



Beaufort Barrier Islands Global IBA

Important Bird Area (IBA) – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Important Bird Area (IBA) Program?

The IBA is an international effort to identify, monitor, and protect a global network of sites for the conservation of the world's birds?

How did the Beaufort Barrier Islands IBA come into existence?

The Fripp Audubon club spearheaded an effort to gather data and prepare a detailed application that was approved in November, 2009 by the Technical Committee of the South Carolina Important Bird Area (IBA) Program which is affiliated with the Audubon Society of SC. In May of 2015 the Fripp_Audubon Club's application to the National Audubon Society for the designation of the Beaufort Barrier Islands as a Global IBA was approved.

What area does the Beaufort Barrier Islands (IBA) encompass?

Six barrier islands in Beaufort County – Harbor, Hunting, Fripp, Pritchard's, Old Island, and Capers, – make up the Beaufort Barrier Islands IBA. The area extends 16 miles and includes 10,000 acres.

What characteristics of these barrier islands made them a candidate to receive IBA designation?

A number of endangered and rare birds, as well as a high concentration of a wide variety of birds, numbering over 182 species, make their homes on these islands that are surrounded by pristine salt marshes, tidal creeks, and rivers. This chain of islands is also a safe stopover for all birds migrating along the Atlantic Flyway.

What species of endangered birds make their home in the Beaufort Barrier Islands IBA?

The following species live in the IBA; Wood storks, Bald Eagles, Wilson's Plover, Least Tern, Piping Plover, Little Blue Heron, Glossy Ibis, American Oystercatcher, Black Skimmer, Gull-billed Tern, and Painted Bunting.

What are some species that are most numerous in the Beaufort Barrier Islands Important Bird Area (IBA)?

The most numerous species are; Brown Pelican, Laughing Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Black-bellied Plover, Hooded Merganser, Common Tern, Black Skimmer, Osprey, Cormorants, Willet, Sanderling, Cedar Waxwing, Tree Swallow, and various egrets, herons, and wrens.

How many Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are there?

BirdLife International is a global coalition of more than 100 country partner organizations. The Important Bird Areas Program was initiated by BirdLife International in Europe in the 1980's. Since then, over 8,000 sites in 178 countries have been identified as Important Bird Areas, with many national and regional IBA inventories published in 19 languages. Hundreds of these sites and millions of acres have received better protection as a result of the Important Bird Areas Program.

As the United States Partner of BirdLife International, the National Audubon Society administers the IBA Program in the U.S. Audubon launched its Important Bird Areas initiative in 1995, establishing programs state by state. To date there are 2,084 state IBA sites across the country encompassing 85,354,638 acres.

How do Important Bird Areas (IBAs) help birds?

An IBA helps birds by setting science based priorities for habitat conservation and promoting positive action to safeguard vital bird habitats. The Beaufort Barrier Islands IBA will encourage the preparation of inventories of birds that will aid the national research efforts and similar programs to focus on the continued stewardship of this unique natural resource.

How can you participate in the Beaufort Barrier Islands IBA?

You can participate by getting involved in Audubon club and other nature programs and activities, volunteer to perform the many tasks of documenting breeding locations, recording sightings of rare birds, and become aware of the important issues effecting the natural environments of the IBA.