

Update on American Oystercatchers in North Carolina

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NC Wildlife Resources Commission



NC STATE UNIVERSITY



Overview

- State listed as Species of Special Concern
- Only just beginning to collect coast-wide population and distribution data (first coast-wide survey conducted in 2004)
- Biologists with NC State University, Cape Lookout NS and Cape Hatteras NS have been monitoring and conducting research on oystercatchers on barrier island beaches since late 1990s
- Also several Audubon sites that have been monitored since 2002

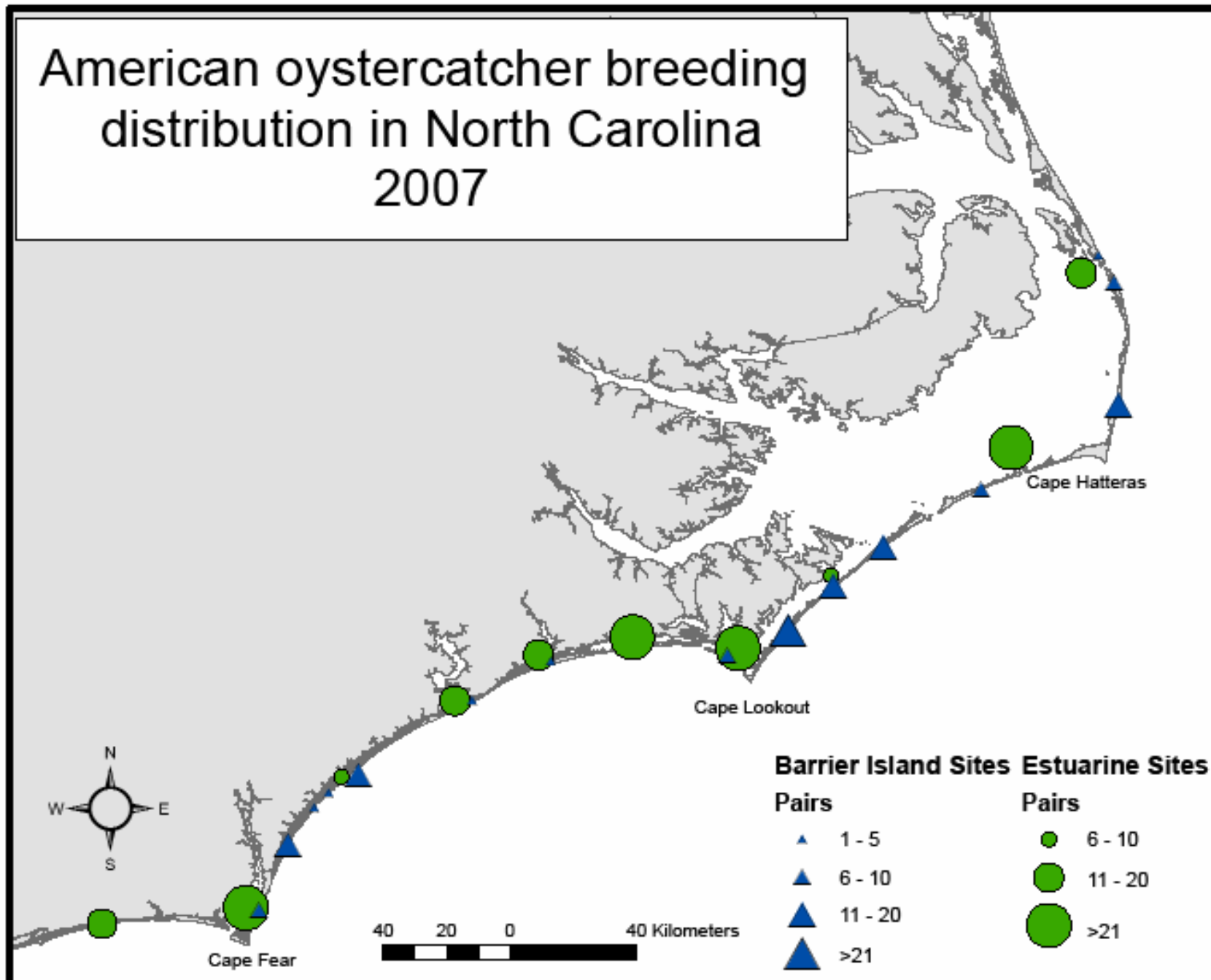


American Oystercatcher Population Estimates in NC

Year	# Pairs	# Singles	Total Birds
2004	337	27	701
2007	339	39	717



American oystercatcher breeding distribution in North Carolina 2007



Distribution

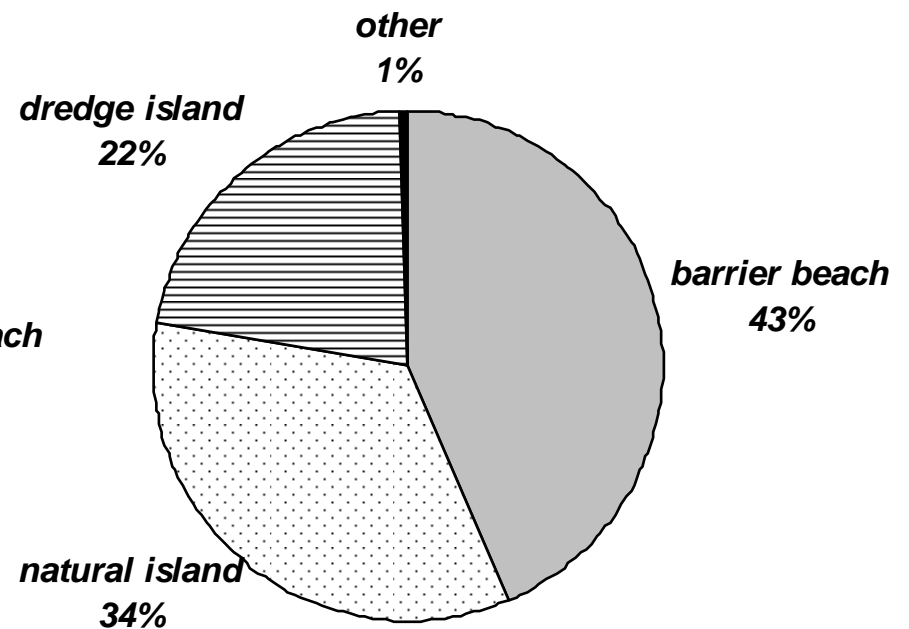
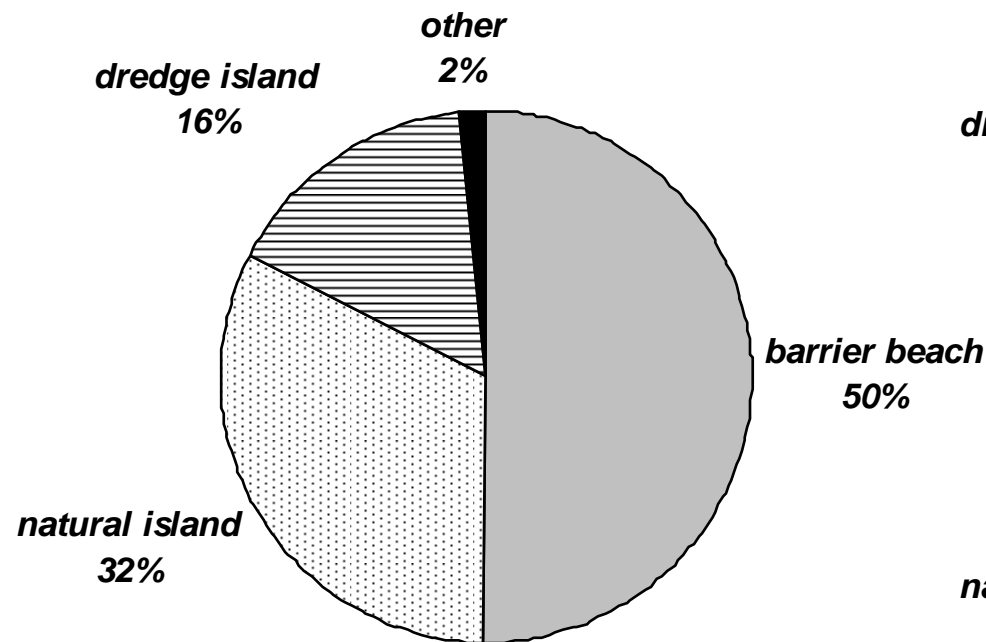
- Majority found from Carteret Co. South
- 40% on remaining undeveloped barrier islands with nearly 20% on Cape Lookout National Seashore
- 22% on Audubon or WRC owned/managed estuarine islands (roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ of these on Cape Fear River Islands)



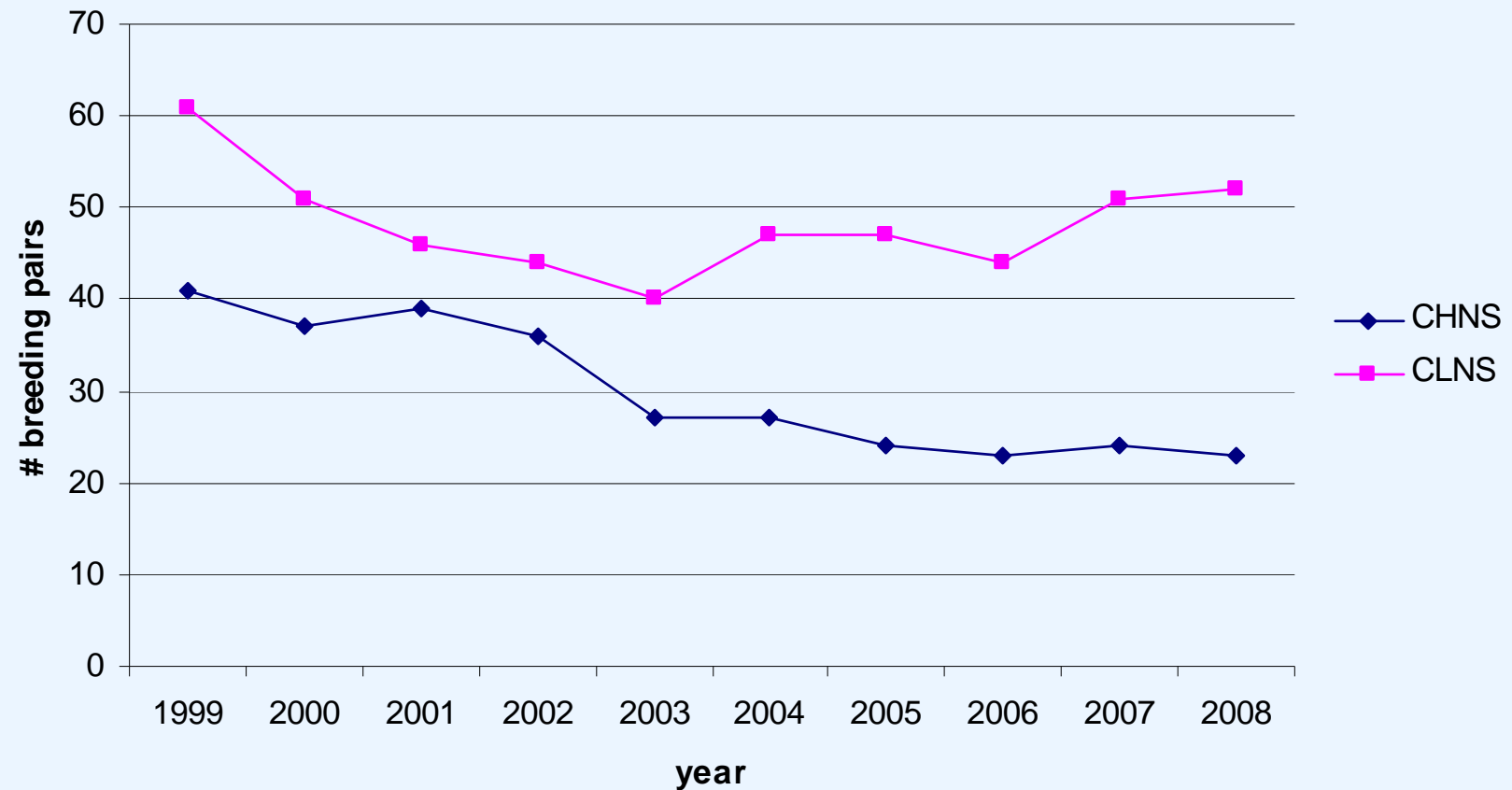
American Oystercatcher Distribution by Habitat

2004

2007



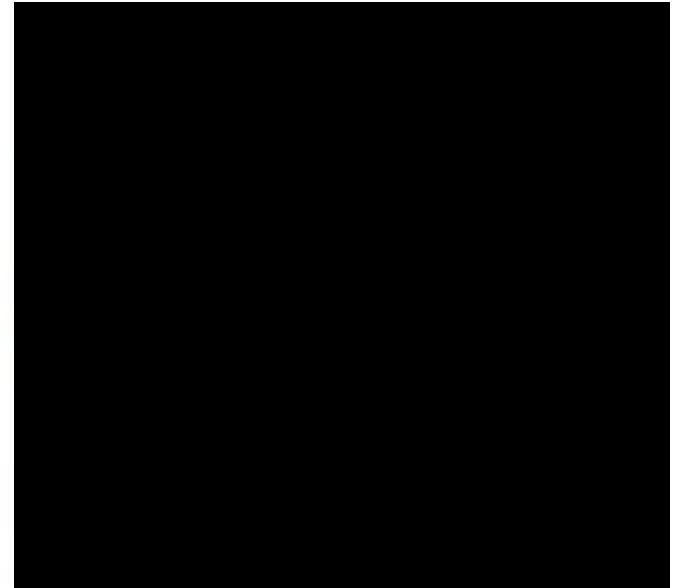
Trends at CLNS and CHNS



Bogue Inlet Productivity Monitoring

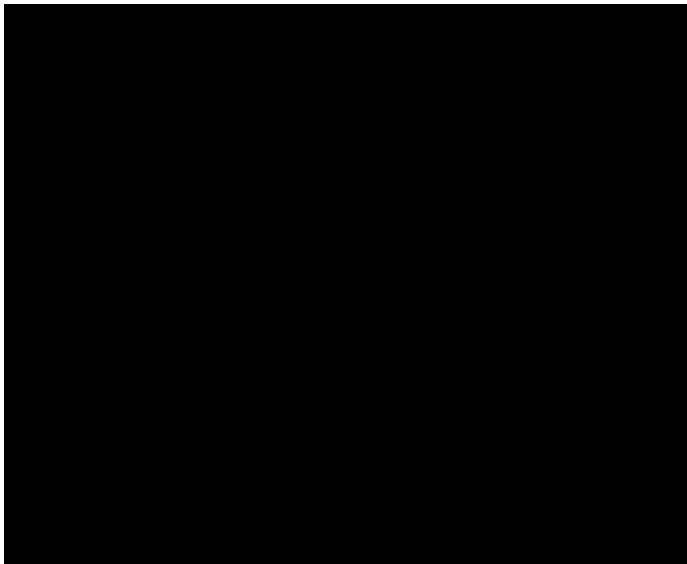


2004



2007

Coastal Planning and Engineering



Coastal Planning and Engineering

2008 Nesting Distribution Bogue Sound South



Productivity of American Oystercatchers in Bogue Sound, 2005-2008

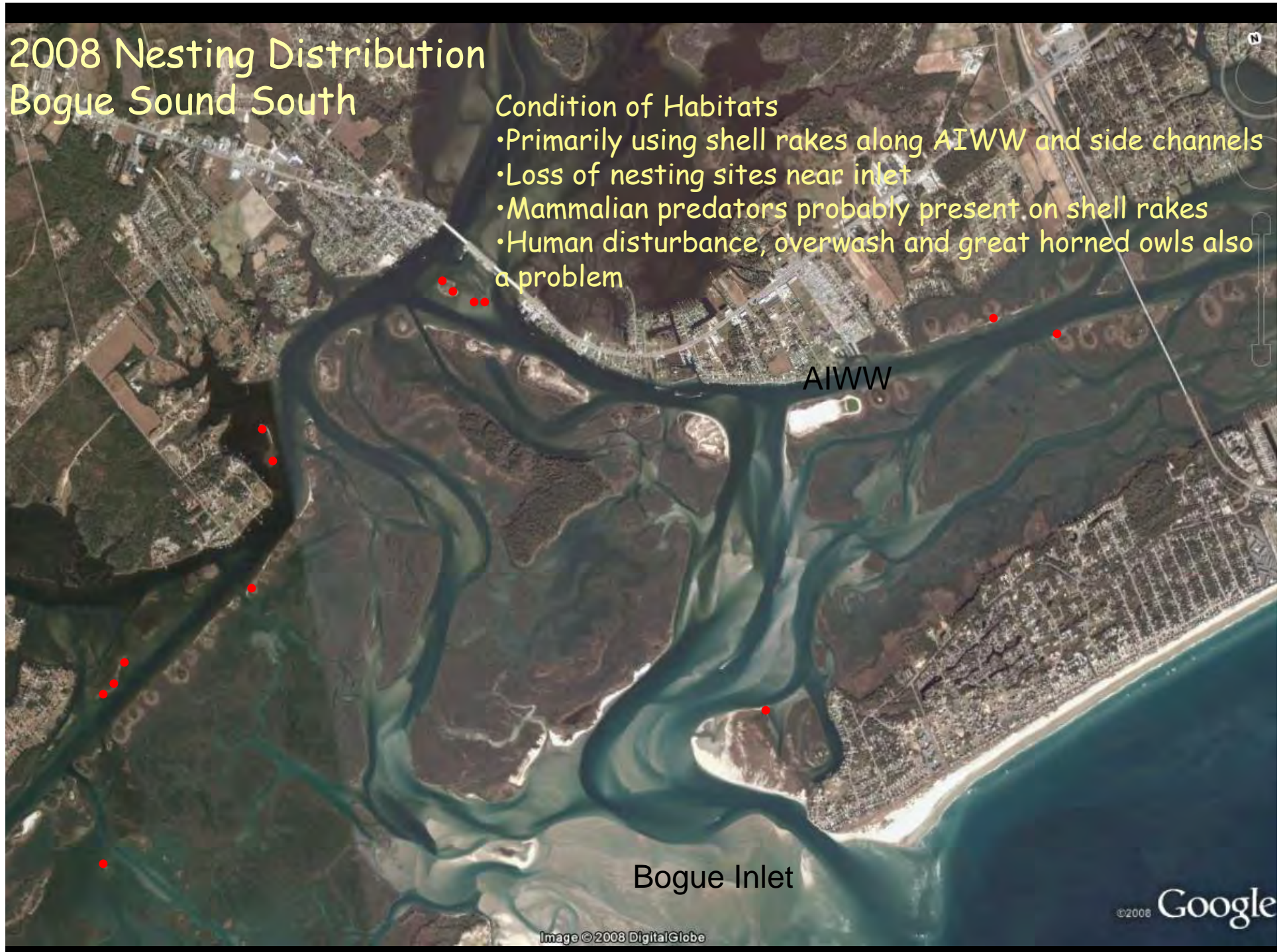
year	# pairs	Nesting success	# young fledged	Fledging success
2005	8	0.20	0	0.00
2006	10	0.36	1	0.10
2007	16	0.25	2	0.12
2008 S	14	0.29	2	0.14
2008 N	8	0.31	5	0.62



2008 Nesting Distribution Bogue Sound South

Condition of Habitats

- Primarily using shell rakes along AIWW and side channels
- Loss of nesting sites near inlet
- Mammalian predators probably present on shell rakes
- Human disturbance, overwash and great horned owls also a problem



2008 Nesting Distribution Bogue Sound North

AIWW

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2008 Breeding Season

site	# pairs	# young fledged	fledgling success
Cape Hatteras NS	23	17	0.74
Cape Lookout NS	63	15	0.24
Lea/Hutaff Island	10	0	0.00
Mason Inlet	7	1	0.14
Cape Fear River Islands	48	11	0.23
Bogue Sound	22	7	0.32

*preliminary results



Sept. 2003



Feb. 2007



Habitat Management

- Manage 22 estuarine islands for waterbirds; Audubon manages several more
 - Recent sand deposition (Cora June, New Dump, Wainwright, etc.)
 - EA for DOT Island, Bogue Inlet Shoal, Stumpy Point
- Manage several beach sites
- Need stewards for beach sites and for enforcement of WRC islands



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Land Acquisition

- Purchased Gull Island located in Pamlico Sound with Natural Heritage Trust Fund dollars
- Not looking great for land acquisition in the near future



Update on ORV Management Planning at NC National Seashores

- CHNS - going through Negotiated Rulemaking and NEPA Process
 - DEIS slated for release in Fall 2009
 - Final ORV Management Plan by 2011
- CLNS - going through NEPA Process
 - EIS alternatives released by Jan. 2009
 - Final ORV Management Plan by 2012



Questions?



A. Houston