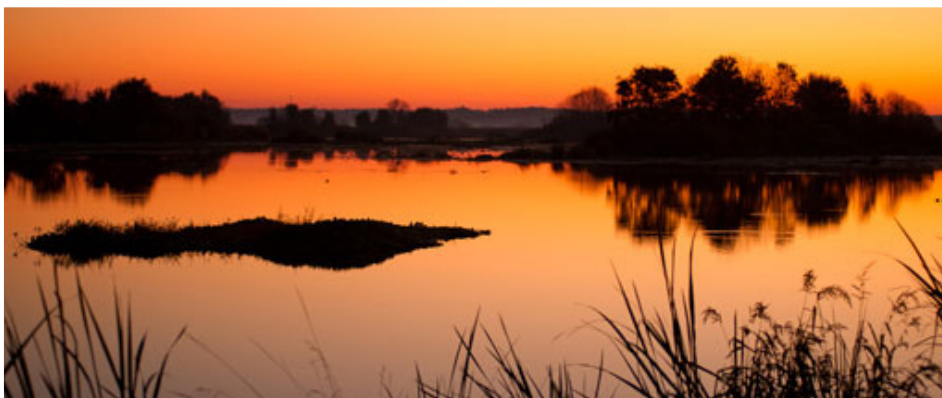




Savannah NWR Initiatives Featured Talk at March HH Audubon Member Program

The Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (SNWR) is a 31,551-acre refuge located in Chatham and Effingham counties in Georgia and Jasper County in South Carolina. Of the total area, 15,395 acres are in Georgia and 15,263 acres are in South Carolina. The refuge was established to provide sanctuary for migratory waterfowl and other birds and as a nature and forest preserve for aesthetic and conservation purposes. The refuge is one of seven refuges administered by the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex in Hardeeville, SC. The complex has a combined staff of 25 with a fiscal year 2018 budget of roughly \$3,000,000.



HH Audubon is proud to welcome Russ Webb, the Refuge Manager at Savannah NWR. He will be discussing Programs and Initiatives at the Refuge.

Russ is a graduate of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, GA, and currently resides in Richmond Hill, GA.

Non-Audubon members are welcome. Call 843-592-7968 or visit <http://hiltonheadaudubon.org/> for additional information.

Meeting Details

Speaker: Russ Webb, Refuge Manager, Savannah National Wildlife Refuge

Date: Thursday, March 14

Time: 3:00 – 4:15 pm

Location: Community Room, Palmetto Electric Cooperative, 111 Mathews Drive, Hilton Head Island.

Parking Information: Entrance and parking is at the back of the building.

Know Your Officials; Know the Issues

At Hilton Head Audubon, one of our objectives is to educate our members on public issues affecting birds, wildlife and natural resource conservation, and to encourage you to raise your voice when an issue is important to you.

The first step is knowing your elected officials, and the following are useful links to help you get started (*click on the underlined text below to link to the site*).

[Hilton Head Town Council](#)

[Beaufort County Elected Officials](#)

[State and Federal Representatives](#)

One bill currently of interest in the South Carolina legislature would expand access to renewable energy in our state. Recently, the House Labor, Commerce & Industry passed a solar expansion bill authored by Rep. Peter McCoy (R-Charleston), with the full House expected to vote shortly. A similar bill in the Senate introduced by Senator Tom Davis (R-Beaufort) is expected to move in that chamber soon.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the South Carolina Energy Freedom Act.

Board of Directors

President Jane Hester

Vice President John Bloomfield

Treasurer Pauline Jones

Recording & Corresponding Secretary Wendy Dickes

Members-at-Large
Marina Bloomfield
Lynn Hodgson

Christmas Bird Count Liason
Susan Murphy

Ecobon Editor Joan Wilson

Past President Robert Rommel

Emeritus Barry Lowes

Standing Committee Chairpersons

Audubon Newhall Preserve
Bob Clemens Rita Kernan
Tom Hennessey Matt Mattoon

Bird Walks/Field Trips
Bob Speare Martha Worthy

Conservation
John J. Coleman III

Education
Lois Lewis

Membership
Carol Clemens Fran Baer

Programs
Chairperson, Vacant
Alan Biggs

Communications/Historian
Miho Kinnas

Website
Marina Bloomfield

Web: www.hiltonheadaudubon.org

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

President's Message



Change is in the air! Already the morning chorus is cranking up, Pine Warblers are singing and Carolina Wrens have begun to gather nesting material at the expense of our garage insulation. These are all signs that spring renewal is underway.

We are having somewhat of a renewal at Hilton Head Audubon, too. We have begun working on an ambitious strategic plan to give us firm footing as we move ahead in the next decade. The Board wants to be an even

stronger voice for the birds and conservation on the island and in the surrounding areas.

We are fortunate to live in an area with abundant natural beauty. It is this beauty that has drawn so many here. Our coast with its sandy beaches, watery inlets, abundant salt marshes and maritime forests are both unique and fragile. Vigilance is required in protecting them from the many assaults they face — both natural and manmade.

You may have noticed that we are already stepping up our efforts to attract a more diversified membership. Programs are being offered for novice birders; we soon hope to add a few educational programs for more advanced birders, such as a sparrow or warbler identification course. Additional bird walks have been scheduled as well. Now, thanks to Lynn Hodgson, there is a weekly bird walk at Newhall Preserve. The Board wants to expand on this initiative and offer weekly guided walks in nearby areas.

As a leader in the cause for conservation, we will also step up our efforts to educate members on conservation issues. Audubon is bipartisan; the organization does not endorse candidates, but it does take stands on issues that affect birds and their habitats. We want our members to be aware of the issues, both locally and nationally that impact people and nature. In the future we hope to develop closer ties with our elected officials, perhaps educating them, too. Those elected officials need to hear from us more frequently. Our recent Audubon Ambassador Program stressed the importance of the phone call or the personal note to officials in helping shape their opinions. The future is in our youth. Increasing our programs and partnering with schools and youth groups can help us grow and perhaps ignite interest in birds and birding that will give students a lifetime of enjoyment. Some of those middle schoolers will be voters before this strategic five-year plan comes to fruition.

Obviously, the Board cannot do this alone; we need the help of you — our members. We are calling on you take an active part as advocates and as volunteers. Involve your friends and neighbors as well; we want to double our membership by 2024!

Birds sing for us, so we need to sing for them. Help us contribute to the mounting chorus singing the song of conservation.

Jane Hester

President
Hilton Head Audubon

Audubon Newhall Preserve

by Bob Clemens

Volunteers needed for Audubon Newhall Workday - Saturday, March 2

The Audubon Newhall Preserve prepares for Spring! We are partnering with the local Rotary for a Work Day Saturday, March 2 from 9-10:30 am to spread a layer of asphalt millings in the parking lot. Interested participants should RSVP to Bob Clemens at RClemens318@roadrunner.com, and plan to bring gloves, shovels, garden rakes, and wheelbarrows or carts. Drinking water and some tools will be provided.

We plan to park our vehicles along Palmetto Bay Road, and walk in to the Preserve with our tools to keep the lot clear for the work. Thank you in advance for your anticipated assistance.

Members and non-members welcome.

Osprey Watch

Hilton Head Island participates in the international Osprey Watch, a group that monitors osprey nests from February through the summer. We have volunteers who monitor over 50 sites on the island. While we have enough monitors and maybe enough backup help, what we currently need is help to identify new nests. If you spot a new osprey nest anyplace on the island or know of a nest that we may or may not be monitoring, please let us know. We need the precise location of the nest and the date you have seen osprey at or around the nest. If the nest is not currently monitored, we can add it to the project. Also, if you are interested in being added to the list as a possible backup monitor, please send us your name, contact info, and area of the island where you live. We cannot promise we will have a nest for you because it depends on the number of new nests, but we will try our best. Email us at Cclemens318@gmail.com.



Photo: Carol Tunnicliffe

Community Events

Visit the Hilton Head Farmers Market at the Coastal Discovery Museum every Tuesday from 9:00am-1:00pm. Free Parking.

Submissions to Ecobon

If you have an item you would like to submit for publication in Ecobon, please contact our editor, Joan Wilson, at ecobon@hiltonheadaudubon.com. Articles must be received by the 15th of each month for the next month's issue. All editorial decisions are final.

You can find us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/hiltonheadaudubon/>. 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.



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

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

New Ownership / Same Location

A Flock of Birding Programs

by Bob Speare

We've been seeing a steady growth of interest in birding programs, so we've decided to add even more programs and workshops to our list of offerings.

Our February field trip featured a morning visit to the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge along the Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive. Aboard the refuge's wagon, we had a terrific vantage point to see and photograph the variety of ducks, waders, and other bird species in both the freshwater impoundments and the salt marsh habitats that are separated by the drive.

We tallied 43 species including an American Bittern, over 250 Ring-necked Ducks, and an amazing 62 Glossy Ibis! A big thank you to my co-leaders John Bloomfield and Lynn Hodgson and to the refuge staff for their assistance in making it a really terrific morning.

March Field Trip

Saturday, March 2, 2019

Bear Island and Donnelly Wildlife Management Areas, 9:00 am - Meet at Mary's Pond entrance to Bear Island WMA.

Leader: Buddy Campbell

Limit: 20

Our March field trip to Bear Island and Donnelly Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the ACE Basin should be another wonderful opportunity to experience good numbers of waterfowl, waders, shorebirds and more – all taking advantage of the resources found in these habitats throughout the winter. These important sites, like so many other great birding locations in the area, are managed to maintain freshwater impoundments that were first used in the days of the rice plantations. Many thousands of birds migrate to these ponds and marshes each fall seeking the food and refuge that these protected habitats provide.

Directions will be sent upon registration. Carpooling is strongly encouraged to reduce the number of cars traveling through these WMAs. Carpoolers should meet in the parking lot near the Olive and Fig Restaurant in the Moss Creek Village by 7:15 am.

To sign up for this field trip, please contact Bob Speare at FieldTrips@hiltonheadaudubon.org or 843-715-9772.



Bird Walks

Beginner Bird Walk at Jarvis Creek Park

March 9, 1:00-2:30 pm. 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.

The walk is free to HH Audubon members; \$5 for non-members.

To register, contact Bob Speare at (843) 715-9772 or FieldTrips@hiltonheadaudubon.org.

Weekly Bird Walks at Audubon Newhall Preserve Tuesday's from 8:30-10:00 am.

We are now offering weekly 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!

These walks are free of charge and do not require registration - just show up!

Christmas Bird Count Update

Our CBC report was accepted by the Regional Editor. Count results are available on our website: <http://www.hiltonheadaudubon.org/?pageid=1125>

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: hiaudubon@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.

Through Our Binoculars

by Jack Colcolough

Recent bird sightings in our area continue to be excellent. A high number (10 species) of out-of-season (overwintering) and irruptive species of birds were reported as well as rare species and our normal winter songbirds and ducks. Also, there were three very unusual leucistic (albino) species reported during the last month.

Out-Of Season Species: Ovenbird, American Redstart, Wilson's and Prairie Warblers, Northern Waterthrush (all warblers), Yellow-breasted Chat, Purple Gallinule, Painted Bunting, Black-necked Stilt and many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

Irruptive Species: Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin.

Leucistic (Albino) Species: Great Blue Heron, Pine Warbler and Song Sparrow.



Black-necked Stilt by Ken Groff

Rusty Blackbird, American Avocet and White-breasted Nuthatch

Some other good finds reported: Red-headed Woodpecker, Screech Owl, Sora, Black & White Warbler, Spotted Sandpiper, Gadwall, Wilson's Snipe, Red Knot, Cattle Egret and many Bald Eagles.

Many thanks to all reporting your bird sightings: Jane/Abe Hester, Bob Speare, Robert Rommel, Cindy/Ken Groff, Ellen Lebeouf, Dottie Bass, Mary Alice Tartler, Carol Clemens, Carol Tunnicliffe, Fran/Denny Baer, Shelia/Roger Johnson, Kay

Grinnell, Alan Biggs, Dick Phillips, Kathy/Grant Greiger, Kay Hudnut, Rita Kernan, Lynn Hodgson, John Bloomfield, Robin Storey, Annette Hausman, 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@yahoo.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!



Scarlet Tanager (non-breeding) by Mary Alice Tartler



Pine Siskin by Carol Tunnicliffe

Rare Species: Scarlet Tanager - Hilton Head Island; White-crowned Sparrow - Bluffton; Western Tanager and Bell's Vireo - Savannah; Western Kingbird and White-winged Dove - Hutchinson Island; Ring-necked Pheasant, King Rail, Fox and Lincoln Sparrows -

Savannah NWR; Bachman's Sparrow - Webb WMA; Common Eider - Hunting Island; and Parasitic Jaeger and Common Tern - Tybee Island.

Uncommon Species: Dark-eyed Junco, Baltimore Oriole, American Woodcock, endangered Piping Plover, Reddish Egret, Loggerhead Shrike, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Blue-headed Vireo, ducks like Canvasback, Northern Pintail and Ruddy, Mottled and Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, American Bittern, White Pelican, Merlin, American Kestrel, House Wren, Gold-crowned Kinglet, Orange-crowned Warbler, Stilt Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Red-throated Loon, Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Pipit, Vesper Sparrow, Glossy Ibis, Greater Scaup, Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls,



Ring-necked Pheasant by Fran Baer

Now is the time to bird in our great outdoors and try to find some of our unusual out-of-season, irruptive and normal winter species and maybe, an early spring migrant!

Birding South Carolina

From the mountains to the sea, South Carolina provides strikingly different habitats in a small amount of space, making for great birding trips.

Like the adjacent Carolina to its north, South Carolina encompasses Atlantic coastal habitats and Appalachian highlands—just in a more compact area. The result is a state species list of more than 430 that ranges from the seagoing Northern Gannet to the mountain-loving Common Raven.

There's plenty of tourist development along the South Carolina coast, including Hilton Head Island, but there's also lots of wild, birdy habitat in parks and wildlife refuges. For many people, major highlights of the state's natural history are protected areas of southern bottomland hardwood and bald-cypress swamp, such as Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Center and Sanctuary.

All in all, South Carolina offers a fine variety of habitat and birdlife in a state small enough to hit many high points in a single weekend, making it a superb destination.

Pinckney Wildlife National Refuge

Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge is an important link in the chain of wildlife refuges along the Atlantic Flyway, attracting thousands of migratory birds annually. The refuge also provides nesting habitat for colonial wading birds such as ibis, egrets, and herons.

The refuge bird list contains over 250 species. The most popular and colorful to see is the Painted Bunting, a common summer resident in the island's brushy habitats. During spring and fall migrations, warblers and other migratory song birds are common among the live oaks and in the shrub/scrub habitat. A variety of raptors, shorebirds, and wading birds call the refuge home year-round. Pinckney Island NWR is one of the best places in South Carolina to see breeding Yellow-crowned Night Herons.

Pinckney Island NWR is a 4,053-acre refuge that includes Pinckney Island, Corn Island, Big and Little Harry Islands, Buzzard Island, and numerous small hammocks. Pinckney is the largest of the islands and the only one open to public use. The refuge entrance is located on the north side of U.S. 278, between the two bridges that connect Hilton Head Island to the mainland.

Savannah National Wildlife Refuge

Located across the Savannah River from Savannah, Georgia, Savannah National Wildlife Refuge comprises 29,175 acres of freshwater marsh, tidal river, and bottomland hardwoods. The refuge's 3,000

*Excerpts courtesy National Audubon, written by Mel White
April 28, 2016*

acres of freshwater impoundments combine history and wildlife: They date back to the plantation era, when they were built as diked rice fields.

The refuge has a fine visitor center on Highway 17, three miles from the start of the Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive. The four-mile route, south of Highway 170, winds through freshwater pools and hardwood forest, providing easy access to great birding. In addition, visitors can walk most dikes between the ponds to get closer to birds. Alligators are seen often, even in winter.

The refuge hosts abundant wading birds, such as Wood Stork, Snowy Egret, White Ibis, and the occasional Roseate Spoonbill. Ducks are common from fall through spring. Nesting birds include Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Anhinga, Least Bittern, Osprey, Swallow-tailed Kite, Mississippi Kite, Bald Eagle, King Rail, Clapper Rail, Purple Gallinule, Black-necked Stilt, and Painted Bunting.

Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Center & Sanctuary

One of America's great wild places, this sanctuary protects the world's largest virgin bald-cypress and tupelo swamp forest, which is itself part of a larger area called Four Holes Swamp. Some of the trees in the 1,800-acre central forest are 1,000 years old. The entire preserve covers 17,000 acres.

Such swamp forests are impressive, even awe-inspiring, but almost always hard to access without a boat. Here, a 1.75-mile boardwalk makes exploration easy, winding deep into this now-rare ecosystem. The visitor center also offers regular bird walks and canoe and kayak trips, among other activities.

Bear Island Wildlife Management Area

Impressive flocks of wading birds first capture a Bear Island visitor's attention, as a dozen species or more may be present in its wetlands. But this site in South Carolina's Low Country has much more to offer birders than just these long-legged species.

Wood Stork can be seen more or less throughout the year, as can Mottled Duck, Anhinga, American White Pelican, and Bald Eagle. Shorebirds are abundant—around 20 species appear commonly and many more drop by regularly.

Bear Island's nesting birds include Mottled Duck, Least Bittern, Swallow-tailed Kite, Mississippi Kite, Black Rail, King Rail, Clapper Rail, Black-necked Stilt, Marsh Wren, Seaside Sparrow, and Painted Bunting.

Most birders drive Titi Road into the area and walk side roads and levees. There are two observation platforms as well. Note that the area is closed November-January.

Going Native

Many of us are interested in creating bird-friendly habitats in our yards using native plants, but how do we get started?

Native plants matter. Birds, butterflies, and other local organisms that depend upon on plants for food, shelter, breeding sites and more have co-evolved with native plants over thousands of years. This developmental partnership provides these species with just what they need in order to best face the challenges of survival, whereas non-native species often don't. The seeds, berries, and fruits from native plants help provide birds with the energy needed for nesting, migrating and over-wintering. Additionally, the plants native to a given region are generally best suited for the climate, planting zone, soil types, hydrology and disease control for that area. In order to create the best scenario for plants and birds, experts suggest planting native plants whenever possible.



Milkweed varieties

Every Yard Counts

More than 80 percent of the plants found in urban and suburban areas are exotic species. These areas cover nearly 15 percent of South Carolina, and that number

is growing. With every yard that “goes native” we help ensure a healthy environment for our local birds.

According to our colleagues at Audubon South Carolina, a native oak hosts more than 500 different species of caterpillars but an exotic ginkgo, only four. And caterpillars really matter. Many birds rely on protein-rich insects, especially during the nesting season. One clutch of chickadees, for example, will gobble down 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars before they leave the nest.

Here are some terrific resources available to help choose the right native plants for your yard:

National Audubon Society’s Online Native Plant Database - Just enter your zip code and you’ll get a list of native plants found in your area as well as what specific birds each will attract. <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>.

Clemson Cooperative Extension Carolina Yards Database - This database uses 10 different parameters to help you choose the right native plant for your South Carolina yard. Click [here](#) for more information

Beaufort County Master Gardeners - A wonderful local resource for learning more about native gardening, plant health, garden design and more. Click [here](#) for more information.

Welcome New Members

Hi fellow birders,

A warm welcome to our new members who joined since the last issue of the Ecobon was published.

Palmira Brummett
Kimberly Campbell
Jackie Currie
Richard Dodd
Bonnie Gutman and Frank Ward
Susan McNally
Linda O’Rourke
Sue Roderus
Tory Robertson-Susac
Terry Skiba
Jack Young

Remember that dues are based on a rolling calendar. For example, if you joined or renewed in March 2018, you are a paid member through March 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 Cclemens318@gmail.com. or Fran at seatwo@roadrunner.com.



Audubon



Issue #: 398
 Hilton Head, South Carolina 29938
 P.O. Box 6185
 Organization: Hilton Head Island Audubon Society
 Frequency: Monthly Sept.-May
 Issue Date: MARCH 2019
 Title: Ecobon

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29938
 P.O. Box 6185
 ECOBON

Non Profit Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Hilton Head Island, SC
 Permit #39

March/April/May 2019 Calendar

March

- Sat., March 9 Birding 101 at Coastal Discovery Museum (*2nd in series*) 9 am-12 pm
- Sat., March 9 Beginner Bird Walk at Jarvis Creek Park 1 pm - 2:30 pm
- Thurs., March 14 HHI Audubon Member Program 3 pm
 Savannah National Wildlife Refuge Initiatives
 with Russ Webb, Director of the Savannah NWR
 Meeting Location:
 Palmetto Electric Cooperative
 111 Mathews Drive, HHI (*parking and entrance is in the rear of the building*)

April

- Thurs., April 11 HHI Audubon Member Program 3 pm
 Lowcountry Recycling with Cindy Carter,
 Beauford County Recycling Coordinator
 Meeting Location:
 Palmetto Electric Cooperative
 111 Mathews Drive, HHI (*parking and entrance is in the rear of the building*)
- 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
 Field Trip (not at museum)

May

- Thurs., May 9 HH Audubon Member Picnic 3 pm
 Location: Coastal Discovery Museum

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