



## Meet Your New Board of Directors

The Hilton Head Audubon 2020-2021 officers and directors were chosen through online balloting during the month of April. To help you get to know the new board, here's a little about them.

### President

**John Bloomfield** moved to Hilton Head in 2018 and became Vice President of Hilton Head Audubon in May of that year. John is also a member of the Audubon South Carolina Board of Advisors. Before moving to South Carolina, he was Secretary and Communications Chair for New Jersey Audubon. Outside of Audubon, John operates a communications consulting practice for life-science companies and conservation organizations. He credits a 2011 vacation to the island for igniting his passion for birds.

### Vice President

**Lynn Hodgson** has been a member of National Audubon and various local Audubon chapters since the 1980s. She moved to Hilton Head in 2017 and immediately became active in our local chapter. She says, "I've always been an outdoors-person and a naturalist, and birding is an outgrowth of that. Birding also gives me an 'excuse' to get outside and to explore new places."

Lynn has a Ph.D. in biological sciences with a specialization in seaweed ecology. Except for a few years in Florida and South Dakota, she spent the majority of her professional career in Hawaii as a Professor of Natural Sciences.

### Secretary

**Jane Hester** has been involved with Audubon for many years and was our President for the past two years. Jane's interest in birds began in her youth but accelerated when she started feeding birds when she first moved to Hilton Head in 1968. Prior to retirement, she was a Beaufort County school science teacher for more than 30 years. Jane is a past chair of our Education Committee, has served as a Christmas Bird Count Captain for a number of areas, and has been a sponsoring teacher for the Great Backyard Bird Count. Jane is also an active volunteer with the Friends of the Savannah Coastal Refuge.

### Treasurer

**Wendy Dickes** joined Hilton Head Audubon in 2016 and has worked with state and local Audubon organizations for many years, including the plover patrol and bird banding at Plum Island NWR in Newburyport, Massachusetts. She received her Lowcountry Master Naturalist certification in 2017 and is currently working on her Master Gardener certification to gain more knowledge in native plants and landscaping.

### Audubon Newhall Preserve

**Bob Clemens** chairs the Audubon Newhall Preserve. Bob is a retired infantry officer and trial lawyer. He attended Syracuse University on an Army Scholarship and spent a dozen years on active duty before attending Notre Dame Law School. Bob and his wife, Carol, moved to Hilton Head in 2005.

### Communications and Membership

**Marina Bloomfield** moved to Hilton Head with her husband, John, after a long career in the healthcare industry. Marina has trained in New York as a graphic designer and was the owner of a graphics design firm. She joined the Hilton Head Audubon board in 2018 as an at-large member and *Ecobon* editor and assumed her current responsibilities last year. She is also the publicity chair for the Palmetto Quilt Guild on HH Island.

### Conservation

**John J. Coleman III** (Jack) is a plastic surgeon and an Emeritus Professor of Surgery at Indiana University. His interest in birdwatching began during medical school in the 1960s. Since his retirement in 2016, Jack has been active with Hilton Head Audubon, serving on the Conservation Committee and the Audubon Newhall Preserve Board. He is currently coordinating our partnership with the Pinckney Island NWR volunteers, working on maintaining and enhancing the ponds and other natural areas. Any members interested in working on projects at Pinckney can contact him at 317-431-8768 or [jjcolema@iupui.edu](mailto:jjcolema@iupui.edu).

### Education

**Lois Lewis** is a "snowbird" who lives in Michigan during the summer and in Sun City during the school year. She has been involved with Hilton Head Audubon's Christmas Bird Count for about 20 years and has served as Education Committee Chair for the last two. As a former public school science teacher, she feels strongly about combatting "NDD" - Nature Deficit Disorder - among our children.

**Mary Ellen Blankenship** joins the HH Audubon Board as Education Co-chair. A Sea Pines resident, Mary Ellen retired from a 20-year early childhood teaching career last June and relocated from Virginia to Hilton Head. Retirement has allowed her to pursue interests including birding, photography, and paddleboarding. She recently completed the Master Gardener program through the Clemson Extension program and is currently working toward her 40 hours of volunteer gardening in the community.

*continued on page 3*

# President's Message

## Board of Directors

**President** John Bloomfield

**Vice President** Lynn Hodges

**Treasurer** Wendy Dickes

**Recording & Corresponding Secretary**  
Jane Hester

### Member-at-Large

Alan Biggs

Julia Buzzard

Kay Grinnell

Carol Tunnicliffe

### Christmas Bird Count Liason

Susan Murphy

**Past President** Jane Hester

## Standing Committees

### Audubon Newhall Preserve

Bob Clemens Rita Kernan

Tom Hennessey Matt Matoon

### Bird Walks/Field Trips

Carlos Chacon

### Conservation

John J. Coleman III

### Communications/ECOBON/Website

Marina Bloomfield

Sean Dennis

### Education

Lois Lewis

Mary Ellen Blankenship

### Membership

Marina Bloomfield

Web: [www.hiltonheadaudubon.org](http://www.hiltonheadaudubon.org)

Subscription is a benefit of membership.

Direct inquiries to:

P.O. Box 6185

Hilton Head Island, SC 29938

Email:

[hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org](mailto:hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org)

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



This issue of *ECOBON* comes to you in the midst of a pandemic that has seemingly turned our world upside down. Every crisis is different, but this one has posed unique challenges. For while we are all facing it together, we are spending most of our time alone or in small groups, so that one day soon we can all be together again.

As birders, lovers of nature, and conservationists, it is in our DNA to be outdoors. It is where we find solace, spiritual inspiration and the camaraderie of other like souls. The outdoors pulls at us during this time of year. Everything is green and in bloom. Northern Parulas are singing. Chuck-will's-widows are calling outside many of our windows. Look overhead at our abundance of Bald Eagles, Ospreys and Red-shouldered Hawks. Perhaps you'll be fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of a Mississippi or Swallow-tailed Kite soaring artfully overhead.

The delights of our yards are comforting in these times, whether it's tending your garden or keeping the birds well fed. Maybe that's why more than 50 birders participated in our two backyard bird counts in April. These counts found 98 species of both resident and migrating birds in our yards, showcasing the diversity of nature that makes us so fortunate to live in the Hilton Head area.

Amid hopeful signs of a gradual reopening, it is my hope that you will get outdoors to enjoy the best of spring in the South Carolina Lowcountry. Our National Wildlife Refuges remain open and many of our neighborhoods have nature trails that have yielded dozens of warbler species, Painted and Indigo Buntings and Blue Grosbeaks this spring.

Enjoyment of nature is one of the best tonics in times of stress and challenge. It's also just plain fun. So, we urge you to get outside, whether it's your yard, your local patch, the Audubon Newhall Preserve or one of our magnificent wildlife refuges. We also urge you to do it safely. Birding is an activity that can be easily pursued while practicing social distancing. So please enjoy the remainder of springtime responsibly, and remember to be mindful of the needs of others during this challenging time.

Good birding –

John



*Painted Bunting by John Bloomfield*

### Field Trips

**Carlos Chacon** is the Coastal Discovery Museum's Manager of Natural History and is owner/operator of Eco-Adventures LLC, a small nature tour company specializing in trips to Costa Rica. Born and raised in Costa Rica, he has lived in the Lowcountry since 2000. Carlos has a bachelor's degree in tropical biology from the University of Costa Rica and a master's degree in earth and environmental resource management from the University of South Carolina. He has been an avid birder for more than 20 years.

### Christmas Bird Count

**Susan Murphy** lives on Hilton Head Island and has been involved with Hilton Head Audubon for 15 years. She has coordinated the Hilton Head Christmas Bird Count, one of the largest in the country, since 2014. "This is an important citizen science project," says Susan, "and I am dedicated to keep it going here."

### Members At Large:

**Alan Biggs** is a resident of Hilton Head Island, living in Hilton Head Plantation since 2014. A former Professor of Plant Pathology at West Virginia University, he's been involved with National Audubon (as a subscriber since age 12) and has served as Program Chair and board member for the Potomac Valley Audubon Society for four years. He's helped with Hilton Head Audubon programs for the past three years.

**Julia Buzzard** joined Hilton Head Audubon in December 2017. Her appreciation and love of birds came from her mother, who enjoyed feeding, watching and identifying birds. Julia and her husband, David, are very concerned with conservation and environmental issues that closely relate to our bird population. She is a retired elementary public school teacher, having mainly taught kindergarten. David and Julia are also members of our Conservation Committee.

**Kay Grinnell** has been involved with Audubon for 11 years. A former strategy and operations consultant and partner with Deloitte, Kay says she didn't really discover nature until she retired. Now, Kay says that nature and birds provide an endless opportunity for learning and hope. She believes every person who is touched by Audubon and becomes interested in birds will contribute in some way to a future of healthy habitats for our birds – whether it be with a vote, a financial contribution or perhaps by getting another person interested and involved.

**Carol Tunnicliffe** is a Hilton Head resident who has been involved with Audubon for three years. When she moved to the island, she developed an interest in learning about the various local species. What transpired was so much more. "A deep interest in birds and their welfare was ignited and has continued to grow,"

she says. "I now care deeply about protecting birds and their habitats, and Hilton Head Audubon was the spark that created my passion." Carol spent most of her adult life as a freelance artist creating woven Native American patterns as framed wall art. She was also a certified paddling instructor for the American Canoe Association.

---

## Welcome New Members

---



A warm welcome to our new members:

Patricia Adams  
Rose Johnson  
Tony Johnson  
Deborah Staley

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 membership 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:

[hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org](mailto:hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org)

---

## Artist of the Month

---

Congratulations to Hilton Head Audubon's Pattie Kappmeyer, who was recently selected as Audubon South Carolina's Artist of the Month for her magnificent bird photography. Pattie's work was also featured on the cover of *The Chat*, the Carolinas Bird Club's online magazine.





# News from Newhall

by Bob Clemens  
Audubon Newhall Chairman

Despite social distancing, the Audubon Newhall Preserve is open and has been frequently visited, especially by locals who have grown weary of being



housebound. We can no longer provide a count of our visitors, because we've removed the clipboard and visitor's log, leaving only the trail guides in the map box, to limit potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. We are also thrilled to

announce that we have the first printing of a completely new and improved Trail Guide, copies of which will be placed in the map box in the near future. You may view a copy by [clicking here](#). We owe a debt of gratitude to Marina Bloomfield for her work on this project and to those who obtained the Town's ATAX grant which funded the publication. Finally, we thank the many volunteers who continue to water the trees and shrubs, shovel the earth and spread pine straw to enhance the beauty of the preserve. Thanks for your commitment, especially in this difficult time.

## Audubon Newhall Preserve



The Audubon Newhall Preserve was established in 1965 as the Island Wildlife Preserve, when Caroline "Beany" Newhall, recognized the need to conserve woodlands on this rapidly developing island. She persuaded Charles Fraser of the Sea Pines Company to deed 50 acres of land for a nature preserve. Over the years, Beany devoted endless hours to saving plants from the paths of developers and transplanting them into this protected environment. In 1976, she deeded the Preserve to Hilton Head Audubon, together with an endowment fund, to ensure its ongoing maintenance. In 1993, the pond was restored, and this recreated an integral focal point for the Preserve. Thanks to the foresight and generosity of its founder, Beany Newhall, this woodland will forever remain a sanctuary for all to enjoy.

In 2016, Hurricane Matthew severely damaged the Preserve. In the aftermath, an army of volunteers, the local Rotary, Sea Pines CSA, and the SC State Forestry Commission, all pitched in to restore the Preserve. More than 300 downed trees were removed from the perimeter firebreak and nearly 400 trees were planted to restore the forest. Trail signage was restored and replaced. Memorial benches were donated or replaced. Milled asphalt has been donated by Sea Pines CSA to improve the parking lot and widen the roadway from Palmetto Bay Road. Most recently, pollinator gardens have been prepared at the back of Audubon Pond. In short, the Audubon Newhall Preserve has "bounced back" better than ever!

# Opportunities of a New Fiscal Year

By Wendy Dickes, Treasurer

I am pleased to report that we completed the fiscal year of 2019-2020 with positive numbers thanks to our wonderful Hilton Head Audubon members and the hard work of the Board. We are thankful to everyone for their membership and generous donations! We are excited that more than 20 members joined our new Leaders Circle, with contributions of \$100 or more.

Our Chapter had fun with raffles, a silent auction and exciting programs, such as Drew Lanham's presentation on Culture and Conservation in November. All provided needed income to the organization. Fundraising for the initial phase of the Motus wildlife tracking project met our initial goal of generating \$3,000. Several board members contributed hours of their time to write grant requests. The grants provided over \$4,000 for specific programs, such as the informative new trail guide you will find at Newhall Preserve. All of these resources allowed our Chapter to end the fiscal year with net income of \$6,400.

You are probably asking what this money is used for. Expenses include insurance for the organization, our annual picnic (which we hope we will be rescheduling soon) and the cost of providing monthly programs and speakers, as well as website costs. This year we upgraded the website to allow for the convenience of online payments.

Many may not know we have an Education Committee. Expenses for educational outreach are low, but their impact is far-reaching. For example, this committee helped more than 900 students participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count, while other students took part in our exemplary Christmas Bird Count. In addition to the grants we receive, we also provide grants to conservation programs and partners like the Coastal Discovery Museum.

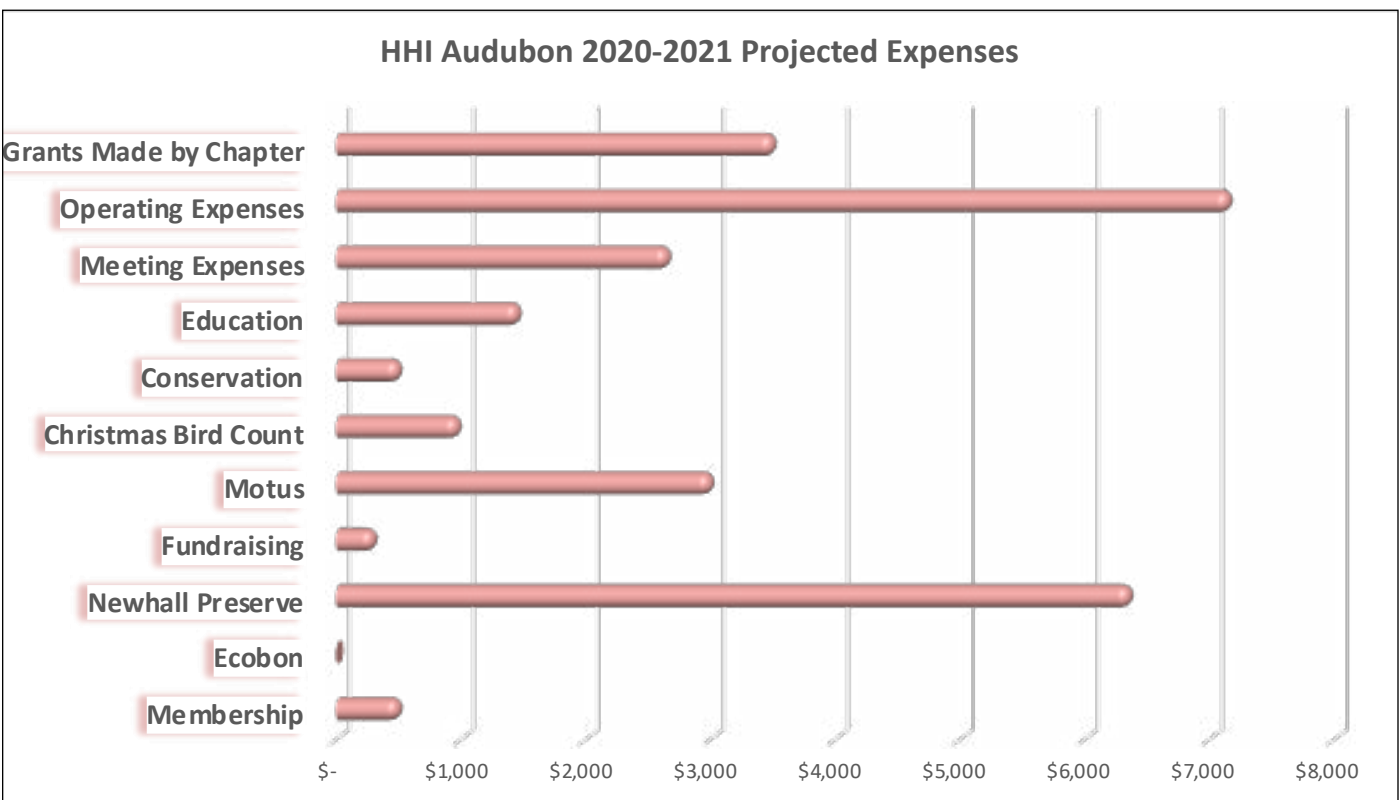
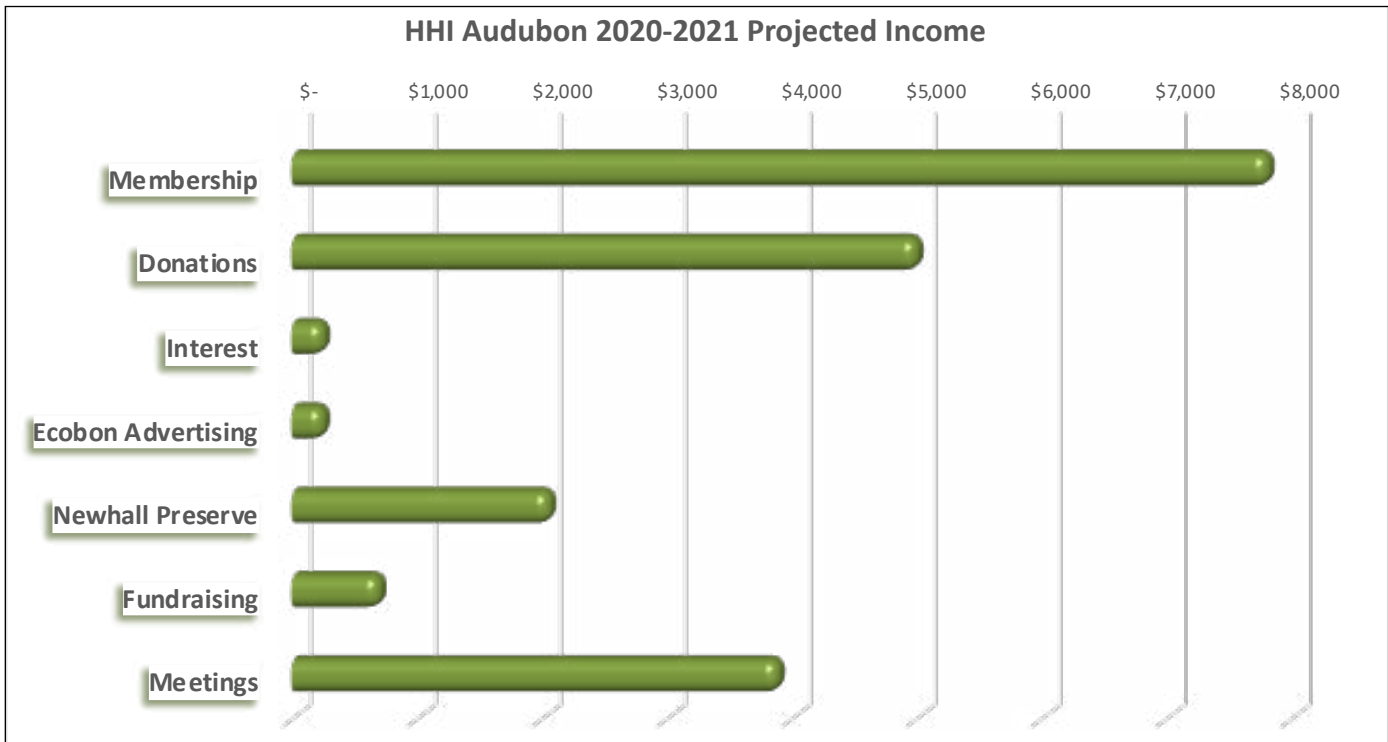
We are so fortunate to have the Audubon Newhall Preserve that provides opportunities to enjoy a natural ecosystem and weekly bird walks throughout the year. Although offset by generous donations given at the on-site money post, improvements and maintenance are both labor-intensive and expensive. The Newhall Committee, with the generous help of volunteers, has been working to replace trees and plants lost in Hurricane Matthew. The pond, the paths, the butterfly garden and the parking area all require continued maintenance.

We are proud to share with you what the organization is accomplishing with your valued membership and donation dollars. As we approach the fiscal year 2020-2021, we intend to use part of last year's surplus to help fund additional repairs at Newhall. Once the COVID-19 epidemic is behind us, we also plan to use the funds

given to us to support the Motus installation and to broaden our educational outreach with a scholarship program dedicated to the memory of Barry Lowes, who inspired a love of birding and nature in people of all ages throughout the Hilton Head area.

The bottom line is that we are a healthy organization. We will continue with diligence as shepherds of your contributions in supporting the conservation efforts so important to each of us! We thank you all.

*In 2019, Hilton Head Audubon ran a budget surplus of \$6400. We intend to use that surplus to fund additional repairs at Newhall Preserve, install a Motus wildlife tracking station and to fund a scholarship program dedicated to the memory of Barry Lowes.*



# South Carolina Reports Largest Number of Wintering Orioles for Sixth Year in a Row

April 22, 2020

South Carolina's 2020 Baltimore Oriole Winter Survey reported the largest number of orioles wintering in the United States for the sixth year in a row. The results were recorded during the sixth annual Baltimore Oriole Winter Survey, conducted by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Feb. 14-17, 2020.

SCDNR's survey was held in conjunction with the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). Tapping into this long standing citizen-science project allowed SCDNR to get a better picture of the status and distribution of this beautiful songbird wintering in the Palmetto State.

Survey participants in South Carolina submitted 88 reports and recorded 401 orioles. The number of reports was South Carolina's highest number to date, and the number of orioles recorded was the third highest to date.

This year, orioles were reported from 14 of the 22 South Carolina counties that have been reported. Two counties, Anderson and Greenwood, had a report for the first time during the survey. Orioles ranged from the Midlands and throughout the coastal plain, from North Myrtle Beach to Hilton Head. Charleston County had the most reports and recorded the largest number of orioles, reporting 38 percent of the total number of orioles in the state.

According to the GBBC and the SCDNR survey, a total of 302 reports and 976 orioles were recorded this year in the United States. South Carolina had the second largest number of reports in the United States and the largest number of orioles seen.

Baltimore Orioles are neotropical migrants, normally wintering in South and Central America and migrating to North America to nest. During the last several decades, however, this species has begun wintering annually in the



Adult male. Photo: Shari McCollough/Audubon Photography Awards

Southeast. Though scientists are not sure why these birds have begun overwintering in growing numbers, the birds respond well to the popularity of backyard bird feeding.

Next year's SCDNR Baltimore Oriole Winter Survey and Great Backyard Bird Count will be Feb. 12-15, 2021. If you have orioles frequenting your feeders during the winter months, (December, January and February), or know someone who does, SCDNR would like for you

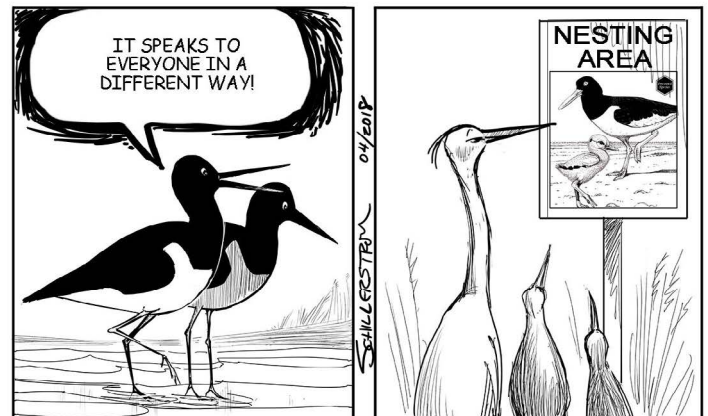
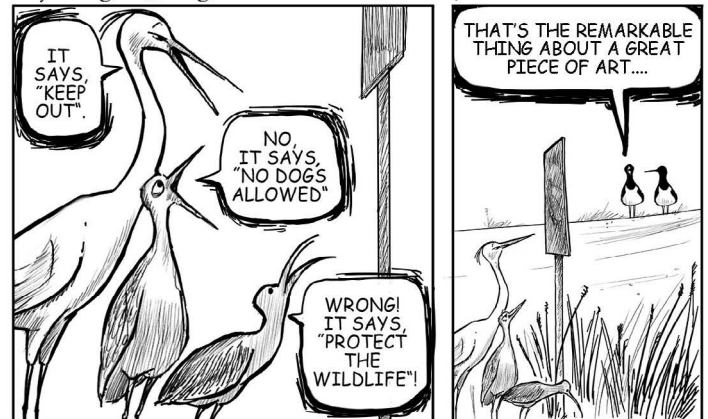
to participate in the survey. For more information on the Baltimore Oriole Winter Survey or to receive this year's survey results, contact Lex Glover ([gloverl@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:gloverl@dnr.sc.gov)) at SCDNR.



Illustration courtesy of David Sibley for National Audubon

## Audubon Mots

by: Roger@RogerSchillerstrom.com





# Think Globally, Bird Locally

by Bob Speare, Bird Program Consultant

During these surreal times of quarantine and social distancing, I'm seeing some wonderful stories of wildlife venturing into town centers, parks and other areas that are now all but void of people. But I also know that it's not all good news for wildlife. Many very important field studies have been suspended, and much needed research, especially on vulnerable species, is not being conducted. So, as we are stuck in our own local areas, a question to ask is, "What can I do at this time to help?"

If you remember the term, "Think Globally, Act Locally," it reminds us that small acts done at home and in our communities can add up to larger impacts, even to a global scale. When we pair this term with the concept of "Citizen Science," more people can focus on a specific effort and create an even greater impact. The Christmas Bird Count, which the greater Hilton Head community proudly embraces, is a fine example of important data that is first collected by local individuals and is then connected to a larger pool, resulting in vital large-scale information made available to researchers and decision makers. This month offers another terrific opportunity for each of us to embrace these concepts and contribute to an important bird study.

## April Backyard Bird Counts

Even though our April birding events took place at home this year, our two Pandemic Backyard Bird Counts were a wonderful success. During these two days, more than 50 members scoured their yards to locate and identify 79 and 90 species of birds respectively, with a combined total of 98 species overall. Both counts were a lot of fun, and many who participated noted how surprised they were by the number of birds they saw. And, perhaps most importantly, events like these help remind us that we don't have to wander far to enjoy the beautiful diversity of birds in our area – they're right in our own backyards!

## Think Globally

May is always a very busy month for bird counts and birding events. Among them is the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Global Big Day, taking place this year on Saturday, May 9.** It's what they call "Birding's biggest day," an annual celebration of the birds around you. Similar to what we learned through our April Pandemic Backyard Bird Counts, adding up the birds in our yards can produce an impressive number of species for the area. Global Big Day expands that area to the entire planet. Think of everyone doing a local bird count on the same day worldwide!

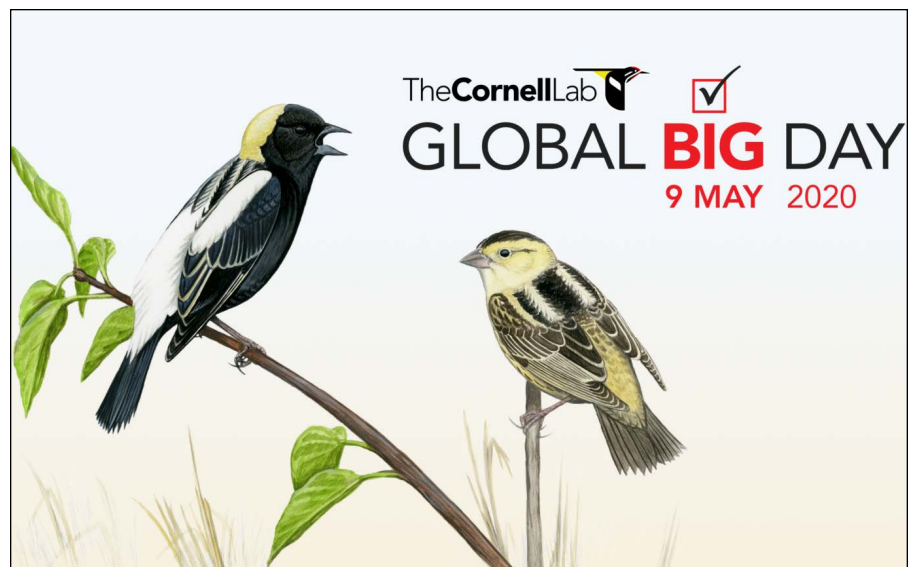
## Bird Locally

We can all take part in Global Big Day wherever we are on May 9. Whether you decide to watch birds from inside your house, in your yard, or safely from a nearby park or other natural area, your sightings will help researchers tell the story of global bird populations right now. The goal for the Lab of Ornithology this year is to collect 100,000 checklists on Global Big Day, something that has never happened before. And it's easy for you to be a part of this tremendous effort. Just keep track of all the birds you see on May 9 (both the species and number of individuals) and submit them using **eBird**.

**eBird - Part of Global Big Day** is to introduce new folks to eBird, a website and mobile app used to submit bird sightings to a large global database, and to encourage birders to keep track of and report their sightings via this great resource. If you haven't used eBird before, it's free, it's very easy to use, and it ensures that your sightings – both on Global Big Day and every day you use it – will become a part of the ongoing database of bird activity around the world.

eBird can be used on a computer ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)), although most folks use it right on their mobile device. Download the free app, create a username and password, and you're ready to go. The most recent version has improvements that make it even easier to use. If eBird is new to you, I strongly encourage you to give it a try, even if you just watch birds at your feeder. You can find a quick eBird tutorial [here](#), or send us an [email](#) if you need help.

Join us on Global Big Day to help us reach a goal of 100,000 checklists and to ensure that the birds that you see wherever you are on **May 9** can be a part of this very important database.



# Thank You from Wild Birds Unlimited of HHI



*Carolina Wren by John Bloomfield*

Although COVID-19 has created a lot of uncertainty in our lives, we can take comfort in knowing that birds and nature are here for all of us. We are all fortunate to be able to live in the Lowcountry and experience a marvelous array of bird species all year long, including in our own backyards.

Please note that WBU is still open for business but currently operating via phone order/curbside pick-up only with shorter hours (Monday-Saturday, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm). The safety of our customers and staff is paramount. Thank you for your patronage and for supporting a locally owned business. We look forward to a future free of social distancing and to talking with all of you again in person about your bird sightings.

Sincerely,

Julia and Sean Dennis



- 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

## May 2020 Calendar

### May 2020

**Thursday, May 21      Hilton Head Audubon Member Picnic - CANCELED**

*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.*