



Christmas Bird Count Success

by Susan Murphy

We kicked off the Christmas Bird Count with our meeting on December 6. Bob Speare gave an enjoyable and informative presentation to an audience of more than 120 enthusiastic birders. Thank you Bob!

As the December 14 count day drew near, the weather forecast was for heavy rain, thunderstorms and gusty wind. With the unanimous consent of the Area Captains, we changed the date to the following Monday, December 17. It turned out to be a nice day, with morning clouds, afternoon sun and temperatures from 44-62 degrees.



White Pelicans by Peter Cram

A few comments about the preliminary results: although we don't have final numbers yet, it looks like our total number of birds is almost 900 more than last year and the species count will be close.

Five teams saw American White Pelicans and two others had count week sightings. We determined that there was some overlap in the reports, so we ended up with a count of 134.

There were two sightings of Red-breasted Nuthatches (Palmetto Dunes and Long Cove) and three Baltimore Orioles (May River and Shipyard).

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Through the Binoculars

by Jack Colcolough

Our fall migration has been excellent – a few transient warblers were still moving through our area in early December. Sightings of 27 warbler species and 17 other migrant bird species have been reported this fall. Most of our winter songbirds and ducks have arrived and many of our summer birds have departed southward for the winter.



Sandhill Crane by Fran Baer

“Irruptive species” like the locally rare Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin that do not often come south have already been reported in our area and are attributed to poor seed production in Canada this year.

Other locally rare species reported in the last month were: very late Cape May Warbler, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Virginia Rail, very late Yellow-breasted Chat and Grasshopper, Fox, Clay-colored, White-crowned, Lincoln's Sparrows and Sandhill Crane.

Uncommon species reported were many and included: very late Ovenbird, Orange-crowned and very late Prairie Warblers, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, endangered Piping and Wilson's Plovers, late Reddish Egret, Glossy Ibis, Baltimore Oriole, House Wren, migrant Swainson's Thrush, Loggerhead Shrike, Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Avocet, migrant Wood Thrush, late Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Blue-headed Vireos, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Sedge and House Wrens, early Dark-eyed Junco, American Kestrel, Ruddy Duck, Canvasback, Redhead, American Wigeon, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Peregrine

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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.

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Hilton Head Island, SC 29938

President's Message

Neighbors reported light sleet in downtown Bluffton the same day my husband and I spotted an out of season hummingbird in our courtyard. Winter may have arrived, but glimpses of summer still linger. Reminders that warmer days are not far away are everywhere. The butterflies that appear on flowers not nipped by cold, and the other insects that flit about midday tell us that temperatures could be in the seventies just next week. My retired southern friends and relatives report cabin fever after just two days of being inside. Clearly, we would not last in colder climates. But here we expect good weather to return and to return pronto. Outdoor pursuits await. Boating, fishing, golf and even beachcombing can be enjoyed all year.



Winter birding is, for me, more fun than summer birding. Shorebirds, waterfowl and a variety of song birds replace those that flew south. Eagles are nesting and falcons are back. I love trips to the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge. What a great time to hone your waterfowl on the wing expertise. I, for one, am still learning and trying to practice the “where’s the white?” technique, but friends, there is a ways to go. Bitterns are blending and white pelicans are soaring. While your feet might get cold, no bugs are biting, the underbrush has thinned and there is less foliage to block the view of the birds. The time to tramp through field and forest is upon us.

If Canadian air comes to visit, take heart. I settle down with seed catalogs, and field guides and wait. For I know this cannot possibly last. The days are already lengthening. Let’s get out there; don those hats and gloves and find those irruptive species that you read about on Birding Friends and eBird; it is just a matter of trying. Great birding to you.

Jane Hester
President
HHI Audubon

Audubon Ambassador Training

Please join Audubon South Carolina and the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society for an interactive training on how to become effective ambassadors for birds. Our discussion will focus on the current issues that most affect our birds, what Audubon is doing about it, and specific actions that you can take at the local, state and national levels to help us protect them. Light refreshments will be provided, and attire is casual – all you need to bring is yourself.

What is an Audubon Ambassador? Audubon Ambassadors are a committed, passionate group of individuals who love birds and want to do more to protect them, especially in the face of a changing climate. We ask our Ambassadors to take action in three primary ways:

- **Be the Messenger:** Share your love of birds with your friends, family, colleagues and online networks, and help inspire others to take action to protect birds.
- **Be the Solution:** Plant a bird-friendly yard, volunteer to improve habitat and encourage others to do the same.
- **Be an Advocate:** Help educate and mobilize your elected officials and community to take actions to protect birds by hosting presentations, speaking with lawmakers and government officials, and voicing your opinion through op-eds and letters to the editor.

Date: January 17, 2019

Time: 9:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Location: Hilton Head Island Library

Draft Agenda

<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Speaker</i>
9:15-9:30	Sign in, Refreshments	
9:30-9:45	Welcome from ASC Staff; Roundtable Introductions	Speaker TBD
9:45-10:30	Spark birds, climate threatened birds, & ASC's programs	Matt Johnson
10:30-10:55	ASC's Coastal Program	Nolan Schillerstrom
10:55-11:00	Short Break	
11:00-11:30	Effective Advocacy – how to speak up for birds	Angelina Eisenhauer
11:30-12:00	Group activity – TBD	Angelina Eisenhauer
12:00-12:15	Closing remarks; Save-the-dates	Matt Johnson



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
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- Bird Seed, Blends & Suit
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- Birdbaths & Accessories
- Binoculars & Field Guides
- Nature Books & Gifts

New Ownership / Same Location

Christmas Bird Count Success *(con't.)*



Uncommon Red-breasted Nuthatch by Fran Baer

A leucistic Carolina Chickadee was found in Port Royal Plantation. It was so interesting to see his dark cap and white body. Our count of Bald Eagles was down from last year, but still impressive at 46.

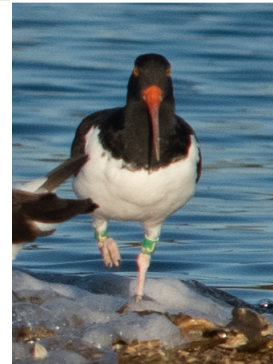
The Palmetto Bluff team identified an American Bittern by sound and saw a female Common Goldeneye.

Last year's international count reports from Audubon are now available. Our Hilton Head area had the 6th highest number of participants out of the 2,585 15-mile diameter count circles. We had 213 field observers and 79 feeder watchers. The full international report, as well as the South Carolina Regional report, are on the National Audubon website at:

<https://www.audubon.org/summary-118th-christmas-bird-count-2017-2018>.

Thank you to all who participated and special thanks to the Area Captains who spend a lot of time and effort organizing and tabulating to make this count a success. Thanks to our panel, Robert Rommel, Jack Colcolough and Bob Speare, who met with each captain to discuss and review the reports. We are still working through some of the details, and we will have more news in the February edition of Ecobon.

Count day for next year is already set. Mark your calendars for Monday, December 16.



The American Oystercatcher was banded as a chick in June 2010 in the area of Ocracoke Inlet, NC. It had not been reported (resighted) since November 2011. Information and photo by Peter Cram.

Welcome New Members

Hi fellow birders!

Please help us welcome several new members who have joined since the December Ecobon was published. Say hello to:

Anne & James Bourn
Karen Cooke
Carol Fruit
Anne & Mark Garrette
Mariah McKenna
Karen Simpson
Candice Spadafora
Rosemary Staples
John Wigington

Remember that dues are based on a rolling calendar. For example, if you joined or renewed in January 2018, you are a paid member through January 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@roadrunner.com or Fran at seatwo@roadrunner.com.

Through the Binoculars *(con't.)*

Falcon, Kestrel, Rusty Blackbird, White-headed Nuthatch, Wild Turkey and seven species of winter sparrows.

Some Fairly Common and Uncommon Species) reported were: very late migrant American Redstart, FOTS Bufflehead, Pied-billed Grebe, arriving American Goldfinch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Marbled Godwit, FOTS Gadwall, Hermit Thrush,



Dark-eyed Junco by Bob Speare

Black-and-White Warbler, Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker, Sora, Song Sparrow, Painted Bunting and many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Bald Eagles.

Many thanks to all reporting your bird sightings – Jane and Abe Hester, Bob Speare, Cindy and Ken Groff, Robret Rommel, Susan Murphy, Dottie Bass, Mary Alice Tatler, Carol Clemens, Carol Tunnicliffe, Fran/Denny Baer, Shelia and Roger Johnson, Kay Grinnell, George Banino, Aaron Palmieri, Alan Biggs, Dick Phillips, Kathy and Grant Greiger, John Bloomfield, Julie Dennis, Diana Churchill, Steve Calver, Russ Wigh, Buddy Campbell and many visitors.

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 spe-



Red-breasted Nuthatch by John Bloomfield

cies 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 ‘good bird finds’ on Birding Friends!

Now is a great time of year for finding our Winter songbirds and ducks and irruptive species this season ... and maybe, we’ll have a few overwintering summer birds this unusual year!

Check out the State Birding trail:

<https://www.southcarolinabirdingtrail.org/> and get the app (for iOS devices only)



South Carolina Birding Trail 
South Carolina Birding Trail Incorporated

Free

Audubon Newhall Preserve

by Bob Clemens



The Audubon Newhall Preserve continues to charm visitors from all over the country, many of whom record their visits in our log books and contribute to the Donation Post. The new Jack Greenshields entry gates have been installed, and by the time you read this, we hope we will have completed the widening of the apron and a portion of the roadway behind the gates. We are finalizing plans to dedicate the gate with a sign on the left-hand column. In November, the Sea Pines CSA brought in machinery and, with help from Vice-Chair Matt Matoon, they mulched piles of limbs and logs gathered along the trails and around the pond. You might also notice that the yellow ropes lining the roadway have been replaced in an effort to discourage off roading. At some future date, we will upgrade by replacing the ropes with a low log fence. Please come visit the Preserve and enjoy a hidden gem,” on Hilton Head Island!

Wild Birds Unlimited Trip to Costa Rica



For more information on this exciting birding adventure, please stop by the Hilton Head Island Wild Birds Unlimited store, visit <https://hiltonhead.wbu.com/birding-trip-to-costa-rica-in-2019> or call (843) 802-2010.

Wild Birds Unlimited of Hilton Head Island is offering an eight-day birding exploration of Costa Rica in September 2019. With over 650 native species and rare specialties like Scarlet Macaw, Resplendent Quetzal, and 54 species of hummingbirds, Costa Rica is a birder's paradise not to be missed. Leading this trip is Carlos Chacon, owner of Eco-Adventures and Manager of Natural History at the Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn on Hilton Head Island. Carlos is native of Costa Rica, an expert in flora and fauna and has led many trips there.



Community Events



February 1 - March 3 The All Saints Episcopal Church

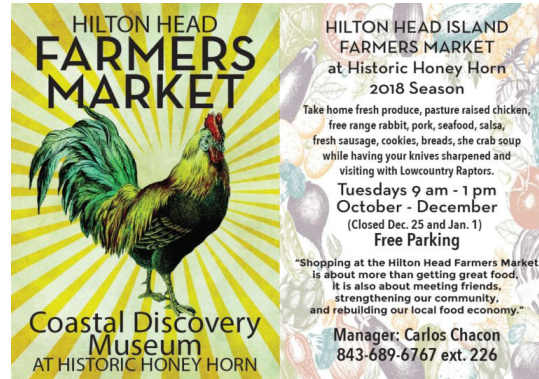
Garden Tour Local Artist Contest. Entries will be on display at the Hilton Head Regional Hospital. Visit the exhibit and cast your vote for the People's Choice award. Winner announced on March 3. For more information, visit <http://www.allsaintsgardentour.com>.



COASTAL DISCOVERY MUSEUM
Experience The Lowcountry Up Close

January 4, 2019 Coastal Discovery Museum

Lowcountry Raptors, Jan 4th, 2:00 pm. A few extraordinary birds will visit with Lila Arnold from Lowcountry Raptors. Get an up close look at these spectacular birds and learn about the life of birds of prey and how you can help protect them. \$7 per person. Reservations required. For more information, visit <https://www.coastaldiscovery.org/> or call 843 689 6767 x223.



Visit the Hilton Head Farmers Market at the Coastal Discovery Museum every Tuesday from 9 am-1 pm. Free Parking. *Closed Jan. 1.*

Bequests

If you wish to honor a family member or friend with a memorial gift, or remember the Audubon Newhall Preserve or the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society in your Will, you may designate a gift in the form of securities, cash, life insurance, real estate, or other property.

Contact your own estate planner or our Audubon Chapter at P.O. Box 6185, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29938. Email: hhiaudubon@gmail.com.

Sharing your estate with Audubon not only reduces the taxes on your estate but will help protect birds, wildlife, and their habitat in the years to come.

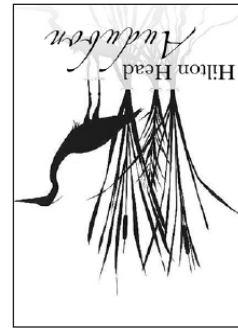
Submissions to Ecobon

If you have an item you would like to submit for publication in Ecobon, please contact our editor, Joan Wilson, at jobobwil@hargray.com. 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 at: <https://www.facebook.com/hiltonhead-audubon/>. 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.

Follow us also on our website: www.hiltonheadaudubon.org.

Audubon



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ECOBON

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January/February 2019 Calendar

January

- Thurs. Jan. 10 **HHI Audubon Member Meeting** 3 pm
Native Plants, Beautiful & Beneficial by Laura Lee Rose
 Clemson Univ. Extension Agent
Meeting Location:
 Palmetto Electric Cooperative
 111 Mathews Drive, Hilton Head Island
- Thurs. Jan. 17 **Audubon Ambassador Meeting** 9:15 am-12:15 pm
 Hilton Head Island Library

February

- Thurs. Feb. 14 **HHI Audubon Member Meeting** 3 pm
Bird Songs: Inspiration for Music by Robert Arnold
Meeting Location:
 Palmetto Electric Cooperative
 111 Mathews Drive, Hilton Head Island

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.