

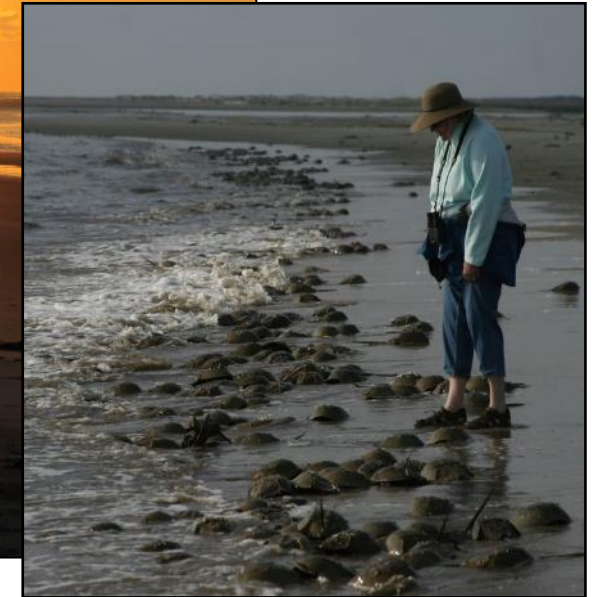
# Building Connections for Shorebird Protection

Abby Sterling, Manomet and Katie Higgins,  
UGA Marine Extension and GA Sea Grant



# The Georgia Bight offers...

- Extensive remote beaches
- High tidal range
- Vast expanses of mud and sand flats
  - Abundant food resources
  - Altamaha and other large river estuaries
- Minimal shoreline engineering, few modified inlets
- Many areas with limited disturbance
- Impoundments and managed wetlands



# Habitat of hemispheric importance throughout the year



August-October (Fall)  
March-May (Spring)

## Migration

Some shorebirds travel thousands of miles without stopping and need to rest and refuel here.



October-March

## Winter

Good food resources, and mild winters make Georgia's coast a critical winter destination for many species.



March-September

## Nesting

Threatened and rare species raise chicks on the beaches and need space to keep their babies safe

Birds rely on the Bight year-round!

# Issues

**Disturbance,  
habitat loss,  
climate change,  
low  
reproductive  
success**



# Issues

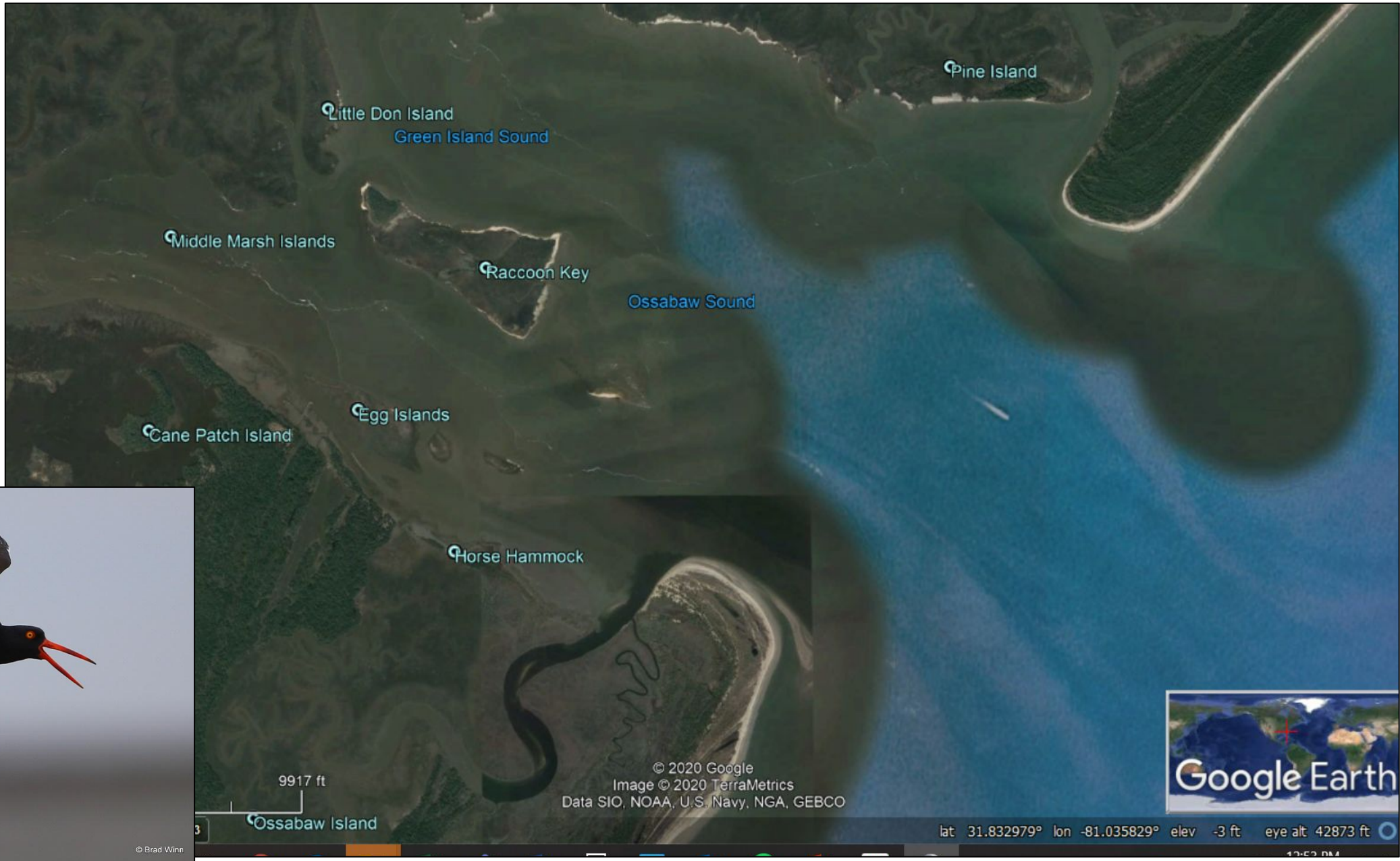
**Disturbance,  
habitat loss,  
climate change,  
low  
reproductive  
success**



# Tools

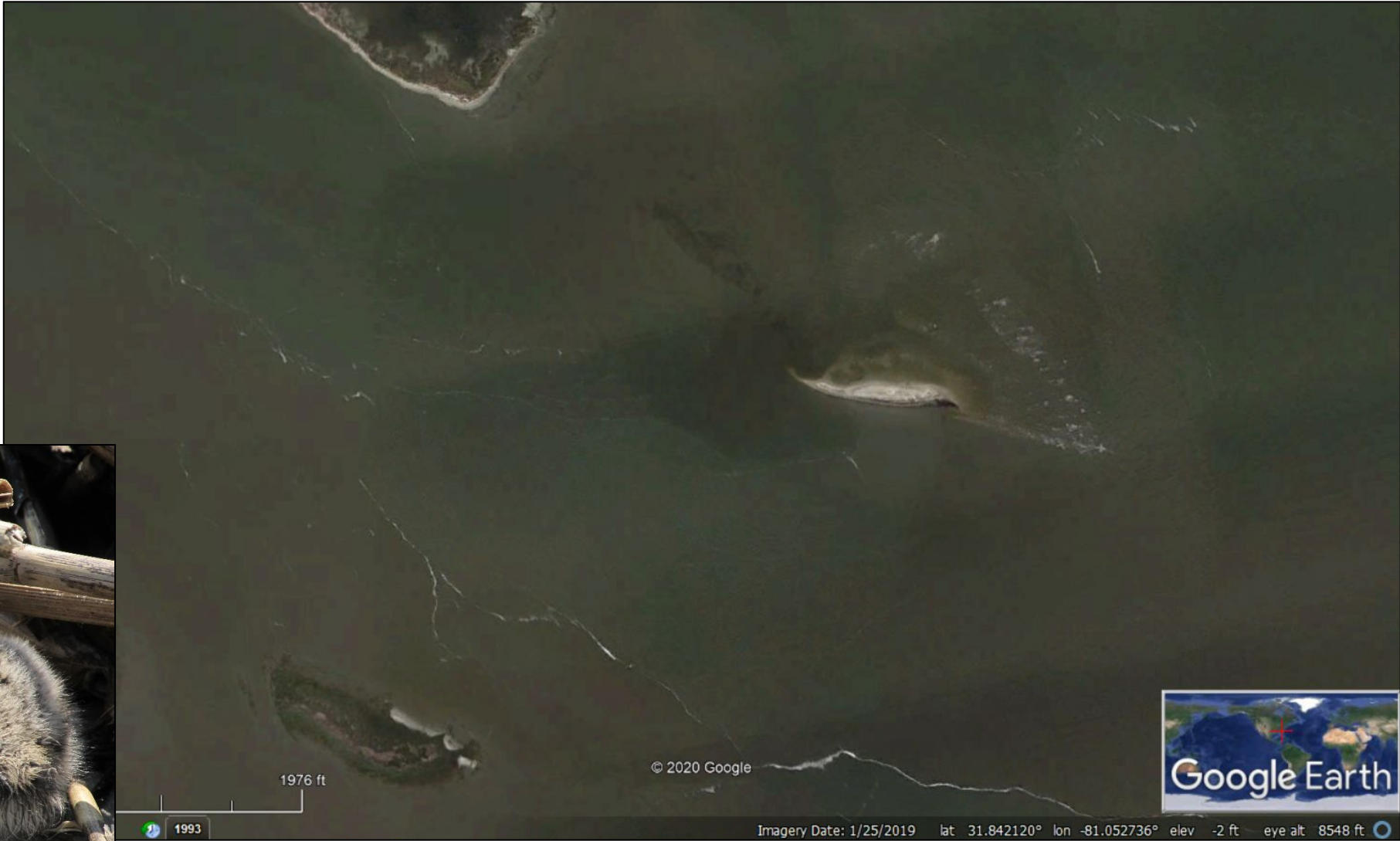
**Partnerships,  
education and  
outreach,  
research,  
management**

# Inlets



© Brad Winn

# Remote bars



# Shell Rakes





# Importance of building connections

Guides

Communities

Resource  
Managers

Tourists

# CARE certification program

Sustainable Ecotourism and  
Shorebird Habitat Protection:  
Building a Certification Program  
for Tour Guides



The Georgia coast provides critical habitat to shorebirds throughout the year and has been recognized as a landscape of hemispheric importance (WHSRN 2018).

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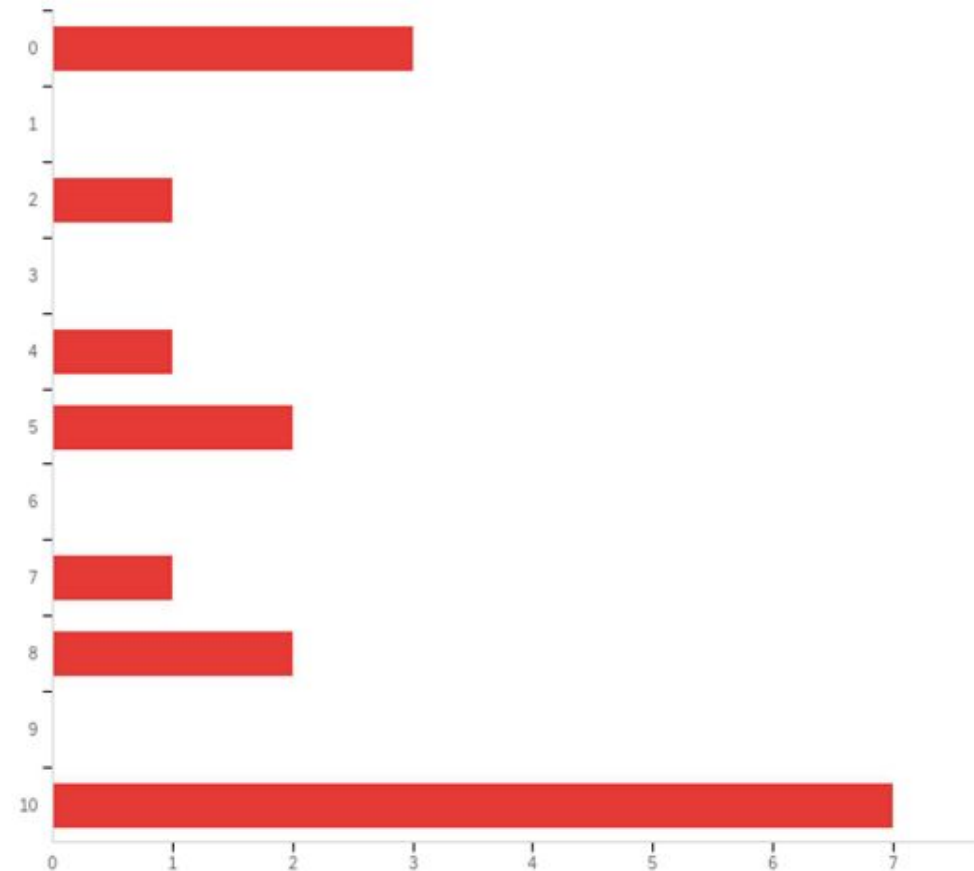


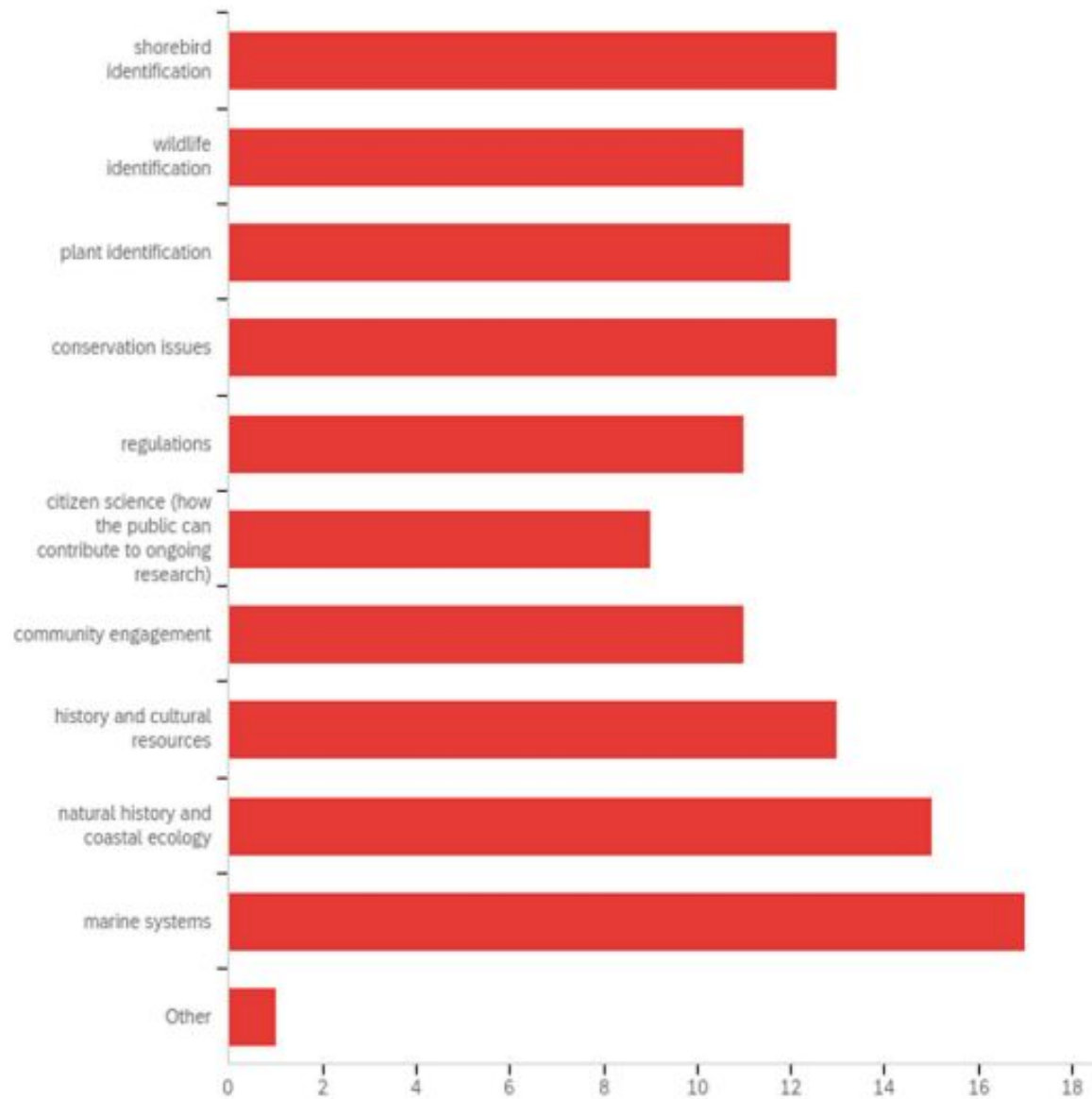
Supported by a 2-year Coastal Incentive Grant, hosted through GA DNR CRD.

# Steps to create program

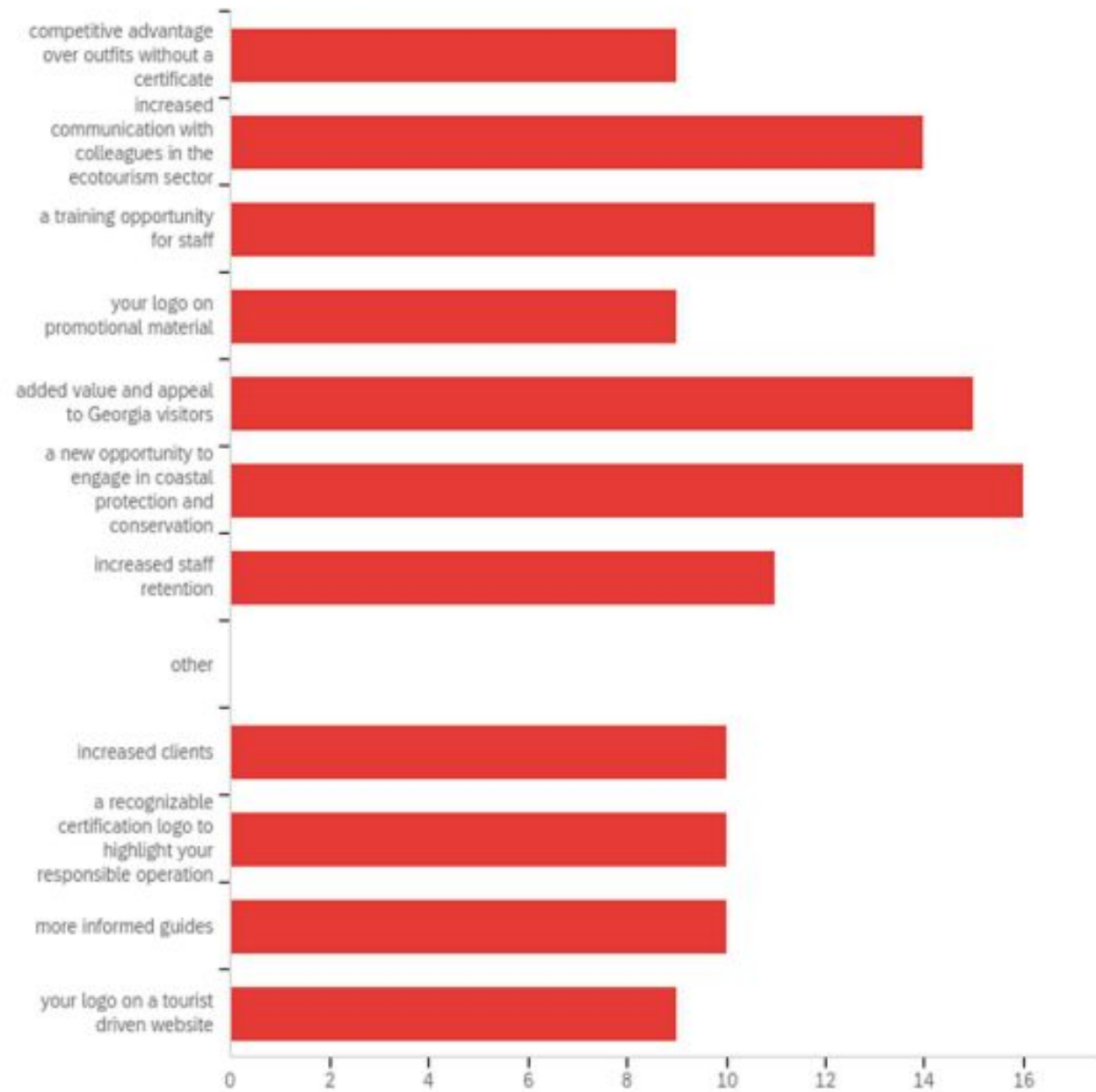
- Creating database of guides
- Forming a steering committee
- Survey guiding community to understand needs and logistics
- Building content
- Advertising course
- Assessing knowledge and impact
- Recertification and building community

Q10 - Gauge your interest in participating in an educational workshop leading to a certification in sustainable ecotourism (slide the bar below the dial to indicate your interest level: 0 is little or no interest and 10 is extremely interested):



**Q15 - What content would you like to see addressed in this educational workshop?****(check all that apply):**

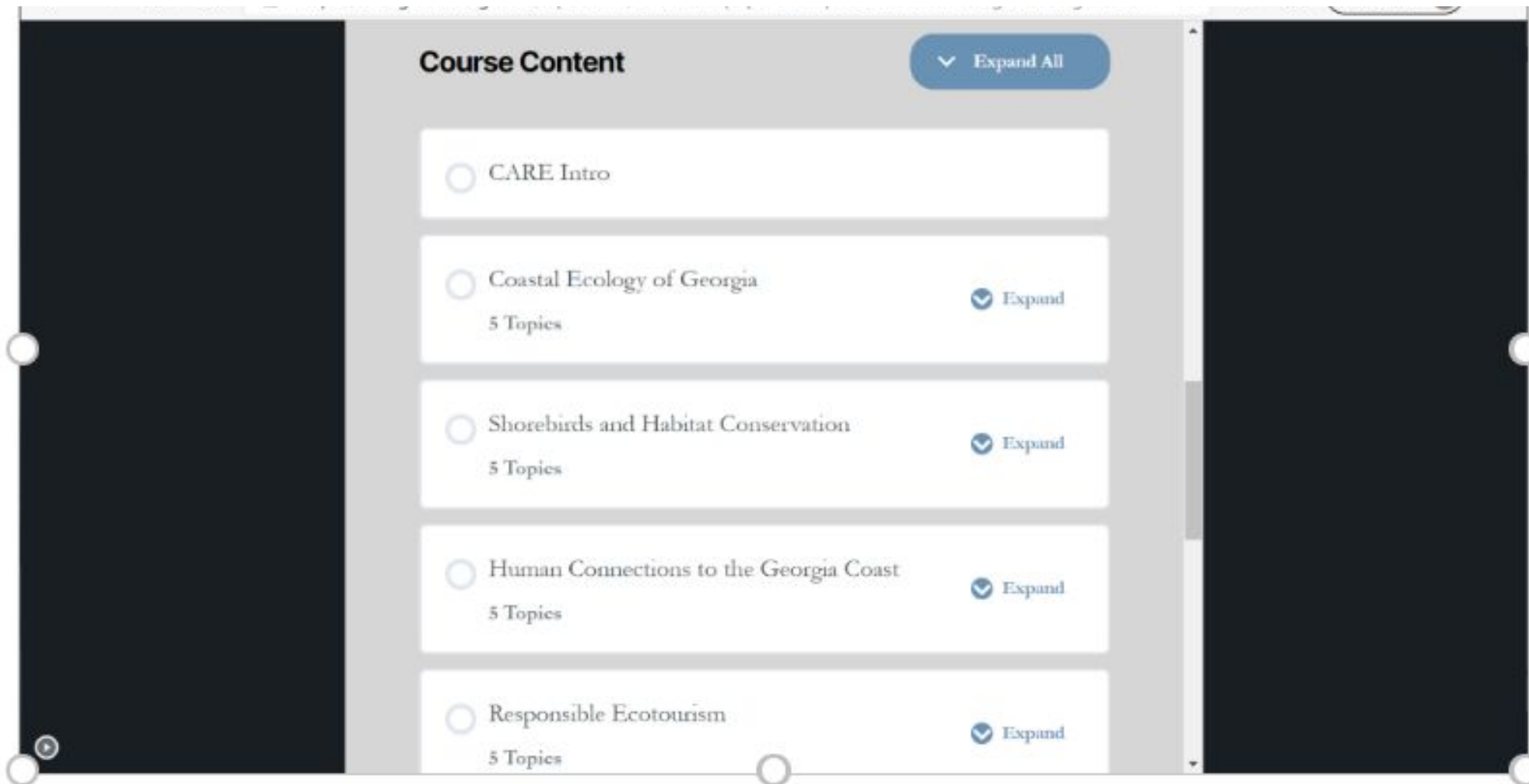
## Q20 - What benefits would you like to gain from a certificate program in ecotourism?



# Adjusting to Covid: Online Learning Platform



UGA's Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant has created an online classroom which will allow non-academic users access to the CARE certification course. Rich Braman ([rbraman@uga.edu](mailto:rbraman@uga.edu) and 404 695 7443) at the Center for Urban Agriculture is working with us to facilitate the hosting of the WordPress site and the use of LearnDash to create and maintain the course.



The course itself will be comprised of online user-paced content, live virtual discussion and a culminating open-air, field excursion. We anticipate the course completion to be 4 weeks total duration.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://care.gacoast.uga.edu/wp-admin/customize.php?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcare.gacoast.uga.edu...>. The page features a large heading "Responsible Ecotourism" in bold black text. Below the heading is a breadcrumb trail: "Private: C.A.R.E. Certification > Responsible Ecotourism" followed by a blue button labeled "IN PROGRESS". A blue header bar contains a document icon, the text "Lesson Content", and "0% COMPLETE | 0/5 Steps". Below this bar is a list of five items, each with a radio button:

- Nature-based Tourism Defined
- Legal Protections for Coastal Resources
- Wildlife Interactions
- Building Community
- Live Discussion

Each weekly lesson should take participants approximately 3 hours to complete including any actions, evaluation and live discussion.



# Tools for partners to access:

- Guidelines and best practices
- Training and learning opportunities
- Laminated guidebook
- Citizen science tools
- Increased communication between partners

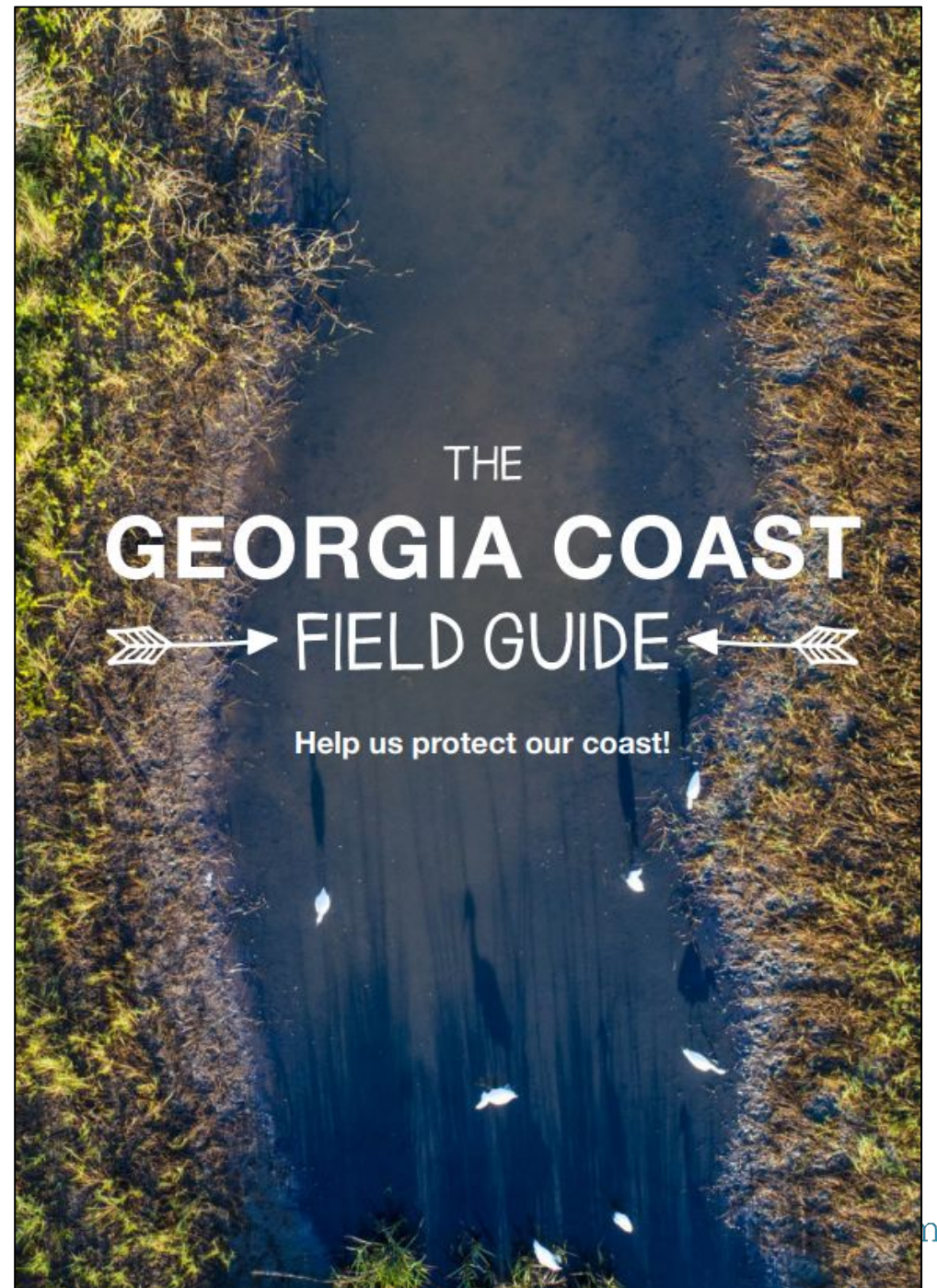


eBird

EDD Maps  
find • map • track



# Guide book and other gear



# Advertising CARE certification

**THE BRUNSWICK NEWS**  
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## Ecotourism certificate program aims to educate local guides

By LAUREN MCDONALD lmcdonald@thebrunswicknews.com Sep 6, 2021



ZURI contemporary credit



1 of 4

vistaprint

the black friday sale

5 DAYS ON NOV. 26

SUBMIT YOUR

We're always in your community. Let us know how we can help.

Go to for

GOLD

WTBC Live News Tracking the Vaccine Weather Investigates Community

## CARE certification program encourages sustainable tourism on the Georgia coast



By Mariah Congedo  
Published: Aug. 24, 2021 at 5:49 AM EDT | Updated: Aug. 24, 2021 at 11:43 AM EDT

SAVANNAH, Ga. (WTOC) - Kayak, paddleboard and boat tours are extremely popular along our coast, so a new program is working to make sure ecotour guides know the best practices to protect our wildlife while showing visitors Georgia's coastal beauty.

# Measuring success

- We saw a significant increase in knowledge among pre- and post- course assessment scores
- Approximately 6,836 tourists have been exposed to information shared by guides from the CARE course.
- About 33% of guides who completed final assessment have contributed some to citizen science efforts
- About 22% have completed additional professional development related to CARE course content in the six-months following the course.



# Building and growing a community

**Manage group**

C.A.R.E. Georgia  
Private group

Home

Admin tools

- Admin Assist  
0 actions, 0 criteria
- Member requests  
0 new today
- Badge Requests  
0 new today
- Membership questions
- Pending posts  
0 new today
- Scheduled Posts
- Activity log
- Group rules
- Member-reported content  
0 new today
- Moderation alerts  
0 new today
- Group Quality

**C.A.R.E. Georgia**  
Private group · 12 members

About Discussion Rooms Topics Members Events Media

What's on your mind, Abby?

Room Photo/video Tag people

New activity

**About**  
Welcome to the social for C.A.R.E. certified members. This is a platform for connecting, helping, communicating, and exploring the coastal Geor...  
See more

**Private**  
Only members can see who's in the group

# Thank you to our partners, funders and guides!



Learn more at: <https://gacoast.uga.edu/care/>  
Contact info: [asterling@manomet.org](mailto:asterling@manomet.org)

