

Low Country Recycling Featured Talk At April HH Audubon Meeting

Ashley Jenkins is a Lowcountry girl who loves to inspire, create, and remind people that a throwaway society is not a sustainable society. She began her career in recycling in 2016 as the Recycling Educator for Beaufort County. As the Recycling Coordinator, she has made it her goal to get people to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle by creating awareness through education and engaging adults and youth of all ethnicity. With different outreach techniques and tools, she has been able to change the conversation about recycling with the help of colleagues and local organizations. By networking with organizations such as Young Professionals of SWANA, Carolina



Recycling Association, and Keep America Beautiful she grew professionally as a Coordinator. Recycling education programs and social media tools are ways that Ashley strives to increase participation, decrease contamination, and inspire Beaufort County residents to change behaviors and reduce waste.

Cindy Carter is originally from Spartanburg. Her background includes more than 30 years with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control as a regulator and manager of Upstate environmental programs. Her expertise is in solid and hazardous waste management and policy.

Ms. Carter is currently the Solid Waste Coordinator for Beaufort County's Public Works Solid Waste and Recycling Section. She is the point of contact for both the Solid Waste and Recycling Board and the Keep Beaufort County Beautiful Board (both County Council appointed). Ms. Carter handles the Section's contracts for services, works as the grants coordinator, and prepares budgets and data reports for solid waste and recycling activities.

Carter's staff work as a team to spearhead an increase in recycling activities, Adopt-A-Highway volunteers and litter control efforts along with ongoing interaction with the operations of Convenience Centers.

Please join HH Audubon for this informative discussion. Non-Audubon members are welcome to our meeting. Call 843-592-7968 for additional information.

Meeting Details

Speakers: Ashley Jenkins, Recycling Coordinator, Beaufort County, and Cindy Carter, Solid Waste Coordinator, Beaufort County

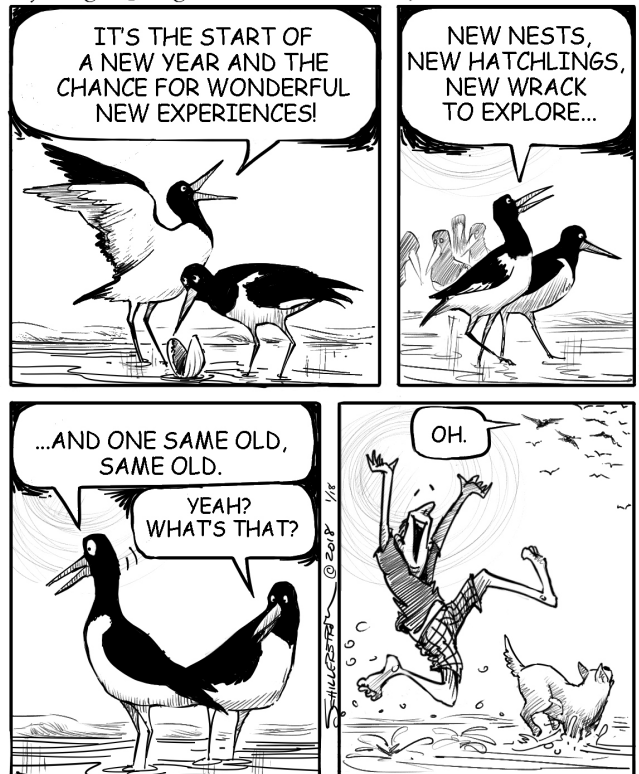
Date: Thursday, April 11

Time: 3 - 4:15 pm

Location: Coastal Discovery Museum, Seal Island Room, 70 Honey Horn Drive, Hilton Head Island

Audubon Mots

by: Roger@RogerSchillerstrom.com



Interested in eBird but not sure how to start? Log onto <https://ebird.org/home>. eBird collaborates with National Audubon and is managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

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Subscription is a benefit of membership.

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President's Message



Lucky us! No season keeps us away from our beaches and waterways which make up so much of the topography of the Lowcountry. The sandy shores and extensive estuaries are a drawing card for tourists and residents. We are not alone in our attraction. With our high tidal range, vast areas are covered and uncovered twice a day by the flooding and ebbing tides. It is in the saltmarshes, mudflats, sandbars and beaches that uncountable invertebrates find a home. They, in turn, provide a smorgasbord for wading and shorebirds. It is these shorebirds, and the pressures they face, that are the subject of this month's message.

Because of their fondness for sandy beaches, so popular with humans, Sanderlings are the most familiar of the shorebirds. Their likenesses are seen in art galleries, and in gift and souvenir shops along both coasts. The captivating wave runner is one of a number of shorebirds who winter on Hilton Head Island. Joining them, in less rambunctious feeding habits, are many other species. Some are frequently seen on the beach and others more commonly along the edges of the saltmarshes. On our five-year count of shorebirds from the area around Fish Haul Creek, four species of plovers that we have noted include the frequently seen Semi-palmated, Black-bellied, Piping and Wilson's Plovers. Peep species, besides Sanderlings, include Western and Least Sandpipers, with migrating flocks of Red Knots joining them.

None of these birds nest on Hilton Head beaches; in fact, the only shorebird nest I've seen in South Carolina was a Killdeer's on the spoil site of the Savannah River. Closest nesters seem to be the Wilson's Plover reported on Harbor Island and on some the barrier islands in Georgia. The Piping Plovers fly to the beaches above Cape Fear, NC, and to the Great Lakes area. A few other shorebirds choose the central area of the US and Canada to breed. Most take to the wing and make it to the Arctic Tundra. Our remarkable little birds, like the famous Red Knots, make long nonstop flights often for 5 or 6 days in length to summer and breed where food for chicks is plentiful. Even the Least Sandpipers, our smallest at one ounce, fly 1,800-2,000 miles without a break. When these birds do stop, finding food and undisturbed rest is critical.

While the birds that feed and rest primarily on the mudflats face perils, those whose habitat is the beach-dune system are additionally stressed. Beaches are favorite recreational areas and that makes it much more difficult for these birds to get the rest and nourishment they require. The birds are often disturbed; kids and dogs seem to take particular pleasure in flushing the birds. The Town of Hilton Head has in place an ordinance prohibiting the harassment of birds on the beach, but many folks seem unaware of either the ordinance or the ill effects of the continual flushing of the birds. Our leash laws are somewhat helpful, but during the summer when the laws

President's Message continued

are the most stringent, our shorebirds have left for their breeding grounds.

We at Audubon want to do more to increase the awareness of the plight of our shorebirds. Jack Coleman, our Conservation Chairman, and I had a productive meeting with Hilton Head Mayor John McCann. Shorebirds, with their plummeting numbers, was one of the topics we covered. Audubon has agreed to help the town improve signage about shorebirds on areas that need it. Additionally, we hope to have short-term rental agencies include a pamphlet about shorebirds in their rental packages. Please consider helping with this important task by spreading the word to friends and neighbors about what incredible creatures those little wave runner and their ilk really are. Let's work together to stem the rising tide of their decreasing numbers.

Jane Hester
President

Hilton Head Audubon

March 14, 2019

Senator Thomas Davis
604 Gressette Building
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Senator Davis:

We are writing both as an organization, The Hilton Head Island Audubon Society, and as people who value our homes and surroundings here in Beaufort and Jasper counties to thank you for your insight and efforts in sponsoring Senate Bill 332, The Clean Energy Access Act of 2019 or the Energy Freedom Act.

As a conservation organization, we are aligned with Audubon South Carolina and the National Audubon Society in their goals to mitigate climate change, maintain clean water supply and provide a safe and nourishing environment for birds and other wildlife. Our individual desires are aligned with these goals and we all wish to preserve the healthful and beautiful environment that we enjoy here in the Lowcountry.

Increasing the access and decreasing the impediments to solar energy will promote our organizational and individual needs. As you well recognize and recommend, there should be no constraint on the use of clean, economical, efficient solar electricity and competition as the open market should be allowed and encouraged particularly as an alternative to polluting and potentially dangerous oil, gas and nuclear power. Increasingly, solar energy will perhaps diminish the allure of offshore seismic exploration and possible subsequent drilling which Audubon opposes as a threat to our beaches, marshes, and Lowcountry beauty. Moreover, an open market for solar energy will help all of us regardless of income and may foster the growth of local partnerships for efficient and less expensive energy delivery.

As an organization and as individuals, we at Hilton Head Audubon join with other conservation groups in thanking you for your foresight and strenuous efforts in moving this bill forward. We believe that "where birds thrive people prosper," and we see that you are dedicated to this as well.

Very truly yours,

Jane Hester
President



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Hilton Head Audubon is proud to join with other conservation organizations in supporting the SC Energy Freedom Act (S.332). See above for the letter our President sent to the bill's sponsor, Senator Tom Davis (R-Beaufort). Many of our members also joined in signing a petition to the Senator.

Audubon Newhall Preserve

by Bob Clemens
Audubon Newhall Chairman

The Audubon Newhall Preserve continues to live up to its reputation as a Hidden Gem! In February, 44 guests or families recorded their visits in our visitors log. They were from 17 states and two foreign countries, including a visitor from Uruguay! We know that there were numerous unrecorded visits since the map box had to be restocked a number of times. In the second week of March, 27 visitors or families recorded their visits, and the map box was emptied. Tuesday Bird walks with Lynn Hodgson continue to be popular, and she reports that we have a pair of wood ducks nesting in the box at Audubon Pond!

On March 2, eight members of the Rotary Club of Hilton Head teamed with seven Audubon volunteers for a Work Day at the Preserve. Earlier in the week, the Sea Pines CSA had delivered and partially spread five truckloads of asphalt millings to resurface the parking lot, and our principal task was to spread the millings to the edges of the lot and fill low spots. In addition, we cleared the pond trail of some piles of brush and logs, and partially lined the access road with logs. The Preserve has never looked better.

Community Event

Purchase your tickets now for the 32nd All Saints Garden Tour to be held on Saturday, May 18 from 10am-4pm. The 2019 self-guided tour features seven private gardens: four on Hilton Head Island and three in Bluffton, SC and will provide inspiration for gardeners at all levels.



There are unique features in some of the gardens, for example one features native plants.

Tickets are \$35 and include lunch which is served in the All Saints Episcopal Church social hall from 11am-2pm. Also at the church you will find items made by local artisans as well as master gardeners who will answer questions. All net proceeds from the Tour are donated to local charities.

Tickets will be available at local nurseries and merchants or online at www.allsaintsgardentour.com. For more information, visit the website above or call (843) 681-8333.

Notes From The Field

by Bob Speare
Audubon Field Trip Coordinator

Our March field trip to Bear Island and Donnelly Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) was another wonderful reminder of just how good the birding is in the Lowcountry! In just a couple of hours, 54 species of birds were recorded at Bear Island WMA. One of the highlights was seeing more than 50 Tundra Swans. These majestic (and native) swans migrate all the way from the, uh, "tundra" down to Bear Island, which is the farthest point south where this species occurs. Another winter migrant that enjoys the ponds (being managed at just a few inches of water) is the American Avocet. This long-legged wader features a long upturned bill which it sweeps back and forth across the water in search of small aquatic animals. The group counted 130 of these birds on this trip.

Including a short trip through the Donnelly WMA, 64 species of birds were seen, including great looks at Roseate Spoonbills, Bald Eagles, Meadowlarks and a Purple Martin. Both of these locations were certainly must-visit spots for late winter birding in the Lowcountry. A huge thanks to Buddy Campbell and John Bloomfield for taking charge on this trip.

April Field Trip

When: Saturday, April 6

Where: Pinckney Island NWR

Time: 8:30 am - Meet in the parking lot at
Pinckney Island NWR

Leaders: Lynn Hodgson and John Bloomfield

Limit: 20

Our April field trip will take us to one of our very local hotspots – the Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge. With over 5,000 acres of various bird-friendly habitats, Pinckney and its surrounding islands are a fantastic bird haven, sitting right between Hilton Head Island and Bluffton. This trip is timed for good opportunities to see and hear returning summer residents like Great-crested Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, and perhaps a Painted Bunting, just to name a few. And then there's Ibis Pond, where a dozen species of colonial nesting waterbirds can be observed by the hundreds up close, courting, nest building, and rearing their young. I hope you can join us!

This walk is free to HHI Audubon members; \$5 for non-members.

To register or for more information, email Bob Speare at FieldTrips@hiltonheadaudubon.org, or call (843) 715-9772.



Great Egret at Pinckney Island by Bob Speare

Other April Birding Opportunities

WEEKLY BIRD WALKS AT AUDUBON NEWHALL PRESERVE

Tuesday's in April from 8:30-10:00 am.

Join us for these bird walks at this terrific birding location on Hilton Head Island. Join Lynn Hodgson and others on a leisurely walk through this wonderful property and learn more about the songbirds, woodpeckers, and more that call Newhall their home!

Tuesday walks are free of charge and do not require registration - just show up! The Newhall Preserve is located on Palmetto Bay Road, HHI.

BEGINNER BIRD WALK AT FISH HAUL CREEK PARK

When: Saturday, April 13; 1:00-2:30 pm.

Leader: Bob Speare

Limit: 20

Designed for new members, non-members, and folks new to birding, this walk will introduce participants to some of our local birds and ways to identify them in the field.

This walk is free to HHI Audubon members; \$5 for non-members.

To register or for more information, email Bob Speare at FieldTrips@hiltonheadaudubon.org, or call (843) 715-9772. Directions will be sent upon registration.

Through Our Binoculars

by Jack Colcolough

Recent bird sightings in our area continued to be outstanding during our most unusual and warm winter season. It has been our best winter for birding in 25+ years in my opinion. During the last month, a high number of rare species (13) were reported and our irruptive species are still here.



Swallow-tailed Kites by Fran Baer

Our spring migration is off to a great early start. Many of our normal winter songbirds and ducks are still here but will be departing soon.

Rare species reported in the last month were: Greater White-fronted Goose, Black-throated Green and Hooded Warblers, Virginia and King Rails, Fox and Grasshopper Sparrows, all at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge; Scarlet Tanager and Common Tern on HHI; Rufous Hummingbird in Bluffton; Red-breasted Nuthatch and Bachman's Sparrow at Webb WMA; and Western Kingbird at Hutchinson Island.

Our irruptive species – Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin – continue to be reported.

Early spring migrants: Warblers: Black-throated Green and Hooded Warblers, Ovenbird, Northern Parula, and Northern Waterthrush.

Others: Veery, Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites, Baltimore Oriole, Purple Gallinule, American Robin, Indigo Bunting, Great-crested Flycatcher and Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

Also a leucistic or albino Song Sparrow was reported in Savannah.

Uncommon species reported were many and included: endangered Piping Plover, Dark-eyed (slate) Junco, Blue-headed Vireo, Loggerhead Shrike, Canvasback (duck), American Kestrel, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Orange-crowned Warbler, White Pelican, Ruddy Duck, American Black

and Mottled Ducks, American Wigeon, Glossy Ibis, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Rusty Blackbird, House Wren, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Bittern, Greater Scaup and Caspian Tern.

Some common and good finds included: Painted Bunting, Wilson's Snipe, Sora, Cattle Egret, Common Loon, Gadwall, Black-and-White Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker and Common Yellowthroat in addition to many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and nesting Bald Eagles and Ospreys.

Many thanks to all reporting your bird sightings: Jane / Abe Hester, Bob Speare, Cindy / Ken Groff, Dottie Bass, Mary Alice Tartler, Carol Clemens, Carol Tunnicliffe, Fran / Denny Baer, Shelia / Roger Johnson, Kay Grinnell, Alan Biggs, Dick Phillips, Kathy / Grant Greider, Kay Hodnett, Lynn Hodgson, John Bloomfield, George Banino, Tina Rosen, Diana Churchill, Steve Calver, Russ Wigh, Buddy Campbell and many visitors and others.

To report a bird sighting that is accidental, rare, out-of-season, uncommon, first-of-the-year (FOTY) or first-of-the-season (FOTS) or a species that you consider to be a good find, e-mail: BirdingFriends@yahoogroups.com or call 843-432-2661. Please state your full name, the bird species sighted, date and location of your sighting and other pertinent information. Keep up the good work of reporting your bird sightings on Birding Friends!

Our spring migration is on now and it is a great time to go birding and try to find some of our unusual out-of-season, irruptive and normal winter species and maybe, find an early spring migrant!



Black-throated Green Warbler by Mary Alice Tartler

Conservation Corner – The Plastic Mess

by John J. Coleman III, MD
HHI Audubon Conservation Chairman

I am sure that most of you are pleased to see Beaufort County's ban on single-use plastic bags in action. Stores have switched to paper bags, people are bringing their own bags to carry their goods and a new enthusiasm for conservation seems to be in the air. We are acting locally but let's think globally. What is the magnitude of the problem? To find out and see an artfully composed argument read the June 2018 issue of *National Geographic Magazine* subtitled "Planet or Plastic", most of which is devoted to this problem and which I will summarize here.

Plastic is a substance created from multiple repeating monomers or molecules of identical chemical composition creating a backbone and attached side molecules (pendant units) again often repeating in the same structural pattern to create a polymer, a very stable larger molecule, which can be molded into numerous shapes and uses. The chemical bonds of plastic polymers are so stable that it is almost impossible to break down the bonds to their component elements. It can be broken into smaller pieces (micro plastics or even nanoparticles) but it remains plastic.

Plastic was invented in the late 1800s and gradually new uses were found for it most of them beneficial. The shortage of natural materials occasioned by wars, particularly World War II, stimulated interest in producing machine parts and containers, weapons, etc. using synthetic materials. Because plastic is often created from the waste products of fossil fuel refining, there is an ample supply of its precursors and it is relatively inexpensive to make. "Better Living through Chemistry" and the "Throwaway Living" slogans of the 1950s were a harbinger of our present dependence on plastic.

To emphasize the magnitude of this problem the article provides some alarming and surprising statistics. It is estimated that since the first use of plastic approximately 9.2 billion tons have been produced of which 6.9 billion tons have ended up as waste and only 0.6 billion tons have been recycled into subsequently useful items. One half of the total production has occurred in the last 15 years. By quantity 2.3 million tons were manufactured in 1950, 162 million tons in 1993 and 448 million in 2015. Yearly, 9 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean where it floats in large whorls

of trash or is broken up into micro plastic small particles which can adsorb toxins or carry possibly harmful chemicals associated with their manufacture. These tiny fragments are often ingested by marine animals. The Coca-Cola Company alone makes 128 billion plastic bottles per year. One trillion plastic bags are used each year with an average working life of 15 minutes but a total life of from 450 years to eternity. Forty percent of these are used only one and tossed.

The pollution problem is particularly acute in the Pacific Ocean, which is the drainage for major population centers located along long rivers. The Yellow, Yangtze and Pearl Rivers in China, the Mekong in Vietnam and Thailand, the Irrawaddy in Myanmar, the Indus and Ganges in India and the Pasig in the Philippines are particular contributors to the Indian and Pacific Ocean trash loads. It has been stated that one half of the world's plastic waste comes from the five Asian countries: China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines and Sri Lanka. Inadequate trash disposal systems in these countries foster disposal into canals and rivers that wash to the sea and may transport plastic around the world. Measurement of sand on Hawaiian Island beaches shows that 15 percent of the volume of sand is actually small particles of plastic. As watchers of wildlife we have all seen the sad photos of turtles trapped by plastic nets or six-pack holders or birds sickly from malnutrition because of wasting their energy consuming plastic instead of nutrients. Seven hundred aquatic species have been adversely affected by plastic waste in the water.

What can we do?

This is a worldwide problem and most acute in developing nations, but much can and should be done:

- 1. Stop using plastic.** Compostable trash, refrigerator and sandwich bags well as other household items are available online on Amazon, Walmart and probably many other sites. Avoid the use of multipackage foods, buy products in bulk if possible packaged in recyclable or reusable containers. Don't use plastic straws and tell your server that you do not want one. Encourage providers to decrease their use of plastic.
- 2. Support political efforts to decrease plastic use.** A SC law may soon come out of committee seeking to prevent local communities from en-

Conservation continued

forcing plastic bag bans and other issues of local concerns. Oppose this. A number of countries including Kenya have completely banned plastic bag use and enforce their bans.

3. If you have non-biodegradable containers reuse them or repurpose them rather than discarding them. If you must discard them make sure they go to a land fill and not into the ocean off a garbage barge. Resourceful entrepreneurs are finding ways to turn trash into important usable items.

4. Increase personal and municipal recycling. Norway collects and reuses 97 percent of its plastic bottles by charging a high deposit and by providing ubiquitous, easy-to-use collection machines. Support such innovative legislation or use.

5. Read the issue of National Geographic, June 2018. Think Globally and act locally.

Welcome New Members

Hi fellow birders!

Welcome to the following new members who joined since the last month's Ecobon.

- Ellen Blanchard
- Hilton Klein
- Karen Penale



Did you know that we are a large group of over 225 paid members? With 91 family memberships, that brings the number of individuals to around 315!

Remember that dues are based on a rolling calendar. For example, if you joined or renewed in April 2018, you are a paid member through April 2019. We send an email reminder with a renewal form in the quarter your dues expire. The renewal may be mailed to us or turned in at a meeting.

We now offer a two-year membership option. As always, you will receive an email confirmation once we have processed your membership. The confirmation email will indicate whether you opted for a one- or two-year membership. You may want to keep a copy as a reminder.

Have a question about your membership? Have you changed your email? Please contact Carol at clemens318@gmail.com or Fran at seatwo@roadrunner.com.

Plants for Birds

by Vicky McMillan

Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) – the Lowcountry's version of northern bayberry – is a native shrub or small tree with olive-green, aromatic



leaves and a long history of domestic uses, from candle making to traditional medicine. Common in woods, wetlands, pine barrens, and sand dunes, it's a popular choice for natural screens and hedges. Landscapers like wax myrtle because it's evergreen, fast growing, and deer resistant. It tolerates poor soil, drought, and even salt spray.

Wax myrtle also provides shelter, nest sites, and food (clusters of bluish, berry-like fruits) for a variety of birds. Yellow-rumped ("Myrtle") Warblers have a particular knack for digesting the waxy skins of these fruits, but many other birds eat them, too. These include Northern Cardinals, American Robins, Northern Mockingbirds, Gray Catbirds, Eastern Bluebirds, Brown Thrashers, Tree Swallows, and various finches and vireos.

For birdwatchers and gardeners, the main thing to remember about wax myrtle, aside from its tendency to be a bit invasive, is that its flowers are borne on separate male and female plants. The fruits are produced on the female plants, but not unless their flowers have been pollinated by males. Most plant nurseries tend to sell only female plants, so it can be hard to find males. Wax myrtles do release abundant pollen, however, which is spread far and wide by the wind, so you can still hope there may be male plants growing somewhere nearby.



Wild Birds Unlimited
Your Backyard Birdfeeding Specialist
www.wbu.com

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

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Audubon



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April/May 2019 Calendar

April

Thurs., April 11

HHI Audubon Member Meeting **3 pm**
 Lowcountry Recycling with Cindy Carter,
 Beaufort County Recycling Coordinator
Meeting Location:
 Coastal Discovery Museum

Sat., April 13

Birding 101 at Coastal Discovery Museum (3rd in series) 9 am - 12 pm

Sat., April 20

Birding 101 at Coastal Discovery Museum (4th in series) 9 am - 12 pm

May

Wed., May 8

HH Audubon Member Picnic **5 pm**
Location: Coastal Discovery Museum (*see enclosed flyer*)

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