

March Program

For our March meeting we are trying something new. In an effort to bring you the best speakers on conservation from across the country, we are presenting a previously recorded presentation by Dr. Douglas Tallamy called *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*.

Tallamy's first book, *Bringing Nature Home*, awakened thousands of readers to an urgent situation: wildlife populations are in decline because the native plants they depend on are fast disappearing. His solution? Plant more natives. In this new book, Tallamy takes the next step and outlines his vision for a grassroots approach to conservation. *Nature's Best Hope* shows how homeowners everywhere can turn their yards into conservation corridors that provide wildlife habitats.

Tallamy is Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University

Recorded Program: Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard

Speaker: Dr. Douglas W. Tallamy, Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware

Date: Thursday, March 11

Time: 3-4:30 pm

[Click here to join](#)
Meeting ID: 580 900 3493

of Delaware in Newark, Delaware. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities.

The Great Backyard Bird Count – In Schools

By Mary Ellen Blankenship

Karen Penale, Environmental Learning Teacher at the Cross School and Hilton Head Audubon volunteer, is committed to instilling an interest and appreciation for birds in her students. Encouraging student participation in local and global bird counts is one way that Karen fosters their interests in birding.

In February, Karen and her third graders kicked off this year's Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) with a visit from HH Audubon volunteers Bob Speare and Mary Ellen Blankenship. Bob spoke with the kids about the value of their roles as citizen scientists to

the welfare of birds. He then led the group on a bird walk around their school campus. In all, they saw and heard 31 species, including 13 Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. Not bad for a drizzly morning!

On the last day of the GBBC, Bob, Karen and Mary Ellen led a group of sixth graders and their parents from the Cross School, on a bird walk to the Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge. The group was thrilled by the 38 species they spotted. Among the highlights were hundreds of Cedar Waxwings and at least a thousand robins! It was heartening to observe the kids' enthusiasm for birding. A big thank you to Bob for volunteering his time and expertise to the students and their families. Kudos to Karen for inspiring the next generation of birders and stewards of the environment!

The Count Must Go On

At HE McCracken Middle School in Bluffton, the count must go on in spite of the pandemic and foggy, wet weather. Science teachers Emily Rietveld and Renata Booth prepared their sixth and eighth grade students for the GBBC with a slide show from HH

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President's Message

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Migration

Spring is upon us, and as I write this I am fresh from the sight of Purple Martins and Barn Swallows. Goldfinches and even Yellow-rumped Warblers are coming into color, Cardinals and Carolina Wrens are singing, and I can feel reawakening all around me.

What can we expect to see in the Lowcountry during the

weeks ahead?

While our wintering ducks are still here, they'll soon start heading for their northern breeding grounds. The White Ibis population will start to dip a little. There will be fewer Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and their typewriter-clicking sound (thanks, Bob Speare) will soon go silent.

But Ruby-throated Hummingbirds will be here in greater numbers. Green Herons too. You might be lucky enough to spot an early Great-crested Flycatcher. Red-eyed Vireos will soon join their White-eyed cousins in our woodlands.

Martins and Barn Swallows will continue migrating north. And toward the end of the month, Northern Parulas should herald the warbler migration, while the Yellow-rumped Warblers will be packing their bags and heading north.

Some keep track of these movements through journals, or written checklists saved from back in the day. I use eBird to track most of this information, and when things start to get real serious, I go to Birdcast for real-time migration maps, forecasts and alerts.

Dr. Sidney Gauthreaux, our February speaker, talked about how technology transformed the study of migration. He was the first to begin using Doppler weather radar to track migration trends. Now we are able to track the movements of individual birds through nanotags and Motus tower monitoring stations. We are building a Motus network along the South Carolina coast and still hope to site a tower on Hilton Head Island once we tame the pandemic.

All of us are hopeful that in the next few months, we will start seeing COVID-19 in our rear view mirror. We are grateful that you all have kept our organization alive and thriving during the pandemic, and we look forward to the time when we can begin to see more of you face to face.

Until then, stay safe and get vaccinated when it's your turn.

John Bloomfield

GBBC continued



Audubon. Lois Lewis, former educator and HH Audubon Education Chair, led bird walks around the campus on Feb. 12, the first day of the international count. The students dutifully disinfected the binoculars, on loan from Audubon, as they traded off so that everyone could spy flocks of White Ibis overhead and Carolina Chickadees scolding them from the Red Maples.

The students were charged with conducting their own counts during the three-day weekend. The next week's lessons include inputting the data – [click here](#) – sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon and Birds Canada. They were motivated to participate as citizen scientists as well as earning a “jeans day” privilege, offered by their teachers. However, many of the students expressed concern about the drop in diversity of bird species as they learned in class. One of them was able to tell the story of the “Canary in a Coal Mine” to his classmates and connect it to the importance of our efforts that day.

We are grateful for the opportunity to share our passions for the birds with local students and hopeful for the future.



Red-shouldered Hawk by Robin Storey

Newhall News

by Bob Clemens
Audubon Newhall Chairman

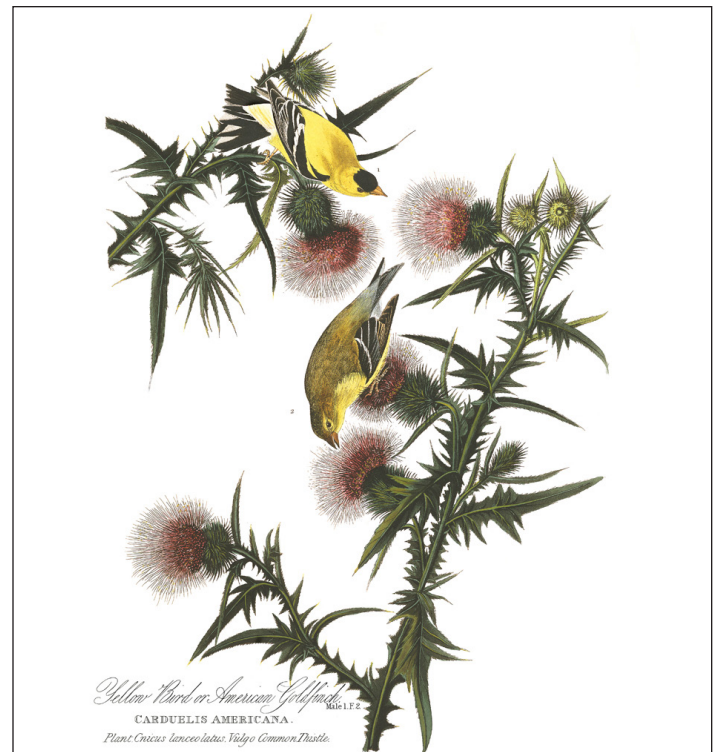
The Audubon Newhall Preserve is once again blessed to have the help of the local Rotary Club for a **work day on Saturday March 6**. We'll be clearing brush and sprucing up the preserve for the spring surge of visitors. If you wish to participate, email our Chair, Bob Clemens, at RClemens318@gmail.com. Vice-Chair Lynn Hodgson continues to offer guided tours on Tuesday mornings. See the [HH Audubon website](#) for details.

Through early February, the preserve's visitor log recorded 126 entries from 18 states. We know that only a small percentage of visitors log their visits on the clipboard in the trail guide box, but the comments are invariably flattering: “Wonderful . . . Nice place to enjoy nature . . . Beautiful . . . Peaceful . . . Quiet . . .etc.”

If you haven't visited in a while, please do so; we're constantly improving.

The Newhall Board recently voted to purchase a new bike rack to replace the old damaged one. Down the road, we may seek a grant to purchase a “high end” rack. And in a related note, the Newhall Board decided to install a “Foot Traffic Only” sign to discourage bikers from trying to negotiate the trails. The trails simply aren't wide enough to accommodate both walkers and bicycles.

As ever, if you have any suggestions or questions about the preserve, please feel free to contact Bob.



Yellow Warbler or American Goldfinch
CARDUELIS AMERICANA
Plant: Cirsium lanceolatum. Very Common Thistle.

Field Trips

by Carlos Chacon, Field Trip Coordinator

Please note, as a benefit of membership, members of HH Audubon are sent an **EMAIL** to sign up for all trips. These trips sell out quickly, are on a first-come, first-serve basis, and we do not keep waiting lists. Therefore the links for trip signup are not listed in the *Ecobon* or on the website.

March 6-Bear Island and Donnelly Wildlife Management Area - SOLD OUT

Bear Island Wildlife Management Area is a sea island that protects 12,021 acres of undeveloped land. Owned and managed by the SC Department of Natural Resources, the island provides quality habitat for wintering waterfowl.

Donnelley Wildlife Management Area protects more than 8,000 acres of diverse habitats. A favorite Lowcountry destination for birders looking to run up their list of avian sightings. The area is one of 17 South Carolina sites designated a global Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society.

Managed old rice fields, forested wetlands, tidal marsh, agricultural lands, longleaf pine savannah, made these two areas one of the best locations for bird watching in the Lowcountry.

Experience birder Ken Scott will lead a group on an exploration of Bear Island and Donnelley Wildlife Refuge.

March 13 - Sea Pines Forest Preserve - SOLD OUT

Since 1970, the Sea Pines Forest Preserve has been a protected area for wildlife habitat and outdoor exploration. The 600 acres of protected land that includes freshwater lagoons, maritime forest and some open fields offers a good opportunity for diverse species. The Sea Pines Forest Preserve is the largest tract of undeveloped land on Hilton Head Island.

Birding in the Lowcountry in the month of March can be especially exciting for a number of reasons. Our winter species, such as Yellow-rumped Warbler and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker are often joined by early migrants, such as Great-crested Flycatcher and Painted Bunting, returning to our woodlands and backyards. In addition, many year-round species begin to fill the air with the sights and sounds of pre-breeding behaviors.

Join naturalist Bob Speare for a March morning birding at the Sea Pines Forest Preserve in search of all of the above.

March 20 – Combahee River - SOLD OUT

Ernest F. Hollings ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge — Combahee Unit is located in northern Beaufort County along the Combahee River. For much of the 1800s, the ACE Basin was a premier producer of rice and owned by a few individuals who worked the land with enslaved peoples.

When the value of rice crashed in the 1890s, wealthy individuals purchased many of the plantations for use as hunting retreats.

In 1990, the Federal government purchased several non-contiguous parcels, the Edisto Unit and two Combahee Units, to form the Ernest F. Hollings ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge. The portion of the refuge commonly referred to as “Combahee” is comprised of a north and south side separated by River Road. It includes a variety of great bird watching habitats including old rice fields, canals, fresh and brackish water marshes, and pine/hardwood forest.

Local birder Steven Guy and Lynn Hodgson will lead a group of six (6) people on a bird watching outing that will cover some of the habitats present on the north side of River Road.

March 26 – Port Royal Sound Foundation - 2 tickets left (as of this writing)

The Port Royal Sound Foundation offers a unique setting that includes Maritime Forest, Salt Marsh Habitat, and extensive mud flats that attract great numbers and variety of shorebirds.

The 105-acre property has easily hiking trails that provide access to little know secluded mudflats.

Naturalist Chris Kehrer, Education Coordinator at the Port Royal Sound Foundation, will lead the group in the exploration of the mudflats and other habitats.

After the bird watching outing, Chris will do a quick guided tour of the Port Royal Sound Foundation.



Costa Rica Trip

May 31 – June 8 Costa Rica Birding Trip

With the expectation that many of us will be vaccinated soon, we are pleased to announce that Hilton Head Audubon Field Trip Chair Carlos Chacon will lead an international birding trip to tropical Costa Rica.

With more than 900 species, the tiny Central American country is one of the world's top birding destinations. Carlos Chacon, a Costa Rica native, will lead a small group of Audubon members through eight days of birding at three locations within Costa Rica.

The trip starts in the capital city of San Jose on May 31. From there, participants will visit the northern wetlands and the famous Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge for two days of birding on land and by boat. The following two days will be spent exploring the tropical rain forest near the famous active Arenal Volcano, an area of high biodiversity and home to rare species including the Bare-necked Umbrella Bird. The trip ends with two days of birding in the cloud forest.

At an elevation of 4,600 feet, the Monteverde Cloud Forest is home to the stunning Resplendent Quetzal as well as many cloud forest specialties. With six species of toucans, and more than 50 species of hummingbirds, Costa Rica is a great bird watching destination.

Email Carlos at eco1adventures@gmail.com for more information about the trip. Carlos will advise potential participants on COVID-19 protocols in Costa Rica.



Try an Online Bird Class

By Lynn Hodgson

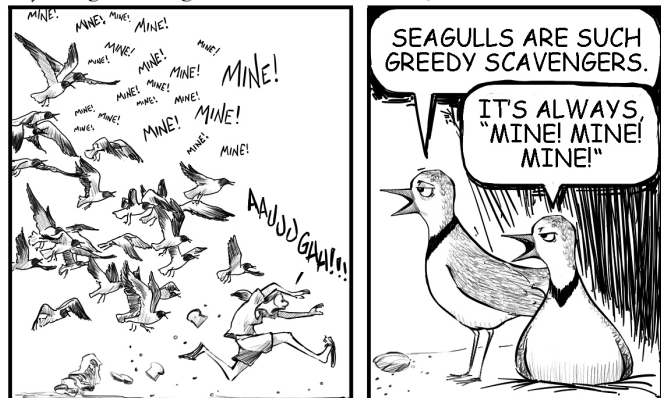
For the last year or so, I've been taking "Be a Better Birder" courses online from the Cornell Lab or Ornithology, mostly recorded by Dr. Kevin McGowan. I highly recommend them as great learning experiences, and as ways to build bird knowledge during times when it is tough to do outdoor birding due to such things as pandemics, nasty weather, personal illness or other commitments.

There is a cost to most courses, but you can start with the least expensive to see if you like them. I started with *eBird Essentials*, which is free. There are several courses at \$29.99 covering particular groups of birds, such as shorebirds or feeder birds or hawks. I especially liked *Ducks and Waterfowl* at \$59.99 – very helpful for winter birding in the Lowcountry. Once purchased, the course is yours forever, like a good book. You can go back next month or next year, repeat sections, take as long as you like to complete.

Access through The Cornell Lab of Ornithology (birds.cornell.edu), then on the upper right choose "All About Birds", then select from the menu "Bird Academy" or go directly to academy.allaboutbirds.org. Have fun!

Audubon Mots

by: Roger@RogerSchillerstrom.com



Through Our Binoculars

by Jack Colcolough

Bird sightings in our area continue to be excellent, with one accidental, thirteen rare, ten out-of-season, and many, many uncommon species reported over the last month. The accidental species, a rare Heermann's Gull, is normally a west coast bird, and was the first ever sighted in Georgia. It was seen on near-by Tybee Island. Many irruptive species, including Red-breasted Nuthatches, Purple Finches and Pine Siskins continue to be sighted. Our spring migration will soon be upon us!

Other species highlighted in this report:

Rare

- Western Kingbird on Tybee Island
- Rufous Hummingbird in Savannah
- Western Tanager in Savannah
- Wilson's Warbler at Skidaway Island
- Ash-throated Flycatcher at Parris island
- Long-billed Curlew at Ossaban Island



Long-billed Curlew by Bob Speare

- Virginia Rail at Oak Grove Pond
- Brown Creeper at Sea Pines Forest Preserve
- White-winged Dove at Tybee Island
- Common Ground Dove at Harbor Island

Out-Of-Season

- Ovenbird
- Northern Parula
- Northern Waterthrush
- Black-Throated Blue, Wilson's and Prairie Warblers
- Summer Tanager
- American Avocet
- Black-necked Stilt
- Caspian Tern
- Painted Bunting

Uncommon Species

- Fox Sparrow
- Wilson's Plover
- Ruddy Duck



Western Kingbird by Mary Alice Tartler

- Redhead (duck)
- American Wigeon
- Mottled Duck
- Whimbrel
- Rusty Blackbird
- Baltimore Oriole
- Long-billed Dowitcher
- Great and Lesser Black-backed Gulls
- Glossy Ibis
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Northern Gannet
- White-winged Scoter
- Merlin
- Peregrine Falcon
- Sedge Wren
- Red-cockaded Woodpecker
- Bachman's Sparrow
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Saltmarsh, Nelson's, Seaside and Vesper Sparrows



White-winged Doves by Carol Clemens

Many thanks to all for reporting your bird sightings in the years I have doing this column, including John Bloomfield, Jane and Abe Hester, Bob Speare, Mary Alice Tartler, Carol Clemens, Carol

continued on opposite page

Consumer Guide to Window Strike Prevention



The new *Consumer Guide to Window Strike Prevention* answers your questions about how to stop deadly bird window crashes at your home. Consumers are confused about the many window collision options that are available.

Since residential window strikes cause about 40 percent of window bird window crash deaths (more than 100,000,000) good information is critical.

The Guide includes a one-page “quick advice” section. It is endorsed by Dr. Daniel Klem, regarded as the nation’s leading window strike expert.

The director of a leading New York bird group commented, “This is great, thanks. I will share with our folks.”

The *Consumer Guide to Window Strike Prevention* explains what works, what does not work, compares the cost of approved options, includes DIY directions for all the systems, and even information about window washing. There are links to all the commercial suppliers and to many DIY YouTube videos. It only includes the systems tested by the American Bird Conservancy. It also includes netting recommended by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

It is written by a retired Nader consumer advocate who has installed all of the commercial systems and fabricated all the DIY systems. Commented the author, Jim Cubie, “I developed this guide over a three-year period after a catbird died hitting my front glass storm door. Installing all these systems helped me to understand their practical benefits and drawbacks – as well as the questions homeowners have.”

The guide includes the ABC’s threat ratings so that consumers will understand which systems are the most cost effective. It can be downloaded [here](#).

Welcome to our New Members

A warm welcome to our new member:

Roberta Manian

Members and non-members can join, renew or make donations on our website. **We only 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:

hhaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org

Through our Binoculars continued

Tunncliffe, Fran and Denny Baer, Aaron Palmieri, Kay Grinnell, Alan Biggs, Dick Phillips, Kathy and Grant Greider, Shelia and Roger Johnson, Lynn Hodgson, Cindy Groff, Tom and Ellen Lebeouf, Diana Churchill, Steve Calver, Russ Wigh, Buddy Campbell, Chris Marsh, Steven Guy, Tony and Rose Johnson and many more.

This is my last writing of this article after doing so for 15 years. It has been my great pleasure logging and reporting on our local bird sightings to you!

What was your favorite migration experience?

This month we asked our readers to tell us about their favorite migration experience – whether on Hilton Head Island or anywhere in the world. Here's what a few members told us.



Cerulean Warbler (Female), Macaulay Library

Warblers are my favorite birds, especially the rare migrants! One day, years ago, I saw a different bird perched on the shepherd hook of my bird feeders. I observed it very closely and noted all of its features: unique blue-green in the head, back and tail, white stripe above the eye, white wing bars, white throat, dark chest stripes over light yellow and white undertail. The bird then flew away, never to be seen again. I hustled to my Sibley bird book ... and there it was in all its glory...my 'life' female Cerulean Warbler!

Jack Colcolough



April 18, 2016, in Bolivar, Texas: You may have heard the term describing a fallout, "Dripping with Warblers." On this day we were dripping as well as the birds. On that day we logged about 120 species including 54 in the Sabine Woods - including 15 warbler species, Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings. The rain was coming down too hard to capture the fallout, although I did manage to get a group of Stilt Sandpipers by the roadside near our destination – getting pelted by the rain. The photo was taken from our van.

John Bloomfield



In August 2018, I made a trip with some friends to Merida, located in the Yucatán region of Mexico. My sole purpose for the visit was to find the Pink (American) Flamingos that migrate there to mate by the thousands during fall every year. I was a little nervous because I was told that August might be a little early for the flamingos and hard to find them in large numbers. The next day after I arrived I woke up early and went out immediately to areas I had researched for the best chances to find them. After about an hour of driving, all of a sudden over the horizon, I saw a sea of pink that was just breathtaking – there were hundreds of flamingos wading in the water and mud flats. I had a thrill of a lifetime and I was so lucky I got up close and personal with these beautiful birds.

Mary Alice Tartler



Summer Tanager by David Sibley courtesy of National Audubon

March - May 2021 Calendar

March

Thursday, March 11 3 pm HH Audubon Program Meeting via Zoom

Recorded Program: Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard

Speaker: Dr. Douglas W. Tallamy, Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware

April

Thursday, April 8 3 pm HH Audubon Program Meeting Speaker: TBD

May

Thursday, May 13 3 pm HH Audubon Program Meeting New Board Introductions

[Click here to join the Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 580 900 3493

Passcode: 638898

By telephone: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

[Find your local number](#)

All are welcome to attend!

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 are welcome.



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