



Sea Turtles on the Slate for November Program



Join us for our November Zoom program featuring Amber Kuehn. Amber will be discussing the results of this year's sea turtle nesting season.

Amber manages Sea Turtle Patrol Hilton Head Island and is well known in the local conservation community. Sea Turtle Hilton Head Island monitors our beaches

for sea turtle nesting and hatching activity annually, May through October, to promote the existence of these endangered species and to spread awareness of their struggle through public education and outreach.

When: Thursday, November 12, 3 pm via Zoom

How to Join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7819826859>

Meeting ID: 781 982 6859

Speaker: Amber Kuehn - Sea Turtle Patrol

2020 Christmas Bird Count

*by Susan Murphy
Christmas Bird Count Liaison*

This is the 121st year for the Audubon Christmas Bird Count! We are one of over 2,600 count circles in the Western Hemisphere. Our count area is a 15-mile diameter circle covering Hilton Head, Daufuskie and Pinckney Islands, parts of Bluffton and our waterways. On our one-day count, we identify species and count each bird we see or hear. We are an important part of gathering this data in the largest and longest-running citizen science project in the world.

December Meeting

Our annual Christmas Bird Count meeting is on Thursday, December 10 and will be a Zoom meeting. The presentation, by Robert Rommel, begins at 7:30 pm. Robert is a past president of Hilton Head Audubon, a professional wildlife photographer and our science advisor for the CBC. He always has some great tips on bird IDs to share! We'll share the Zoom link closer to the date.

Silent Auction During Christmas Bird Count Meeting

We will again be offering a silent auction to be held Nov. 30-Dec. 9. Though the auction will be virtual; Hilton Head Audubon members will receive an email including a link to the online auction site. Winners will be announced at 7 pm on December 10 – just prior to the Christmas Bird Count meeting.

Count Day

Our count day is Tuesday, December 15, for the Hilton Head area. Area Captains are putting their teams together. We always welcome more birders, so if you are interested in being a part of this international

effort, please [e-mail me](#), and I will have a Captain contact you. You do not have to be an accomplished birder. You can start out as the recorder or as the photographer in a more experienced group. You can also participate from the comfort of home by being one of our Feeder Watchers.



President's Message

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Web: www.hiltonheadaudubon.org

Subscription is a benefit of membership.

Direct inquiries to:

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Hilton Head Island, SC 29938

Email:

hiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org

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



I have many birding friends who are obsessed about lists. They keep yard lists, state and county lists and the all important life list. I have a friend in New Jersey who not only maintains impeccable lists from his bird travels around the world, but also a detailed accounting of every Wawa convenience store he has ever been to – which ones have gas, bathrooms, adequate parking and so on.

I keep lists as well, not for sport or competition or some obsessive-compulsive desire, but because I want to remember. A list of what I saw and when – especially if there's a companion photograph – helps me remember a time and place as vividly as if it were yesterday.

And so it was the other day that I recorded the 63rd bird species seen in my backyard since moving to Hilton Head in 2018. That's not too bad, but I am aware of two Audubon members whose yard totals stand at 99. May the good Lord grant them each at least one more!

On the other side of listers are the mindful birders, those who live in the moment and see every single bird as a unique creature to be enjoyed whether it visits your yard daily, or whether you only saw it once while traveling in some far-flung destination.

Is there a right way or a wrong way? Really, there's only your way, and you get to make the rules.

This especially applies to beginning birders. I often get questions like *what binoculars or camera should I buy?* It all depends on how serious you are and what you can afford. *Should I be on eBird and share my observations?* I have strong opinions on this, but it's really up to you. *What bird guides should I own?* I have Sibley, Peterson, Crossley, National Geographic and more. On my phone I have Sibley, The Warbler Guide, Merlin and the Audubon app. When someone makes an app that can faithfully identify birdsong, I'll get that too.

My advice? Start with the free apps first and move up the ladder when if you're compelled to do so. All of which is a long way of saying, "Do whatever makes you happy," and if anyone tries to tell you how you should approach birding, smile gently and thank them for their advice.

Kenn Kauffman once wrote that "birding is something we do for enjoyment, so if you enjoy it, you're a good birder."

Especially in these times, when enjoyment of nature is a welcome relief from the anxieties and stresses of the world around us, just let it go, and enjoy every bird you see. You'll feel good about knowing you're a good birder.

And if you feel like it, keep a list.

John Bloomfield

Newhall News

by Bob Clemens
Audubon Newhall Chairman

Among the things we can be thankful for this Thanksgiving month is our beloved Audubon Newhall Preserve! The new pond pollinator gardens are coming along nicely, and the October workday was focused on adding additional native plants, working on the irrigation system, and in removing the piles of debris from the September workday's culling of non-native plants. Our

half full, four bikes in the bike rack, and a couple of trail bikers on the pond trail. There was a gaggle of nature photographers at the pond taking photos of our resident alligator, "Big Al", cruising the pond. The latest visitor's log comments included: several "Beautifuls", "Yay!", "Love it!" and our favorite, "Thanks for upkeep and free entry!"

Save the date: The next Newhall workday is scheduled for 9 am on Saturday, November 7. Please bring a hat, a mask, water, gloves, sunscreen, bug spray, and hoes or other tools appropriate to remove stubborn vegetation. The preserve is located at 55 Palmetto Bay Road at the south end of the Island.

Comments, questions, and suggestions regarding the Preserve may be directed to [Bob Clemens](#).



Deer Photo by Mary Alice Tartler

October volunteers included Kathy Byrd, Karen Penale, Mary Ellen Blankenship, Lynn Hodgson, Toney Mathews, Jack Coleman, and Bob Clemens.

Lynn Hodgson has returned from the distant north to lead Tuesday morning bird walks from 8:30–10 am. The walks are casual, naturalist-led strolls around the Preserve for about a mile. Kids are welcome if accompanied by an adult. Walkers should bring binoculars and dress for the weather. Because of COVID precautions, we limit the participants to 10, first come, first serve. Pets are not allowed on the walks, but are welcome on leash at other times in the Preserve.



The Preserve continues to be popular with visitors, although the COVID travel ban has curtailed visits from Canada and more exotic countries. On a recent Sunday morning visit we found the parking lot more than



Lowcountry Banded Birds

Story and Photos by Alan Biggs

It's thrilling to spot a banded bird along the Lowcountry coastline. In my short time here, I have seen and reported bands on Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers, Brown Pelicans, Black Skimmers and Red Knots. The most commonly observed banded birds on Hilton Head Island are Piping Plovers, so this article will focus mostly on this species.

Why should you look for banded Piping Plovers?

There are many reasons, but the two main ones are:

- 1) band sightings provide scientists and managers with valuable data on wintering locations, migratory stopover locations, first and last observation dates, and survivorship;
- 2) you can learn how birds are moving around the habitats you survey.

When looking for banded Piping Plovers, remember the following: Piping Plovers are a federally endangered species – avoid disturbing them if possible. Let them come to you, or approach very slowly. No loud noise or fast movements. Use a spotting scope or a camera with good zoom capabil-



ity. Binoculars usually are not sufficient. Be patient: it may take several minutes to identify band colors and very often you'll need to look closely at a photo when you get home. In the field, write down type of band (flag, metal, plastic), color, and location on the leg and double check what you write against what you see. It's easy to forget what you saw once you get home unless you were able to take a good enough photo.

The bands always come with an interesting story that is always worth the effort that it takes to under-

stand how to read the banding codes and report your sightings.

We have several banded Piping Plovers that visit our island each year on their way to their wintering grounds or heading back to their breeding locations. Seeing old friends like 9R1, 12A, or X47 is a poignant reminder of the harrowing journeys these birds make twice a year and the importance of our coastal refuges in their life cycle.

Let's look at the story of Piping Plover X47

Looking at the photo, you can see that there are multiple bands on this bird. When reporting the bird, we try to delineate band locations on the legs (using abbreviations) and the band colors, as in upper right (UR), lower right (LR), upper left (UL), and lower left (LL). I reported the bird in the photo this way: PIPL yellow flag X47 UL, orange LL, metal UR, white and black LR - Hilton Head Island 12/7/2018. Professional Piping Plover people use an even more abbreviated code that we won't get into here.



My communication was rewarded with some of this bird's life story. Piping Plover X47 has been reported at Hilton Head Island each winter since it was banded in 2014. It can currently be spotted along the Port Royal Sound at Fish Haul Beach.

It was banded in 2014 on the Missouri River near Bismarck, North Dakota. In summer 2018 it nested on the Missouri River near Washburn, North Dakota. This is a prominent breeding location for Piping Plovers.

So how should you report a banded Piping Plover in South Carolina?

Here is a link to instructions from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (from Charleston, SC) that you will need to read because it explains the process completely and includes contact information for the

person with whom you'll be communicating. [This is a "must read" document.](#)

For banded Piping Plovers seen in South Carolina, please send this information along with the observer's contact information to melissa_bimbi@fws.gov.

Several groups are involved in banding Piping Plovers, including teams in the Bahamas, Atlantic Canada, Atlantic US, US Great Lakes region, US Great Plains, Great Plains Canada, and Great Plains Canada-Alberta. All these groups will have birds with distinct differences in band color and the use of letter and number inscriptions. Communicating with Melissa Bimbi will help get your band information to the correct group.

Other potential contacts in addition to Melissa in South Carolina include the following:

If Your Bird Has...	Report It To...
Colors bands (no flag) on just the upper legs	Christina.Davis@dep.nj.gov and VT.plover@gmail.com
Green flag	VT.plover@gmail.com
Pink flag	BahamasPIPL@audubon.org and VT.plover@gmail.com
Black flag, White flag, or Gray flag	Cheri.Gratto-Trevor@canada.ca
Yellow flag or Cobalt Blue flag	npwrc.ternplover@usgs.gov
Orange flag or Metal band on an upper leg (no flag) and one or more color bands on the lower legs	plover@umn.edu
Light Blue flag	Joel.Jorgensen@nebraska.gov and npwrc.ternplover@usgs.gov
Red flag	dnewstead@cbbep.org

How does one report a banded bird that's not a Piping Plover?

Let's start at www.bandedbirds.org.

Go to "Report Resighting" and on the dropdown menu click on "Report Resighting." This will take you to a form where you can input date, location, your name and email, the species you are resighting, all the band information, and other notes you



may have recorded. Finish by clicking "Save Information." Creating an account is optional but can save time and will allow you to use a mapping tool to follow other sightings of your banded bird.

Here are the different quality levels the scientists are looking for using a banded Red Knot as an example.

What to Report

Good: Your name and e-mail address, date, time, location, species and flag color and inscription. For example, "flag lime (VLA)."

Better: The above plus the rest of the band combination starting at upper left and ending at lower right. For example, "Blue / -: Flag lime (VLA)/ metal" which denotes a blue band on the upper left, nothing on the lower left, a flag on the upper right (with its inscription) and a metal on the lower right.

Super: The above plus: tide stage, how well the flag was seen, how many of that species were there, what the birds were doing, which (and how many) other birds were there also.

Best: The above plus a photo.

Other Links

[Great Lakes Piping Plovers](#)

[US Fish and Wildlife Service, Northeast Region](#)

Flag colors and inscriptions:

Canada			AB
	Pre-2003	2003	2004
USA			AB
		ABC	2007
Brazil			AB
Argentina			AB
Chile			AB



Field Trips

by Carlos Chacon, Field Trip Coordinator

November 7: Field Trip to Harbor Island

Harbor Island resident Peggy Lucas will lead the group in an exploration of the beach and mudflats of Harbor Island. This is a good opportunity to see many kinds of shorebirds, wading birds, pelagic birds and others. Harbor Island is known as a major wintering and resting site for numerous shorebirds such as the famous Red Knot. From time to time the island also presents the opportunity to see rare migrants such as the Long-billed Curlew.

This trip is limited to 10 participants. Online registration is required to arrange entry passes and ensure proper COVID-19 protocols.

November 18: Field Trip to Port Royal Plantation

Hilton Head Audubon Secretary Jane Hester will lead the group in an exploration of the shorebirds that gather on the beach at Port Royal Plantation. During the fall and winter, hundreds of shorebirds, skimmers and terns can be seen on the Hilton Head Island beaches. This trip will give you an opportunity to sharpen your shorebird ID skills and view these birds from a different perspective than on the beach at Fish Haul Creek.

This trip is limited to 11 participants. Online registration required to arrange entry passes and ensure proper COVID-19 protocols. Spotting scopes recommended if you have one. We will not be sharing optics. Water shoes are also a good idea.

All field trips carry a fee of \$12. Masks are required, hand sanitizer is highly recommended. Equipment such as binoculars or spotting scopes cannot be shared outside of family members.

November 19: Birding in Costa Rica (6:30PM)

Join Hilton Head Audubon Field Trip Coordinator Carlos Chacon for colorful and informative presentation on birding in Costa Rica.

With almost 900 species of birds, packed in a country the size of West Virginia, Costa Rica truly is a bird watcher's paradise, featuring more than 30 species of hummingbirds, several species of toucans, famous tropical trogons and many other spectacular birds.

Carlos has been leading trips to his native Costa Rica for many years and hopes to be able to return with a group of 10 from May 31 to June 8, 2021, should COVID-19 conditions allow.

People interested in seeing the presentation and potentially participating on the trip can contact Carlos at eco1adventures@gmail.com. The live presentation will be available at this [link](#).

Name That Tern

By Carlos Chacon

Several species of terns visit Hilton Head Island through the year. During the fall season the most common are the Royal Tern, the Sandwich Tern and the Foster's Tern. Audubon member Jim Bourne managed to capture the photo below featuring all three species.

The Royal Tern, measuring 20 inches, can easily be identified by its large size compared with the others. Its prominent orange bill, and the absence of streaks in the crown, separates the Royal from the similar Caspian Tern, also present on the island.

The medium-sized Sandwich Tern reaches 15 inches in length. Sandwich Terns have a distinctive black bill with a yellow tip unique to this bird.

The smaller Forster's Tern is one of our most common winter terns on the island. Reaching 14 inches, it is one of the smallest terns. Forster's Terns have a distinctive dark mask that covers the eye and orange legs that are clearly visible in this photo.

Terns are coastal pelagic birds capable of impressive migrations, with the Arctic Tern doing the longest migration of any bird species, moving across the globe from Arctic summer to Antarctic summer. It is a unique way of life in an eternal summer, seeing night only during the migration route.

Most species of terns have declined in recent times due to the deterioration of the coastal habitat, wetlands, and nesting sites. Most terns nest in uninhabited islands or desolated coastal areas. In recent times, some terns have taken advantage of human structures and established nesting colonies in the gravel roofs of commercial buildings.



Photo: Anne and Jim Bourne

Through Our Binoculars

by Jack Colcolough

Our fall migration was in full swing in our area during the last month and was fantastic! Sightings included one accidental and 18 rare species, and a total of 26 warbler species and 21 other migrants. Most of our winter arrivals are now here...even a few ducks are beginning to show up. Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Siskins have also been reported.

Accidental species reported

Red-necked Phalarope at Savannah Spoils Site

Rare species

- Tennessee Warbler in Bluffton
- Black-throated Green Warbler at Mitchelville Freedom Park
- Blackburnian Warbler at The Landings
- Hooded Warbler at Crystal Lake
- Cape May Warblers on Hilton Head Island and in Bluffton
- Blackpoll and Worm-eating Warblers at Jarvis Creek Park
- Wilson's Phalarope at Savannah Spoils Site
- Bachman's Sparrow at Webb WLC
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher on Parris Island
- Scarlet Tanagers at Skidaway and Parris Islands
- Black Terns at Fish Haul Beach Park and Beaufort
- Red-breasted Nuthatch and Solitary Sandpiper at Hunting Island
- Roseate Spoonbill at Pocotaligo Trail
- Broad-winged Hawk at Pinckney Island
- Common Tern at Tybee Island
- Least Flycatcher at Mitchelville Freedom Park and Skidaway Island

Uncommon Species

- Pine Siskin
- Piping and Wilson's Plovers
- Baltimore Oriole
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Yellow, Orange-crowned and Prairie Warblers
- Ovenbird
- Northern Waterthrush
- Reddish Egret
- Pectoral and Stilt Sandpipers
- American Bittern
- Caspian and Least Terns
- Bank Swallow
- Whimbrel
- Peregrine Falcon
- Horned Lark
- American Avocet
- American White Pelican
- Glossy Ibis
- Red-cockaded Woodpecker
- Mottled and Ruddy Ducks
- Merlin
- Wood and Swainson's Thrushes
- Blue Grosbeak
- Indigo Bunting
- Glossy Ibis
- Black-bellied Whistling Duck
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Seaside Sparrow
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Eurasian-collared Dove
- Black-necked Stilt
- Veery
- Blue-headed and Yellow-throated Vireos
- Lesser Black-backed Gull
- Bank Swallow
- Bobolink
- Mississippi Kite (late in the year)

Other Migrant Species

- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- American Redstart
- American Robin
- Semipalmated Sandpiper

Other Warbler Species

- Prothonotary
- Black & White
- Yellow-throated
- Palm



*Pine Siskin by
Patty Kappmeyer*

continued on next page



Red-breasted Nuthatch
by Patty Kappmeyer

- Pine
- Northern Parula
- Common Yellowthroat

Arriving Winter Species

- American Goldfinch
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- White-throated Sparrow
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Eastern Wood Pewee
- Northern Flicker
- Great Crested Flycatcher
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Tree Swallow
- American Coot
- Marbled Godwit
- Black-bellied Plover
- Red Knot
- Western and Least Sandpipers
- Semipalmated Plover
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Blue-winged Teal
- Eastern Phoebe
- Northern Harrier

Other Birds of Interest

- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Painted Bunting
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Orchard Oriole (late)
- Summer Tanager (late)
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Eastern Towhee (Red-eyed)

To report a bird sighting that is Accidental, Rare, Out-Of-Season, Uncommon, First-Of-The-Year or First-Of-The-Season 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 infor-

mation. We also recommend that you report them on eBird.

Many thanks to all reporting your bird sightings: John Bloomfield, Jane and Abe Hester, Bob Speare, Dottie Bass, Mary Alice Tartler, Carol Clemens, Carol Tunnicliffe, Fran and Denny Baer, Kay Grinnell, Alan Biggs, Dick Phillips, Kathy and Grant Greider, Tom Marko, Aaron Palmieri, Cindy Groff, Diana Churchill, Steve Calver, Russ Wigh, Buddy Campbell, Chris Marsh, Steven Guy, and Tony and Rose Johnson.

Now is a good time to look for late migrants near at the end of our great fall migration season ... and to look for newly arriving winter birds and ducks. Come join us for Project Feeder Watch at your home, starting in November.

Welcome to our New Members

A warm welcome to our new members:

Sarah Gustafson

David Williams

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

Warbler Photo Essay



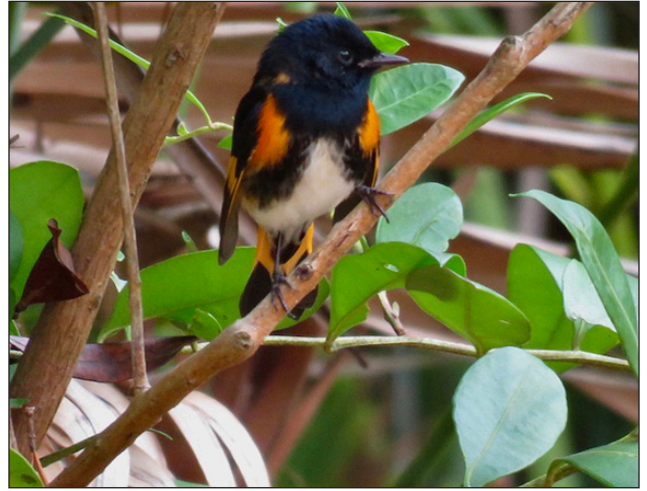
Alan Biggs

Warblers in spring, summer, and fall is the thread here. The Yellow-throated warbler was observed this past spring under COVID-19 rules while walking along the Dolphin Head leisure trail in HHP. The Palm Warbler was observed in the fall at Fish Haul beach while birding with new friends who have since become good friends. The Black-and-white Warbler was observed at the Victoria Bluff nature area in early summer while walking with my dog there.



Cherry Underwood

Success! Prothonotary warblers nested in a neighbor's bluebird box last spring. The neighbors weren't sure what species the birds were and called me to take a look. I visited twice and was fortunate to catch this action. It shows a parent bringing a wonderful insect to the nest box. Then a baby pops its head out wondering whether to take the leap, then decides it is time. The morale of the story is "Birds need insects to feed their young."



Carol Tunncliffe

These photos are all the same species, taken the same day and in the same location of the Sea Pines Forest Preserve.

I was lucky to stumble onto a large flock of migrating American Redstarts that were foraging in mid-height vegetation, instead of high up in the tree canopies. I was also thrilled to see quite a few males in the group as well. I couldn't believe my luck in finding such a good photo op for such challenging birds!



Mary Alice Tartler

We have indeed had a wonderful fall migration this year. We may only get a fleeting glimpse of some migrants, but those sightings serve to satisfy us until their return next spring. My first image – the Blue-winged Warbler is a life bird that I was lucky enough to spot at the Whooping Crane Conservancy in Hilton Head Plantation. I first saw the Chestnut-sided Warbler last year at Jarvis Creek Park and again this year at Sea Pines Forest Preserve, proving that lightning can strike twice! And finally, I only saw one Magnolia Warbler this year and was happy it stayed around long enough for me to get a nice shot.



Patty Kappmeyer

The common thread that links together my images of a Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, and Yellow-throated Warbler is the peripheral flash of yellow that caught my eye. The Prairie Warbler and Palm Warbler were photographed in the marshes that edge Fish Haul Beach. I caught a glimpse of the Prairie Warbler as it flew to my left and perched on driftwood for a few seconds. The Palm Warbler was hidden among a scrub bush and its yellow rear made me notice it. The Yellow-throated Warblers – along with four others – made an appearance at my bird bath.



Nancy Cope

This photo essay is a wonderful idea! However, lacking photos of this fast-moving backyard friend, I was delighted to I.D. a female American Redstart on three occasions at our bird bath. Also, a regular migrating visitor, the Yellow-rumped Warbler in my wildflower garden and bird bath.



Yellow-rumped warbler courtesy of David Sibley and National Audubon

October - December Calendar

November 2020

Thursday, Nov. 12

3 pm Member Program via Zoom

Speaker: Amber Kuehn
Update on the Turtle Patrol

Monday, Nov. 30

Online Silent Auction Bidding Begins begins at 12 noon (information will be posted on the website and emailed to members)

December 2020

Wednesday, Dec. 9

Online Silent Auction Bidding Ends at 12 noon - winners will be notified by phone/email and announced at the Christmas Bird Count meeting, Dec. 10, at 7 pm

Thursday, Dec. 10

7 pm Silent Auction Winners Announced via Zoom

7:30 pm Christmas Bird Count Meeting
via Zoom

Speaker: Robert Rommel
Former HH Audubon President

To join the Member Programs via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7819826859> - Meeting ID: 781 982 6859

Hilton Head Audubon holds monthly member programs from September to May at 3:00 pm on the second Thursday of each month. Information about meetings is listed on our [website](#) and in each issue of Ecobon. All welcome.



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