

Ecobon

March 2020 No. 398

Native Plants for Birds

Native plants are good for birds, but we often wonder what plants we should use? Where should I plant them in my yard? Where can I buy them? HH Audubon member Jim Cubie will be speaking to members at our March meeting about this topic to help birds in this critical time..

For those of you who don't know Jim, he is an avid birder and gardener and has developed, with the help of Clemson, some plans for native plant gardens. Some samples are on this <u>website</u>.

The goal of this website is to make native plants simple. You can find landscape plans that incorporate native trees and shrubs in addition to an explanation as to where to plant them. The website shows photos and information to use 50 native plants, trees and flowers that thrive in the Lowcountry. Most of them may be purchased or ordered at any of a number of nurseries in the area.

Of course, your yard may not look like the simple rectangle shown on these landscape plans. But the plans can be adapted to your layout. There is also a more extensive, professionally-designed native plant landscape plan on this website that includes ground covers, ferns and flowers in addition to trees and shrubs.

Recent research shows that if 80 percent of the trees and shrubs in a yard are native, those plants will produce enough insects for birds to be able to successfully raise their young. By all means include a native oak in your plan. As Doug Tallamy, the leading expert on native plants, insects and birds has said, "One cannot overestimate the importance of oak trees to wildlife."

Jim has worked on environmental and conservation matters for his entire career, including in a presidential campaign and as Chief Counsel of the Senate Agriculture Committee in Washington. Since retiring, he has concentrated on developing new approaches to increasing the adoption by birders of practices which benefit birds.

When: March 12, 3 pm

Where: Palmetto Electric Company 111 Mathews Dr., Community Room, Hilton Head Island

Speaker: Jim Cubie, Hilton Head Audubon member and conservationist Topic: *Native Plants and More*

HH Audubon Wants You!

Since our origins in the early 1970s, HH Audubon has been sustained by the work of volunteers. Our volunteers lead field trips, conduct educational programs for children, advocate for pro-conservation policies, help maintain the Audubon Newhall Preserve, aid the Pinckney Island NWR – and guide our overall efforts through service on our committees and Board of Directors.

Our 2020-2021 board and board committees will be chosen in April, and the newly elected board will convene for its first meeting in May. Through our nominating process, we strive to advance our commitment to being a diverse and inclusive organization where people



of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can enjoy and promote the beauty of nature together.

In particular, we are looking for volunteers who can help in the following areas :

- People with management skills (including finance management) and an interest in conservation policy and advocacy
- Individuals interested in our Administration, Program Committee, Communications and Membership team.
- Mentors/teachers with a passion for working with young people to help build the next generation of birders and conservationists.
- Coordinators to help with logistics of monthly meetings, including A/V support and aid with setup/breakdown before and after our programs.
- Workers for our Newhall and Pinckney workdays.

In general, we need volunteers for any and all activities that help us advance our mission of ensuring that Hilton Head remains a bird-friendly, conservation—minded community where people and nature thrive together.

If you love nature, believe in our work and can spare a couple of hours a month, we need your help to keep our organization vital and strong.

Interested in learning more? Please contact us at hhitaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org

NOTE: if you are trying to email any of the individuals in this issue, please copy and paste the email address in your email program — the email links are currently not working.

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The *Ecobon* is a monthly publication (September through May) of Hilton Head Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Subscription is a benefit of membership.

Direct inquiries to: P.O. Box 6185 Hilton Head Island, SC 29938

hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org

President's Message

The end of this month and the beginning of March will see me in recovery mode after a knee replacement. Since I won't be able to get out birding for a while, I have been plotting "shut-in birding." If you can't get outside to see the birds, then the next best thing is to bring the birds to you.

For this I already have a head start,

with many feeding stations located within easy viewing of our house.

Indeed, I often question just who is the actual owner of our marsh-side deck...us or the wildlife. Even though water and food abounds in other locales, our deck remains the most popular.

To entice a variety of birds, and not just seed eaters, we are providing more than the usual black sunflower seeds, peanut suet and mixed seed, which are standard fare for most. We use fruits to entice Baltimore Orioles. Now we have branched out to include mealworms, peanuts, safflower seeds, and Bark Butter (available at Wild Birds Unlimited).

Non-seed eaters love mealworms. For years, the Eastern Bluebirds ignored our worms, even stepping over them to get to the bird water. Suddenly and without explanation, they now love them and eagerly await the morning ration. Mealworms are also attracting the Carolina Wrens, Northern Mockingbirds and a variety of warblers. Peanuts are magnets for the battling Northern Cardinals, Tufted Titmice, Carolina Chickadees, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Blue Jays and woodpeckers.

After a few weeks of observations, feeding strategies became clear. Many of the birds grabbed a nut and flew off to eat it. The Cardinals like to eat on the deck where they can guard the stash; the Red-bellied Woodpeckers take a nut, fly away and return within 30 seconds, and this goes on until most of the nuts have disappeared. Jays believe in the all-you-can-eat scenario, stuffing their gut as fast as possible until you question if they will be able to get airborne.

A diversity of food and habitat seems to be the key to drawing in diverse species. We did a trial count over three days last week and saw more than 30 species, without adding in the marsh and creek birds. I sure hope this is going to satisfy me for almost a month, but I don't know if there is a choice.

Jane Hester

Editor's note: Our community partners at Wild Birds Unlimited on Hilton Head Island, now celebrating their Third Anniversary, are available to provide advice on all your backyard birding needs in order to get you ready for spring migration! Visit their website.

Remembering Barry Lowes

by Jane Hester



On Saturday, February 8, Hilton Head Audubon Board Member Emeritus, Barry G. Lowes, 93, died in Toronto, Canada. Barry was well known on the island as a passionate and leading voice for conservation and growth practices that incorporated best practices for wildlife.

Barry shared his passion wherever he could, and David Lauderdale of the *Island Packet* recalls many interviews with Barry over the

years. While he never converted David to birding, his personal stories about birds and birding touched David and greatly enhanced his respect for birds. See David's remembrance here: <u>Island Packet</u>.

It was because of birds that Barry and wife Philomena were drawn to the island. While watching a broadcast of the Volvo Cup tennis match (later to become the Family Circle Cup) held on Hilton Head, they could hear a loud chorus of birds in the background. The Lowes decided to check the island out and eventually made their winter residence in Baynard Cove overlooking Calibogue Sound.

An early member of Hilton Head Audubon, Barry headed our Christmas Bird Count for 30 years. His philosophy of inclusion and his policy of spreading his love of the natural world to all has been the cornerstone that has made our count a great success. As remembered by HH Audubon member, Charlotte White:

"For some years, I co-chaired the Christmas Bird Count with Barry Lowes, at his invitation. He was the skilled leader and expert ornithologist and I was the recorder or computer assistant. I learned from his leadership about the importance of the Christmas Bird Count, about the dedicated people in our community, about our diverse bird habitats, about advocacy, about migratory bird issues and about conservation. Mostly from Barry, I learned what a jewel this place is for birds and for people who are curious about birds. And yes, I learned to be alert and be quiet on field trips, with a set of ready binoculars! Barry taught all these things in the most gracious and courteous manner!"

Not only did Barry head the Christmas Bird Count, but he participated in as many counts as he possibly could, often dashing from one count to another. Back in the days when the count was spread out over several days, many groups got to enjoy Barry as a member. Palmetto Bluff and May River by water were two of the counts he frequented.

Lois Lewis, our Education Chair, recalls:

"Barry Lowes was a man I admired, and I am proud that he was also my friend. I met him for the first time at a special event on Pinckney Island. He was the host for a flying demonstration featuring a falconer he knew. His educational talk was inspiring, showing a reverence for these birds and their place in the world. I will always be grateful for the friendship that we ultimately shared, thanks to mutual friends and many wonderful days on the May River during

the Christmas Bird Count. He taught me how to see a bird's profile and posture to spot subtle differences. After his hearing and vision began to fail, he only needed a decent description to



a decent Left to right: Eduction Chair, Lois Lewis; HH
 description to Audubon President, Jane Hester; Emeritus Barry recite page and Lowes with special guest Miss Piggy!

verse from his mental field guide. He repeated annually how he loved December solstice because the days would begin to lengthen. I want to thank him for his steadfast support for me as a teacher. He made me feel valued, and his contributions to the world will live on for generations."

Barry was a world-class birder and an avid photographer; he and Phil made yearly trips to points far and wide, sometimes alone and at others accompanied by sons and their families. Some lucky folks got handwritten notes on the magnificent stationery he created from his photographs.

As much as Barry meant to those on the island, he had an even larger life in Canada. In 1958, he and his wife Phil, founded Camp Timberlane, located a few hours north of Toronto. There they created a camp where kids could spend their summers, connect with nature, learn new skills, become part of a family and express their individuality.

With more than 250 staffers and hundreds upon hundreds of campers every year, Camp Timberlane remained Barry's favorite place. He managed to remain active at the camp after it was sold and spent his summers there, even his last. Barry educated so many and touched so many lives. A plaque near the camp ice cream shop quotes Barry, "As a counsellor you drop a pebble into the pond, never knowing how far the ripples will spread." Barry threw a lot of pebbles in his time and the ripples still reverberate.

Notes From The Field

February Field Trip: Bear Island and Donnelly WMAs

On Sunday, February 16, we visited both Bear Island and Donnelly Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) in Green Pond. Our leader was Lowcountry birding veteran, Buddy Campbell, who set the stage for a fantastic day of birding. It was cool enough to keep the bugs down, but not the birds. Among the 67 species tallied, we saw White Pelican, Tundra Swan, American Avocet, Roseate Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Merlin, Bonaparte's Gull, Eastern Meadowlark, plus plenty of shorebirds and waders, terns, waterfowl, raptors and songbirds. Bear Island WMA has just reopened after being closed to the public for the winter months. If you can get out there in the next couple of weeks, please visit both of these terrific birding locations before the winter visitors head off to their breeding grounds.

Throughout the month of March and April, we'll see some interesting seasonal changes take place to our local bird populations in and around Hilton Head. Here's some of the ways you can get out and bird with us.

March Birding Field Trip - Birding the Mobley Tract (*sold out*)

Where: The Port Royal Sound Fdtn. Maritime Center

When: Saturday, March 7; 9:00 am - noon

Leader: Juliana Smith, South Coast Project Manager,

Coastal Conservation League

Limit: 20 participants

Fees: \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members

With March birding in the Lowcountry, anything can happen! This trip provides a fun and educational morning bird walk along the 95-acre Mobley Tract at the Maritime Center in Okatie. Preserved in 2016 by the Beaufort County Land Preservation Program, this property sits along the beautiful rural greenway between northern and southern Beaufort County. The trail will lead us through rich maritime forest and salt marsh habitats where a variety of birds and native plants can be seen. We will search for warblers and other songbirds as well as shorebirds, waders, raptors and more.

We're thrilled to have local naturalist and seasoned leader Juliana Smith lead this walk for us. Juliana's bird research includes banding marsh sparrows, shorebirds (including Red Knots) and a variety of neotropical migrants to help biologists better understand migratory patterns of these local birds. She's been a naturalist on Kiawah Island, leading hundreds of birding trips, and now brings her talents to the Coastal Conservation League.

April Field Trip

Where: The Solomon Tract at Savannah NWR

When: Saturday, April 18; 8:30 am - 11:30 am

Leader: Lynn Hodgson, Georgia Master Naturalist

& HH Audubon Birding Leader

Limit: 20 participants

Fees: \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members

The Solomon Tract portion of the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge sits on the Georgia side of the refuge and boasts 887 acres of woodland, freshwater marsh and open field habitats. Past trips to Solomon Tract have produced up to a dozen species of warblers, including Prothonotary and Worm-eating Warblers, as well as a variety of sparrows, vireos, flycatchers, buntings, grosbeaks and more.

To ensure we are there during the active morning period, we'll begin the walk at 8:30 am. Expect to walk up to two miles through the tract, with plenty of stopping along the way.

Carpooling is encouraged as there is limited parking at the Solomon Tract.

Directions and additional details will be available upon registration.

Pre-registration required — Registration will open on <u>March 16</u>. Please look for our registration email the first week of March.

Tuesday Morning Bird Walks at Audubon Newhall Preserve

Where: Audubon Newhall Preserve, 88 Palmetto Bay Rd, HHI

When: Tuesdays, 8:30 - 10:30 am

Come out and join us for a Tuesday morning walk at Newhall. We're there every Tuesday from 8:30 am to about 10:00 am, identifying and discussing the variety of species found at this beautiful site. As always, you don't need to sign up, and there's no charge — just show up. Hope to see you there!

Quick Bird Trips

Because birds don't always wait around for us to publish the next *Ecobon*, we've created the Hilton Head Audubon Quick Trip List. When we hear about a sudden birding occurrence that we'd like to see in the next day or two, we will send an email to folks on the list to see who might be able to join us. If you'd like to be on the list, send an email to Fieldtrips@hiltonheadaudubon.org.

Costa Rica Birding Trip

Join birding experts and naturalists Carlos Chacon and Sean Dennis for a bird watching trip to Costa Rica from May 25-June 2, 2020. This trip is limited to 12 participants and includes three locations within the country: the Central Pacific coast, which is a dry forest environment and home to the spectacular Scarlet Macaw; the Monteverde mountains, a cloud forest habitat with many highland species including the famous Resplendent Quetzal; and the Arenal Volcano on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica. As a world-famous birding destination, participants will see toucans, several species of parrots, hummingbirds and other tropical beauties.

By the time this *Ecobon* is available, this Costa Rica trip may already be filled. If this is the case, Carlos will start a waiting list for those who want to be notified if anyone cancels and a slot opens up.

In addition, if there are enough people willing to commit and pay in full, Carlos is willing to schedule and lead a second trip with a similar itinerary 2-3 weeks after the May 25 trip concludes.

Please email Carlos Chacon at <u>eco1adventures@gmail.com</u> for details.



Lesson's Motmot by John Bloomfield

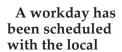
Audubon Newhall Preserve

by Bob Clemens Audubon Newhall Chairman

We are off to a great start to 2020 at the Audubon Newhall Preserve. In January, we hosted 126 visitors from 20 states and three foreign countries! Perhaps as important, many of our visitors left wonderful comments on our visitor logs. Remember, even if you are local and visit the Preserve frequently, please post in the log, and let us know what you've observed! Please list your northern state if you're "snowbirds".

Every visitor counts toward our Hilton Head Accommodations Tax (ATax) application. We now have updated *Birding in Hilton Head* brochures for the map box (funded through an ATax grant), so take a peek even if you think you know every yard of the trails in the Preserve.

Recently a new magnolia tree was planted just north of the parking area to honor the memory of Denny Jones. Denny's widow, Pauline Jones, served on the Hilton Head Audubon Board for many years, including service as our Treasurer.





Planting the Denny Jones Magnolia Tree

Rotary for Saturday, March 7, at 9 am, and everyone is invited to come and help. Vice chair Rita Kernan will supervise renourishing the soil in the butterfly garden, so bring shovels, garden rakes and wheelbarrows or carts. Please direct any questions to Rita at rakhhi@aol.com.

Thanks to Rita's efforts, the Preserve was awarded a grant of \$870 from the Women's Association of Hilton Head Island (WAHHI) for an irrigation system for our Butterfly Garden. Plans are underway to enrich the soil on the March 7 work day, and we plan to install the sprinkler system in the spring.

Our trail monitors are walking the trails and sweeping the deck and boardwalks weekly. Our thanks to Aliceon Stillman, (January), Karen Penale (February) and Jack Coleman (March) who have performed this valuable duty. If you want to volunteer at Newhall, please contact me at RClemens318@roadrunner.com.

Through Our Binoculars

Our local birding has been very good during the last month, although it has been one of our mildest winters. We haven't had a large influx of American Goldfinches yet and only one irruptive species reported (Purple Finch). We have had a good number of out-of-season/overwintering birds reported. Most of winter songbirds are still here as are the usual duck species, although their numbers have been down due to milder temperatures up north.

Accidental Species

• Limpkin at Sun City (ongoing)

Rare Species

 Ash-throated Flycatcher at Sea Pines Forest Preserve



Ash-throated Flycatcher by Mary Alice Tartler

- Black-chinned Hummingbird at a Savannah
- Fox Sparrow at Chatham County Wetlands in Georgia
- Brown Creeper at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge

Out-Of-Season Species

- Painted Bunting, Summer Tanager, Indigo Bunting
- Black-necked Stilt, Least Bittern
- Northern Waterthrush, Prairie Warbler
- Many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds

Uncommon Species

- Baltimore Oriole, Rusty Blackbird
- American Kestrel, Merlin, Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Long-billed Dowitcher, American Avocet, Glossy Ibis, Stilt Sandpiper, endangered Piping Plover, American White Pelican

- Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Redhead (duck), Ruddy, Mottled and American Black Ducks, Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup
- Hairy Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Blue-headed Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Winter and House Wrens, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eurasiancollared Dove, Purple Finch



American Avocets by John Bloomfield

Common/Good Find Species

- Bald Eagles nesting with chicks
- Ospreys starting to nest
- Flocks of Cedar Waxwings and American Robins

Many thanks to all for reporting your bird sightings: Jane / Abe Hester, Bob Speare, Dottie Bass, Mary Alice Tartler, Carol Clemens, Carol Tunnicliffe, Fran / Denny Baer, Shelia / Roger Johnson, Kay Grinnell, Alan Biggs, Dick Phillips, Kathy / Grant Greiger, John Bloomfield, Lynn Hodgson, Tom Marko, Aaron Palmieri, Diana Churchill, Steve Calver, Russ Wigh, Buddy Campbell, Chris Marsh and many visitors and others.

To report a bird sighting that is Accidental, Rare, Out-of-Season, Uncommon, First-of-the-Year or First-of-the-Season or a species that you consider to be a Good Find call 843-432-2661 or email us at BirdingFriends@yahoogroups.com. Please state your full name, the bird species sighted, date and location of your sighting and other pertinent information. It's a great time to go birding with a possible early spring coming soon!

AuduBon Mots by: Roger@RogerSchillerstrom.com Audubon SOUTH CAROLINA









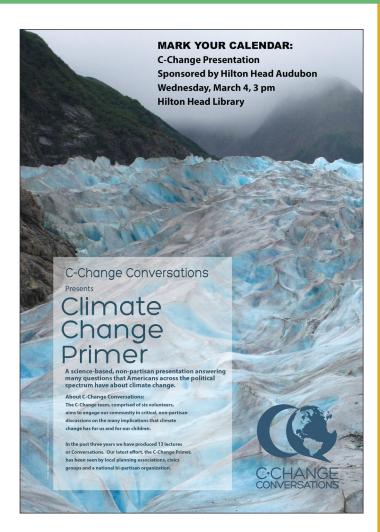


Willet, courtesy of John James Audubon

Submissions to Ecobon

If you have an item you would like to submit for publication in Ecobon, please send an email to hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org. Articles must be received by the 15th of each month for the next month's issue. All editorial decisions are final.

Follow us on Social Media. You can find us on Facebook here. Once there, join our member page, where you can share photos and interact with other local birders. You can also share photos with us on Instagram. Tag your photo #hiltonheadaudubon for a chance to be featured on one of our social media platforms.





- · Bird Seed, Blends & Suet
- Bird Feeders & Houses
- Mounting Hardware
- Birdbaths & Accessories
- Binoculars & Field Guides
- Nature Books & Gifts

Festival Centre at Indigo Park 45 Pembroke Dr., Suite 130 Hilton Head Island, SC 29926 843-802-2010 HiltonHeadWBU@yahoo.com

Our Next Generation of Birders



The Education Committee has been busy this year. Nine members of HH Audubon have stepped up to form a cohesive team of presenters, inviting local students and teachers to participate in The Great Backyard Bird Count. This international count, sponsored by our national Audubon as well as Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies of Canada, takes place every year in the middle of February. It is a perfect opportunity to fulfill our purpose to "promote awareness and appreciation of

nature, to preserve and protect wildlife, as well as to encourage responsible environmental stewardship."

At the time of this writing, we have presented our program to more than 900 students in the following schools: Beaufort Academy, Bluffton Middle, Cross School, HHI IB Elementary, HHI Middle, HH Prep, Island Academy, May River Montessori School and McCracken Middle School. Others are scheduled for Beaufort Middle and HH Creative Arts Elementary Schools.

The program includes a slideshow of local birds and field exercise in which students find and identify our feathered friends. In the classroom, stories abound from students sharing their own experiences. For example, upon hearing the cooing call of the Mourning Dove, kids confessed, "I thought that was an owl!" Others smiled to exclaim they know that "chirp-petty, chirp-petty" of our Carolina Wren, especially first thing in the morning. Outdoors, once students donned pairs of binoculars, they become instant scientists, tiptoeing along the path and shushing each other to hear the calls and be first to spot new birds.

The whole experience has been very rewarding for our team members who enjoy observing the enthusiasm of the children, the dedication of the teachers — and laying a foundation for the next generation of bird watchers.

We offer special thanks to Coastal Discovery Museum and The Low Country Institute for supplying binoculars for this program.

HH Audubon members who would like to become involved with this program should contact Education Committee Chair Lois Lewis at oeblewis@gmail.com or any board member.

Welcome New Members

A warm welcome to our new members:

Gordon Fair
Pamela Harrington
Linda Lotz
Jan McKelvey
Stephen Mueller
Patricia Tokar

Members and non-members can join, renew or make donations on our website. We accept Visa, Mastercard or Discover. An email will be sent when your member-



ship is due. You may choose to pay online through our secure portal or mail in a check (the website has a form for you to fill out and mail with your check). Please do not mail in a check without the form. We continually update our records and want to make sure you're receiving our emails and *The Ecobon*. If you have any questions about membership, please email <a href="https://hitalian.com/

March - April - May 2020 Calendar

Free Bird Walks Every Tuesday Morning at Audubon Newhall Preserve

8:30 - 10:30 am - 88 Palmetto Bay Rd, Hilton Head

March 2020

Wednesday, March 4 C-Change Primer 3 pm

Hear a special presentation that provides a science-based

overview of our changing climate and the potential risks ahead.

Hilton Head Library 11 Beach City Road, HHI

Saturday, March 7 March Field Trip - Birding the Mobley Tract 9 am

The Port Royal Sound Foundation Maritime Center

Saturday, March 7 Audubon Newhall Work Day w/ the Rotary 9 am

Everyone is invited. Bring shovels, garden rakes, and wheelbarrows or carts. Direct any questions to

Rita Kernan at rakhhi@aol.com.

Thursday, March 12 HH Audubon Meeting - Plants for Birds and More

Long-time member Jim Cubie reveals how Sun City is creating a more bird-friendly landscape, and other

topics to help birds thrive

Palmetto Electric Community Room 111 Mathews Drive, Hilton Head Island

April 2020

Thursday, April 9 HH Audubon Meeting - Shorebirds of the Georgia Bight: 3 pm

Connecting the Hemisphere through Conservation

Abby Sterling, shore bird biologist from the

Massachussettes-based non-profit, Manomet organization

Coastal Discovery Museum

70 Honey Horn Dr, Hilton Head Island

Saturday, April 18 April Field Trip 8:30 am - 11:30 am

Solomon Tract, Savannah NWR Registration opens March 16

May 2020

Thursday, May 21 Hilton Head Audubon Member Picnic

Coastal Discovery Museum



3 pm

3 pm

Monthly meetings of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society are regularly scheduled at 3:00 pm on the second Thursday of each month, September through May. Members and guests welcome.