

Lowcountry Vultures Coming Soon

Our October program meeting will focus on vultures: the fascinating and mysterious birds we often see soaring in kettles above the horizon, feeding on the side of the road or gathering on rooftops. We have two vulture species in the Lowcountry: Turkey Vulture and Black Vulture.

Capable of cleaning a full-grown deer carcass in a few hours, vultures are of great value to nature. The Turkey Vulture's extraordinary sense of smell is one of the unique features that facilitates a lifestyle that has evolved to feeding on rotten meat. From their unique feeding habits to their quite peculiar defense mechanism, vultures are definitely incredible creatures. Although, by human standards, they're not the most charismatic creatures, they are highly specialized and occupy important ecological niches. Learn why their bad reputation is mostly undeserved.

This month's speaker, Carlos Chacon, is Manager of Natural History at the Coastal Discovery Museum. Born and raised in Costa Rica, he studied Tropical Biology at the University of Costa Rica. After graduating in 1996, Carlos began working as a naturalist, leading

Vulture Fun Facts

- ♦ Black and Turkey Vultures are part of nature's clean-up crew. They rid the landscape of deteriorating carcasses and help curb the spread of dangerous diseases and bacteria.
- ♦ Turkey Vultures have an excellent sense of smell and use it to locate food. Black Vultures rely on sight.
- ♦ The misnomer "buzzard" was given to our North American vultures by early settlers, who thought these birds were related to the European *buteo* with this name. Unfortunately, the name is still in common use.
- ♦ Vultures acquired their bad reputation in the 1900s, when people grew concerned they might increase the spread of disease, despite strong evidence to the contrary.
- ♦ The oldest recorded Turkey Vulture was at least 16 years old; the oldest Black Vulture lived for more than 25 years.

Art: Turkey Vulture, David Sibley

When: October 10, 2019, 3:00-4:15 PM

**Where: Coastal Discovery Museum
70 Honey Horn Dr. Hilton Head Island**

**Speaker: Carlos Chacon
"Lowcountry Vultures"**

trips through the rainforest and other environments of the American tropics. In 2000, he moved to Hilton Head Island, his wife's home. In the Lowcountry, Carlos continued working as a naturalist, guiding kayak trips in the marshes of Hilton Head Island. In 2005, he joined the Coastal Discovery Museum and, in 2007, he received an M.S. in Earth and Environmental Resources Management from the University of South Carolina. Carlos conducts many varied nature programs at the Museum and manages the Karen Wertheimer Butterfly Enclosure.



Art: Black Vulture,
National Audubon

Welcome New Members

A warm welcome to our new members:

Mary Ball
Mary Ellen Blankenship
Leigh Harrington
Lynne Murphy
Jane Kendall
Lawrence Jones
Karen Seminary
Laura Voight

We have implemented an online membership process where you can join, renew or make donations by using Visa, Mastercard or Discover. An email will go out when your membership is due, and 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). Prior membership forms are void after September 1. If you have any questions about membership, please email Marina Bloomfield at hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org.

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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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President's Message

One of the best perks of joining Hilton Head Audubon is the opportunity to take day trips to nearby birding hot spots. Our field trip coordinator, Bob Speare, selects locations based on his vast expertise and experience as a birder. I have never been on an Audubon field trip that was not a rewarding experience.



I keep asking myself: "Why, with our outstanding leadership, don't we attract a wider following among our membership?" When I go on these outings, I see mostly the "regulars," our faithful field trip followers. If you are one of those regulars, read no further because this message is not for you. Rather, it's for those who linger on the cusp and cannot make the decision to participate.

Please allow me to confirm or debunk some of the more popular reasons I have heard for staying at home.

Reason #1: The weather might be bad. While it is true that Audubon cannot control the elements; we call off trips if things are looking really nasty. Contrary to what some folks think of us birders, being out in the rain is not all that popular. We are hoping for great weather, too.

Reason #2: I have nothing to wear. I have been on these trips, and the fashion police are not among us. Gave your winter coat away when you moved south? Layer up! Wear shoes that can take a little muck. However, some trips are on boardwalks where no special footwear is required.

Reason #3: They start too early. Okay, if you want to sleep until 9, then perhaps you can just hear about the great birds we saw.

Reason #4: I am not a good enough birder. Nonsense! All levels are welcome. You are not going to get better just watching the birds that come to your feeders. Audubon members are happy to share their knowledge, and we have wonderful leaders who make sure to include everyone in the birding experience. We all are still learning. Plus, we have beginner bird walks and programs like Birding 101 to help build your knowledge.

Reason #5: I might misidentify a bird. Yes, you might and so might the rest of us. I have learned a lot through the years thanks to a great mentor, but there is so much to learn and see. Birders are a forgiving lot. Even the experts misidentify birds from time to time.

Reason #6: I am not in good shape. We usually tell you how much walking is involved. Most often, we travel by carpool with stops or we are on a wagon with seats and a step. Since we are here in the Lowcountry, no climbing is required. Birding means a slow quiet walk, listening and looking. As a rule, no sprinting is involved.

continued on page 5

The Crisis for Birds is a Crisis for Everyone

A major study published last month in the journal *Science* confirmed what many birders have long suspected: since 1970, or longer than the time many of us have lived, North America has lost more than a quarter of its birds — some 3 billion in all.

This study, in the nation's leading scientific journal, was a collaborative effort among seven major institutions, including the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the American Bird Conservancy.

The losses documented by researchers include dramatic declines by Eastern and Western Meadowlarks (down by 139 million) and favorite birds at feeders, such as Dark-eyed Juncos (down by 168 million) and White-throated Sparrows (down by 93 million). Baltimore Orioles saw their numbers cut nearly in half during this time period.

In today's world, it's convenient to cast doubt on information we find inconvenient. But make no mistake — this is extremely credible science. As Cornell Lab Director Dr. John Fitzpatrick and his colleague Dr. Peter Marra, director of the Georgetown Environmental Initiative wrote in an Op-Ed published in *The New York Times*:

"Birds are the best-studied group of wildlife; their populations have been carefully monitored over decades by scientists and citizen scientists alike."

The study drew from multiple standardized bird-monitoring datasets such as breeding bird surveys, some of which provide close to 50 years of population data. It also used 10 years of data from a network of 143 NEXRAD weather radars across the U.S. to track nocturnal migration trends.

Fitzpatrick and Marra write that the results signal an "unfolding crisis," noting that "more than half our grassland birds have disappeared, 717 million in all. Forests have lost more than 1 billion birds."

What is shocking is that much of the loss is among common species. The Red-winged Black-

by John Bloomfield and Jane Hester

bird population has declined by 92 million. A quarter of all Blue Jays have disappeared, along with almost half of all Baltimore Orioles. As Fitzpatrick and Marra write: "These are the birds we know and love, part of the bird life that makes North America lively, colorful and filled with song every spring."

Habitat loss, agricultural intensification and coastal disturbances were identified as primary culprits behind the crisis, all intensified by global environmental change. "Birds are indicator species, serving as acutely sensitive barometers of environmental health," explain Fitzpatrick and Marra, "and their mass declines signal that the earth's biological systems are in trouble."

The study did find some good news, and in this news there is hope. According to the study, populations of North American ducks and geese have grown by 56 percent. This is, in large measure, the result of



conservation initiatives spearheaded by the hunting population and organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, which has contributed substantially to wetlands acquisition and lobbied hard for

laws to protect wetlands. Hunters are not the enemies of birders. Waterfowl populations are booming today because of people who cared.

Beyond the rebound of waterfowl populations, Bald Eagles, Ospreys, Peregrine Falcons and other raptors have increased by 15 million through conservation measures, including the banning of the pesticide DDT.

These successes show us that we have the power to mitigate the declines and leave our grandchildren more than memories of what the morning chorus used to sound like. Please see the seven simple actions for things you can do today to help birds on page 5.

[You can download the full report here.](#)

continued on page 5

Notes From The Field

by Bob Speare
Audubon Field Trip Coordinator

Lots of great birding opportunities in October!

We had a wonderful start to our fall birding with a number of programs in September. For our September Field Trip, we enjoyed a trip to the Sea Pines Forest Preserve where we spotted 34 species, including five warbler species, an American Kestrel and a Pie-billed Grebe. Our Tuesday Morning Walks at the Newhall Preserve also got underway with Summer Tanager, Ovenbird, and Chipping Sparrow among the 22 resident and migrant species seen. Also, Birding 101 is just beginning with its first session on September 28.

Here's what we have in store for the next two months:

October Birding Field Trip

Where: Altamaha Town Heritage Preserve, Okatie

When: Friday, October 4; 8:30–10:30 am

Leader: Matt Johnson, Audubon SC Director of Bird Conservation and Engagement

Limit: 20 participants

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

Join Audubon South Carolina's bird biology expert, Matt Johnson, on this special program to explore Altamaha Town Heritage Preserve, a property protected with funds from the Beaufort County Rural & Critical Land Preservation Program. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this 100-acre sanctuary was purchased for its historical and archeological significance, but its mature woodlands also host a diversity of wildlife. Birds will be the main focus of this guided walk, but all organisms encountered will be discussed and enjoyed!

We will walk the 0.8-mile (one way) trail through the woodlands and down to the marsh, identifying the birds and other wildlife as we go.

Directions, carpooling information and additional details will be available upon registration.

Preregistration required — to register, [please click here.](#)

November Birding Field Trip

Where: Fish Haul Creek Park, Hilton Head Island

When: Saturday, November 2; 8:00 - 10:00 am

Leader: Robert Rommel, past HH Audubon President, Author, and Photographer

Limit: 20 participants

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

Fish Haul Beach Park (formerly Mitchelville Park) is without question one of the birding gems on Hilton Head Island. Located along the Port Royal Sound, many bird species take advantage of the varied habitats found at the park. Among these habitats are the salt marsh, beach, and associated mud flats, which provide important feeding and resting sites for migrating shorebirds as well as gulls, terns, skimmers, oystercatchers and waders. Timed for the best viewing of these birds, this promises to be a terrific morning with Robert, who will teach field techniques for identifying these coastal birds along the edge of the surrounding maritime forest. Waterproof footwear, bug spray and sunscreen are recommended. We'll have a spotting scope on hand, but feel free to bring one if you like.

Directions and additional details will be available upon registration.

Preregistration required — to register, [please click here.](#)

Tuesday Morning Bird Walks at Audubon Newhall Preserve

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

When: Tuesday, October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; 8:30- 10:30 am

No registration and no fee — just join us for a leisurely two-hour walk through the native trees and wildflowers to look for migrating and resident bird species that are found on this wonderful 50-acre property. New birders are always welcome.

Quick Bird Trips

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

Reason #7: Bathrooms are not conveniently located. I'll give you this one. We tell folks ahead of time where there's a convenient rest stop, but sometimes things are primitive. A good strategy is to go easy on the coffee before a bird walk.

Reason #8: It is too far for me to drive. We have carpooling for our more distant travels; you can always catch a ride with someone.


Reason #9: There might be bugs or worse yet, snakes. Indeed, bugs are possible; however, most of our trips happen from fall through spring, and most bug sprays work well. Participants on winter trips encounter few bugs, so that time might work best for some. Winter brings few snakes, another plus for most. The only snake I have ever seen on an Audubon field trip was at the Audubon sanctuary at Beidler Forest — we were safely on a boardwalk with warblers landing just a few feet away.

Of course, legitimate reasons exist for not joining us on a field trip. But please, if you're on the fence about it, I encourage you to give it a try. Everyone is more than welcome. It is not just new birds you might see, but also great views of our diverse natural areas and a chance to bond with a great group of people. I look forward to some new faces among the familiar.

Yours truly,
Jane Hester

Seven Simple Steps

1. Make windows safer, day and night. On the outside of the window, install screens or break up reflections using film, paint, or Acopian BirdSavers or other strings spaced no more than four inches apart.
2. Keep cats indoors. Cats are estimated to kill more than 2.6 billion birds annually in the U.S. and Canada. Apart from habitat loss, letting cats roam outside is the #1 human-caused reason for the loss of birds.
3. Reduce lawn and increase native plantings. Native plants look great and provide nutrition for birds. [National Audubon's Native Plant Database](#) can help you get started.
4. Avoid unnecessary pesticides. More than 1 billion pounds of pesticides are applied in the U.S. each year. The continent's most widely used insecticides, a class known as neonics, are lethal to birds and to the insects that birds consume. Common weed killers used around homes, such as 2, 4-D and glyphosate (used in Roundup), can be toxic to wildlife. Glyphosate has been declared a probable human carcinogen.
5. Drink bird-friendly (shade-grown) coffee. You need to do your research here, but [Smithsonian](#) has a database to help you get started.
6. Skip the plastic straw and protect the planet against unnecessary plastics. We are fortunate to live in a community that has taken action against unnecessary plastic bags. Let's see what we can do about straws, plastic forks and Styrofoam. Restaurants say they want to do more, but they need consumers to support them.
7. Practice Citizen Science. Hilton Head Audubon participates in several citizen science initiatives, ranging from our Christmas Bird Count to Cornell's annual Feeder Watch program. Simply reporting your sightings to eBird is a great help. eBird is not just a checklist tool; it is the world's largest database of the frequency and distribution of birds.



- Bird Seed, Blends & Suit
- 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



Practicing just a few of the seven steps can have an impact in helping mitigate this crisis and its effects in our own community. Make that commitment today.

Hilton Head Goes to Costa Rica

by John Bloomfield
Vice President, HH Audubon

Call it luck or call it timing. On September 1, as the uncertain path of Hurricane Dorian began churning up the Atlantic, 15 of us found ourselves on the ground in Costa Rica, wondering what might be happening back home and powerless to do anything about it.

So we waited anxiously. And we watched birds. A lot of them. To be precise, over the next week, long after the hurricane passed by Hilton Head, we saw 222 species — many of them lifers and nearly all of them spectacular in their own way.

Costa Rica's reputation as a birding paradise is well-deserved. Its proximity to both the Caribbean and the Pacific, lush rainforests and cool mountain-tops, and relatively small size mean you can see a lot of birds in a relatively short time. So when our friends at Wild Birds Unlimited of Hilton Head teamed up with Carlos Chacon and his company, EcoAdventures LLC, to create a birding trip to Costa Rica, many of us jumped at the chance to go.

Carlos, a native Costa Rican who many of us know from his work at the Coastal Discovery Museum, took us on a journey that started in the foothills of the Arenal Volcano, through the Sarapiquí Valley, the Puerto Viejo and Penas Blancas Rivers and up into the Talamanca mountains of southern Costa Rica. We hiked, rafted, and traversed hanging



Photo: Spectacled Owl
John Bloomfield

bridges over lush forest canyons. We listened intently as Carlos explained the interconnected nature of rainforest ecology — each species dependent on another for its survival. We tasted native



Photo: Resplendent Quetzal
John Bloomfield

fruit, local fish, fine Costa Rican coffee and chocolate, and practiced our Spanish at every meal.

And did we ever bird! Each time we walked outside, we saw something new. Birds so spectacular they need hyphens in their names, like the Northern Emerald-Toucanet, the White-throated Mountain-gem and the Fasciated and Bare-throated Tiger-Herons.

We will never forget seeing five Resplendent Quetzals descend on wild avocados directly in front of us, providing close-ups not only of their snacking ability, but the full dimensions of their form, the male's elongated tail in full view. Nor will we forget Carlos' friend Cope, who guided us through thick forest and stream to find a family of Spectacled Owls peering at us, and later a Crested Owl and the nest of a secretive White-tipped Sicklebill (we had to don muck boots for that one).

We saw 22 species of hummingbirds, some coming so close that our ears are still buzzing with the sound of them passing by. There were 11 warbler species including the brilliant yellow-and-red Collared Redstart. Tropical birding is famous for tanagers and we saw 13 tanager species, ranging



Photo: Lesson's Motmot
John Bloomfield

from the unfortunately named Plain Tanager to the more descriptive Golden-hooded, Crimson-collared and Spangle-cheeked Tanagers.

Our group bonded over these amazing birds and the places we found them. Costa Rica has done admirable work in protecting its rainforests and other important habitats. Walking through the forests of San Gerardo de Dota — the intoxicating aromas, the clear mountain streams polishing the rocks underneath — we realized how privileged we were to see this, and we were reminded of our own roles as stewards for the places we care about at home.



If you want to visit Costa Rica, you'll have another chance this coming spring. Wild Birds Unlimited of Hilton Head and Carlos' company are putting the finishing touches on the itinerary for a trip beginning the last week of May 2020. The final itinerary and prices will be announced shortly.



Submissions to Ecobon



Art: David Sibley for National Audubon

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

Follow us on Social Media. You can find us on Facebook [here](#).

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

Follow us on our website:
www.hiltonheadaudubon.org

Through Our Binoculars

by Jack Colcolough

Our fall migration has begun and we have had some excellent sightings in the Lowcountry, but in small numbers. We have already found 18 species of warblers and 13 species of other transient birds. Some of our visiting winter birds have already arrived. I expect our migration to peak in October, but there are some indications that it may be late again this fall.



Black-throated Blue Warbler - Mary Alice Tartler

Significant warblers sighted in our area thus far:

- Blue-winged Warbler (rare)
- Worm-eating Warbler
- Hooded Warbler
- Magnolia Warbler (uncommon)
- Yellow Warbler
- Prairie Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Palm Warbler



Magnolia Warbler - John Bloomfield

- Black-and-white Warbler
- Prothonotary Warbler
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- Northern Waterthrush
- American Redstart
- Ovenbird

Other migrant species:

- Philadelphia Vireo (rare), Scarlet Tanager, Baltimore Oriole, Veery, Yellow-throated Vireo
- Cliff Swallow, Bank Swallow
- Black Tern, Common Tern
- Pectoral Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, American Golden Plover (uncommon)
- American Robin (common)



Yellow-throated Vireo - Carol Clemens

Early winter arrivals:

- Endangered Piping Plovers (up to 22 seen at one time along Port Royal Sound). Black-bellied Plover, Dunlin, Sanderling, Marbled Godwit
- Great Black-backed Gull, Lesser Black-Backed Gull, Brown Booby
- Ruddy Duck, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Blue-winged Teal, American Coot
- Hairy Woodpecker
- American Goldfinch
- Tree Swallow

continued on next page

Project Feederwatch

Time to Join or Renew

Other good finds

- Common Ground Dove (rare), Eurasian Col-lared Dove
- Whimbrel (uncommon), Wilson's Plover, Red Knot
- Red-cockaded Woodpecker
- Bald Eagle, Swallow-tailed Kite, Mississippi Kite, Loggerhead Shrike
- Glossy Ibis
- Purple Gallinule
- Blue Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole, Painted Bunting
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird

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

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

We have had a great start to our fall migration, and it should get better as it peaks this month. Go into our great outdoors and try to find some of our fall migrants and arriving winter visitors as well as some of our summer visitors that are still here. It is one of the best times of the year to go birding.

eBird

INTERESTED IN EBIRD BUT NOT SURE
HOW TO START?

Log onto

<https://ebird.org>

eBird collaborates with National Audubon
and is managed by the
Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Attention backyard birders: It's time once again to count your feeder birds for science. Project Feeder-Watch, the long-running winter bird survey conducted by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada, kicks off November 9.



Bluebirds - Blake Robinson

Many of our members count themselves among the 20,000 people who participate in Project FeederWatch — one member has been counting for more than 30 years.

FeederWatch is a winter-long (November-April) survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, schools, nature centers, community areas and other locales in North America. Participants periodically count the birds they see at their feeders and send their counts to the project. Your bird counts help you keep track of what is happening in your own backyard and help scientists track long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. With FeederWatch, your observations become part of something bigger.

Anyone interested in birds can participate. Feeder-Watch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs. You can count birds as often as every week, or infrequently as time permits: the schedule is completely flexible.

Participation is easy: all you need is a bird feeder, bird bath, or plantings that attract birds.

[Click here to join or renew.](#)

Audubon Newhall Preserve

by Bob Clemens
Audubon Newhall Chairman

By the time you read this, the Preserve should have freshly spread milled asphalt from the roadway apron at Palmetto Bay Road to the parking lot! This is the result of our September workday collab-



oration with the local Rotary Club. Our relationship with the Rotary has been invaluable, as they have donated 180 native trees and shrubs to add to the Longleaf Pine project. Moreover, Rotary members, under the tutelage of Vice Chair Rita Kernan, have planted, weeded, and watered these plantings for over a year! Thanks also go to the Sea Pines CSA for



donating and delivering the milled asphalt, which the resident Sea Pines biologist assures us is an environmentally friendly way to pave the roadway with porous materials.

We know that not every visitor signs our visitor log, but through the end of August 2019 we have tallied 487 individuals or families from 45 states

and 8 countries, many of whom leave complimentary notes in the logs. We are hopeful that this data will support our ATAX application to fund printing costs for our trail guides and birding brochures. We have now added Coastal Discovery Museum program brochures to the Map Box to invite our visitors to yet another gem on the island.

Hurricane Dorian caused only two large trees to fall across the Preserve trails, and they were quickly dispatched by our trusty electric chainsaws!



Did you know that volunteers walk the trails every week to report on problems like these? We still need a volunteer Trail Monitor for the month of November. Anyone interested should contact Bob Clemens at (317) 989-5777 or RClemens318@roadrunner.com.



Bequests

If you wish to honor a family member or friend with a memorial gift, remember the Audubon Newhall Preserve or the Hilton Head Island Audubon 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, SC 29938. Email: hhaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org.

Here's What the Wind Blew In

There's no doubt birders are a quirky lot, and then there are the extreme birders who are a different breed altogether. Extreme birders dream of places like Attu in the Aleutian Islands and enjoy camping in the inhospitable Dry Tortugas in their quest for rarities. When a storm comes, they're the first to rush out and see what might have blown in.

Since Hurricane Dorian fortunately spared us, and life on Hilton Head Island is back to as normal as it ever gets, we were curious enough to ask this question:

Whether you stayed close to home or evacuated during Dorian, what was the most interesting bird you saw? Here's what you told us:



Wild Turkey - Alan Biggs

Alan Biggs: We evacuated on Wednesday morning to Hendersonville, NC, to stay with Laurie's twin sister and brother-in-law at their home in Champion Hills. They had recently purchased a property there and were taking us to see it that afternoon. Driving up and down through the hills led us to a small flock of wild turkeys crossing the road. I snapped this on my phone as we drove by and they walked calmly into the adjacent woods.



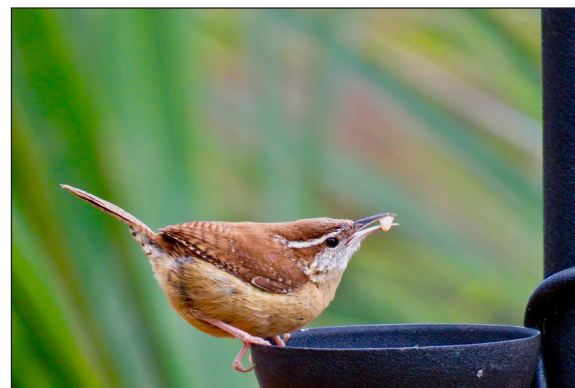
Solitary Sandpiper - Mary Alice Tartler

Mary Alice Tartler: I evacuated to my nephew's place in Greensboro, NC. Within two blocks of his home there are two parks: Tanger Family Bicentennial Garden and Bog Garden at Benjamin Park. The Bog Garden was filled with Jewelweed which at times was literally covered with Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Also, 30 Canada Geese, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Wood Thrush, Red- and White-eyed Vireos, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrows, Mallards, Barred Owl and others. My best find, however, was a Solitary Sandpiper.



Greater Roadrunner - Patty Kappmeyer

Patty Kappmeyer: I planned a southwestern road trip but Hurricane Dorian forced us to leave earlier. So we had the chance to visit Palo Duro Canyon in Texas — a vast, captivating landscape. We camped on the Old Comanche Trail which winds and hugs the canyon walls. On a hike, I heard the soft cooing of a Greater Roadrunner who crossed the trail, climbed the escarpment and paused on a ridge where I snapped this photo.



Carolina Wren - Carol Tunncliffe

Carol Tunncliffe: In the aftermath of Dorian, our favorite bird was a Carolina Wren. We had evacuated, and when we returned the first thing we did, before even unpacking, was rehang the feeders. Within a few minutes, this wren arrived and began singing away. We were so happy to see the first of our regulars return. What a great welcome home!

October – December 2019 Calendar

October

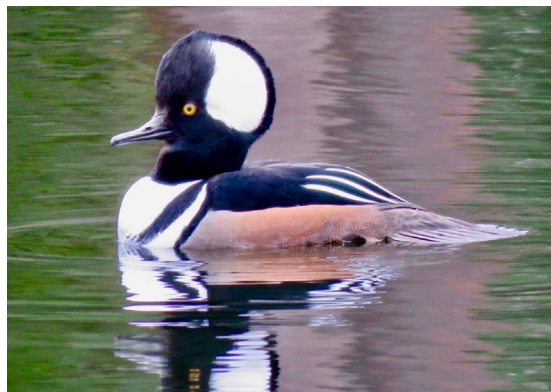
Friday, Oct. 4	October Birding Trip Altamaha Towne Heritage Preserve, Okatie	8:30 am
Thursday, Oct. 10	HH Audubon Member Meeting Speaker: Carlos Chacon “Lowcountry Vultures” Location: Coastal Discovery Museum	3 pm
Saturday, Oct. 19	Birding 101 (2nd of 5 sessions) Coastal Discovery Museum, Discovery Lab	9 am

November

Saturday, Nov. 2	November Birding Trip Fish Haul Creek Park	8 am
Saturday, Nov. 9	Birding 101 (3rd of 5 sessions) Coastal Discovery Museum, Discovery Lab	9 am
Thursday, Nov. 14	HH Audubon Member Meeting Speaker: Amber Kuehn “Turtle Patrol 2019 Season” Location: Hilton Head Public Library	3:30 pm
Saturday, Nov. 23	Birding 101 (4th of 5 sessions) Field Trip	9 am

December

Thursday, Dec. 12	HH Audubon Pre-Christmas Bird Count Program Location: First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall 540 William Hilton Parkway, HHI	7 pm
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Hooded Merganser

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.