the way of product promotion, marketing rice to the American public as a particular green, bird-friendly, and habitat-saving consumer product. That has yet to develop.

How Do You Show Support for Birds and Rice?

- You can try a new t-shirt



If you want to literally wear your support for bird-friendly rice, consider this t-shirt. It delivers a simple message: "Buy American RICE - Preserve Bird Habitat."

The shirts are available in most sizes (S, M, L, XL, 2XL). These shirts are 100% cotton.

The first shirt costs \$20, and any additional shirts sent to the same address will cost \$15 each. (Maryland residents should add \$0.90 tax per shirt.)

You can order shirts directly from (and make a check out to):

Paul J. Baicich
P.O. Box 404
Oxon Hill, MD 20750

Available in April - *The story of bird feeding*

Bird feeding here has been many things in the last 120 years. Depending on the time and place, this seemingly simple practice has been a social cause, a trendy curiosity, an agricultural obligation, a serious hobby, a billion-dollar industry, a basis for scientific study, a road to conservation, and pure entertainment.

The story of bird feeding is one of invention and a reflection of our changing economic times, but it is also a story of how Americans have come to value the natural world.

A new book, scheduled for distribution in early April, tells the historic tale. The book is by Paul J. Baicich, Margaret A. Barker, and Carrol L. Henderson.

Feeding Wild Birds in America - Culture, Commerce, and Conservation

6 x 9, 320 pp.

76 color illustrations, 37 b&w photos. 3 maps. 2 tables. Index.

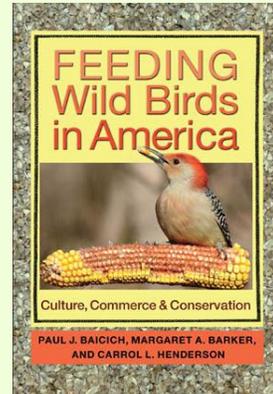
Flexbound (with flaps)

Price: \$27.95

978-1-62349-211-3

Also available as e-book

You can find more details - including comments from early readers - from [Texas A&M University Press](#).



Words to Consider:

"I wish to mention another threat to peace, which arises from the greedy exploitation of environmental resources. Even if 'nature is at our disposition,' all too often we do not respect it or consider it a gracious gift which we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations."

- Pope Francis (14 January 2014)

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

