

Delineation of Focus Areas

A primary objective of SAMBI was to delineate focus areas, areas in which conservation actions are implemented for high priority species and habitats. Focus areas are biologically based, and conservation actions are dictated by both biological foundation and opportunity. It is important that focus areas be large enough to provide all the necessary seasonal requirements for a wide variety of species. At the same time, small, distinct and sometimes disjunct areas that are equally important to high priority species should be included. Essentially, focus areas are important to the life history of a wide variety of high priority birds where financial and conservation resources can be expended to have the maximum positive impact on these bird populations (Hayes et al. 2002).

During the first workshop, SAMBI participants noted that focus areas should link important habitat areas, guard against fragmentation, include upland areas, and link existing protected areas. Public lands, other protected areas, and areas of high avian resource value were considered to serve as anchors from which to base delineation of focus areas ([Figure 4](#)). Existing waterfowl focus areas were used as examples or a starting point to delineate “all bird” focus areas. Waterfowl focus areas had already been described (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1988b), and were known to provide critical habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and waterbirds. Additionally, SAMBI participants agreed that focus areas should be places where all disciplines could work together, ignoring geopolitical boundaries.

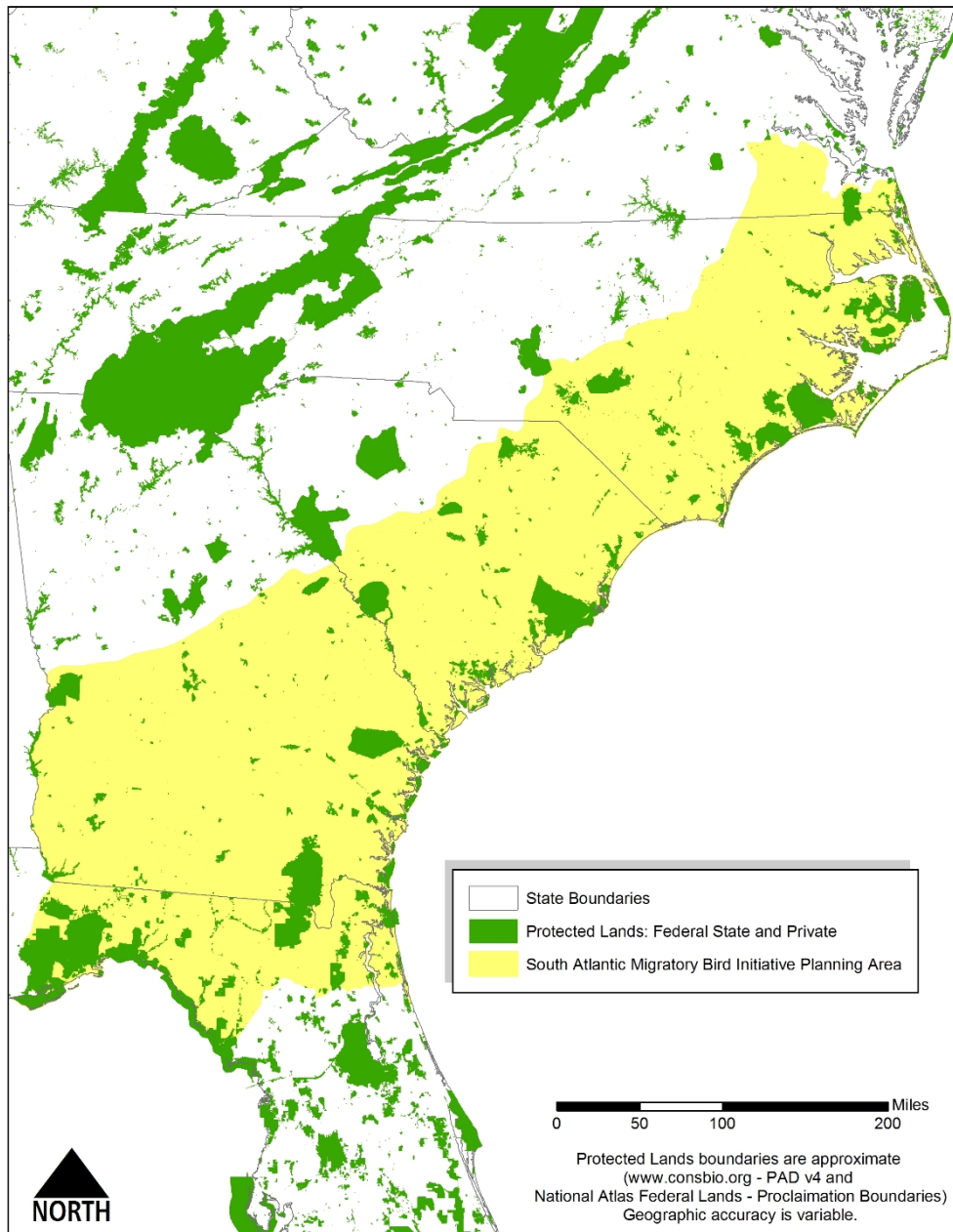


Figure 4. Map of Protected Lands (Federal, State and Private) within the SAMBI Region

State Working Groups were asked to delineate distinct focus areas for landbirds, shorebirds, waterbirds, waterfowl, or any other bird group (i.e. Northern Bobwhite/early successional/grassland species) in which to focus their conservation efforts. We used 1:250,000 topographic maps to delineate distinct focus areas for each bird group. All five states delineated these focus areas (see States section). Once these areas were delineated for each bird group, the areas were superimposed, displaying the overlap of focus areas. This layering of the various bird focus areas for each State can be displayed to represent one large “all bird” focus area for each state, and each of the five states can be combined to display one large “all bird” SAMBI focus Area. Additionally, focus

areas for each bird group for the entire SAMBI area can be displayed individually ([see States section](#)).

This effort allowed the participants to visualize differences in amounts and types of habitats across their own jurisdiction as well as across the entire BCR. Some states, such as North Carolina, worked on distinct focus areas for Northern Bobwhite and other early successional/grassland bird species through a new program called CURE (Cooperative Upland Habitat Restoration and Enhancement) where landscape scale focus areas were delineated to direct efforts for the conservation of high priority early successional species ([Figure 7](#)). Additionally, focus areas for early successional/grassland species have been identified in South Carolina ([Figure 8](#)) and Georgia ([Figure 9](#)).

Focus areas for each bird group, whether at the State or regional level (SAMBI), are important to each group for conservation projects, contributing to conservation of priority bird species at the local, regional, flyway, and continental level. Additionally, SAMBI partners recognize that these focus areas are important for pursuing single bird group projects, such as for waterfowl or shorebirds, or even projects focused on a single high priority species. Thus, projects in focus areas need not necessarily contribute to multiple bird group conservation, but contribute to regional biodiversity. The break-down of sites allows groups that function on a smaller scale, such as many non-profits and state agencies, to contribute to the conservation action already being taken on the larger, national scale by federal agencies.