

Ecobon

April 2021 No. 408

April Program

For our April Zoom Program Meeting, we are pleased to be joined by Rex Garniewicz, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Coastal Discovery Museum. Since many of us may not have had an opportunity to visit the museum during the pandemic, we have decided to bring the meeting to you.

Rex will be discussing what's new at the museum, including a new nature trail on the property and a new bird box monitoring program. He will also give an update on the museum's Conservation in the Classroom program as well as the museum's plans for the future.

Program: Coastal Discovery - What's New

Speaker: Rex Garniewicz, President and CEO,

Coastal Discovery Museum

Date: Thursday, April 8

Time: 3-4:30 pm

Click here to join

Osprey Watch Update

Teamwork and concerned residents have worked to save an Osprey nest on Hilton Head Island.

One of the HHI Osprey Watch monitors reported that the tree where his assigned nest is had two balloons attached near the nest and a red tie around the trunk, indicating the tree was to be removed. The gated community's ARB board was contacted, who shared our concerns with the property owner. As coordinator of the HHI Osprey Monitoring program, I explained that Osprey are protected once eggs are laid, only mate once a year, and that this Osprey was back at the site looking for his mate to breed.

We talked about options of not removing the tree until we see if the pair nests, building a platform, or moving the nest to a nearby tree.

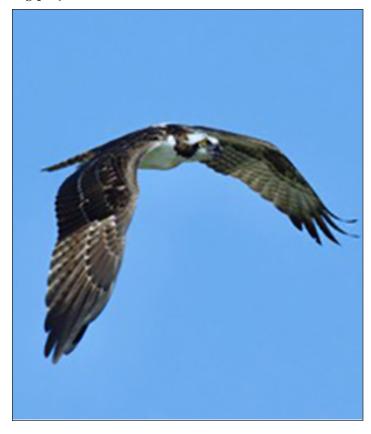
The property owner couldn't have been nicer or more understanding. Within a matter of days, he contacted people to get the nest moved to a nearby pine that would not interfere with the removal of the original tree on his property. He did this at his own expense.

We want to thank the companies involved in making this happen safely and quickly. Jason Adams of Luxury Imaging Professional Photography, who verified that there were no eggs yet in the nest; Paul Langan of Langan Contracting, who coordinated the project, and JD Hoft of Hoft Environmental Service, who actually moved the nest.

A special thanks to the property owners, the Caywood family, for caring about the environment and

By Carol Clemens

being so supportive. Also, to Larry and Jin Freda for bringing this to our attention and for the support of Kristen Mattson of the Lowcountry Institute and coordinator of the overall Lowcountry Osprey Monitoring project.



by John Bloomfield

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Bird Walks/Field TripsCarlos Chacon

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Lois Lewis Mary Ellen Blankenship

Membership

Marina Bloomfield

Web: <u>www.hiltonheadaudubon.org</u>

Subscription is a benefit of membership.

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

President's Message



In his 2019 book A Season on the Wind: Inside the World of Spring Migration, Kenn Kaufman describes peak nights in spring migration, where "tens of millions of birds, representing hundreds of different species, are moving north all across the continent," with migrating birds flying "over every square mile of land in North America."

In April, we are in the midst of it. The weather still dips up and down, but the rising buzz of a Northern Parula tells you all you need to know. It's springtime. In this month's issue, read Carlos Chacon's *Migration is in the Air* for more insights on spring migration.

At Hilton Head Audubon, our focus is on protecting birds as well as the places they need. Read about the efforts of a citizen's group working to protect portions of the Mid-Island Tract, as well as their vision for two other projects.

Also in this issue, we are pleased to present to you our new board nominees, who will stand for election later this month. The members coming on to our board are talented and committed conservationists who are eager to work with our returning board members in helping us reach our growth plans for the future. Many of those plans were put on hold due the pandemic, and while COVID-19 is far from behind us, the new board will need to devote a great deal of thought to what a post-pandemic Hilton Head Audubon will look like.

We know there is pent-up demand for more field trips. You have also told us you want more opportunities to learn about birds, nature photography and native plants. We have been holding our monthly program meetings via Zoom, but we sense a Zoom fatigue setting in among our members. What should our meetings look like in the future?

We'd like to hear from you. E-mail us at <u>HHIAudubon@</u> <u>hiltonheadaudubon.org</u>

Later this month, we will be sending you instructions on how to cast your ballot in the April board elections. Until then, stay safe and enjoy the spring migration.

John Bloomfield



Newhall News

by Bob Clemens Audubon Newhall Chairman

As we mark the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Audubon Newhall preserve remains a great place to seek refuge in a "Forest Bath!"

We kicked off March with a great workday, with the Hilton Head Island Rotary Club donating several hours of labor to spruce up the preserve. Matt Matoon and Rita Kernan honchoed a crew to clear vegetation from the shoreline of the Audubon Pond, and Lynn Hodgson led a crew culling invasive plants from around the longleaf pines near the parking lot. Bob Clemens and Jack Coleman trimmed foliage obstructing the gate signage and improved the Memorial Garden.

Later in the month, Tom Hennessey arranged for the Sea Pines CSA to haul away our debris and drop some milled asphalt to create a pad for a new bike rack. Steve Fishman was our Trail Monitor for March, and he reported a record number of logs across the trails for any one month. Later in March, Jack Coleman and his son Patrick helped level and mulch the pathway to the memorial garden, and Mary Ellen Blankenship delivered several native plants from the Coastal Discovery Museum sale to add to our Pollinator Gardens.





Patrick Coleman

Through the first ten weeks of the year, visitors from 36 states and the District of Columbia have signed our logbook, with a total of 383 family groups. As always, we note that this only represents a fraction of those who visit the preserve. Every time we visit, there are bikes in the bike rack and vehicles from other states in the parking lot!

Lynn Hodgson and Jack Coleman are working on a long range Strategic Plan for the preserve. Anyone with questions or suggestions regarding the preserve are encouraged to email Bob Clemens at Rclemens318@gmail.com.

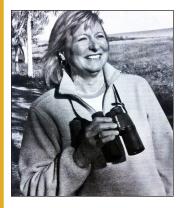
Board Elections to be held in April

Hilton Head Audubon elects its leadership in April, and the board is officially seated May 1 with the start of our new fiscal year.

Following are profiles of our nominees for president as well as our other new board officer candidates.

BOARD OFFICERS

President, Kay Grinnell - Nominee



Kay Grinnell is a retired business consultant with more than 20 years of advising top executives on matters of strategy and operations as a Deloitte Partner. Since her retirement she has embraced her long-time love of nature by serving on environmentally oriented boards, including the Marine Conservation In-

stitute, the Low Country Master Naturalist Association and Hilton Head Audubon. Kay is the immediate past board chair and current treasurer for The Nature Conservancy's South Carolina chapter. She and her husband Phil enjoy walking, birdwatching and boating in natural areas around the world, but especially in the South Carolina Lowcountry. Says Kay, "Birding offers an endless opportunity for learning and is a great way of engaging with others at home and around the world through a common interest."

Vice President, Lynn Hodgson - Returning

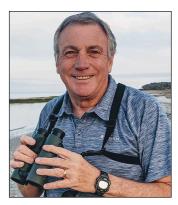


Lynn has been a member of National Audubon and various local Audubon chapters since the 1980s. She moved to Hilton Head in 2017 and immediately became active in our local chapter. She says, "I've always been an outdoors person and a naturalist, and birding is an outgrowth of that. Birding also gives 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. She spent the majority of her professional career in Hawaii as a Professor of Natural Sciences.

Treasurer, Tony Johnson - Nominee



Tony Johnson moved to Hilton Head Island in 2019 from western North Carolina. Always at home in the outdoors, Tony volunteered for three years with the Elk Bugle Corp educating visitors about the reintroduction of elk in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Tony's interest in birding grew

exponentially after spotting a Purple Gallinule at Lake Junaluska, a rarity in the mountains. He now enjoys birding South Carolina's parks, wildlife management areas, and wildlife refuges.

Tony's career focused on entrepreneurship education, business finance, and rural economic development in the higher education and nonprofit sectors. He was Executive Director of two nonprofits and Senior Director of another nonprofit where he led NC's \$46 million State Small Business Credit Initiative, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Tony plans to use his business skills in the role as Treasurer of HH Audubon.

Secretary, Jane Hester - Returning



Jane has been involved with Audubon for many years and was our President from 2018-2020. 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 also an active volunteer with the Friends of the Savannah Coastal Refuge.

Carolina Chickadee courtesy of David Sibley on behalf of National Audubon



COMMITTEE LEADS

Conservation Chairs David and Julia Buzzard - *Nominees*

David and Julia Buzzard are originally from Bowling Green, Kentucky, where they attended



Western Kentucky University. After living and working in Indiana, Michigan and Alabama, David, an engineer, and Julia, an elementary public school teacher, retired

and relocated to Hilton Head in 2017. They enjoy spending time outdoors running, biking, and kayaking. Retirement has given them more time to pursue their interest in birding and conservation. They are motivated and inspired by John James Audubon's words, "A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children." They hope to help maintain the legacy of environmental stewardship on Hilton Head. They joined HHAS in 2017 and have served on the Conservation Committee for 2 years.

Membership Chair, Natalie Hefter - Nominee



Natalie is Vice President of Programs at the Coastal Discovery Museum, having started on staff here when she was finishing her graduate degree as an intern. Her educational background is not specific to nature and conservation, but to preservation in general. She received her

B.A. in Art History and M.A. in Public History (concentration in Historic Preservation). Natalie say, "I wouldn't consider myself an expert birder, but I have learned a great deal since my initial connection with HH Audubon several years ago. I enjoy watching birds in my backyard and keeping an eye out when I travel. Locally, I am most concerned with wetlands protection, erosion, and over development as it's connected to conservation. I hope to connect with many of the newer members of HH Audubon and to continue to connect the organization with other like-minded groups to further our goals."

Communications Chair, Patty Kappmeyer - Nominee



Patty fell in love with Hilton Head Island and its birds 35 years ago when her family moved here. She says she is happiest when she is knee deep in pluff mud, wandering the marshes or forests seeking out birds. "Each bird has a soul and personality that I try to capture through my photography," she says. Patty adds, "Through my

images I seek to educate, inspire and uplift people to conserve and preserve the fragile ecosystems in and around Hilton Head Island and the Lowcountry. I am a member of the Carolina Bird Club and the Carolina Nature Photographers Associations and am a frequent contributor for their publication *Camera in the Wild*. In my professional life I have had a long career in Marketing and Technology and want to put my skills and experience to use to elevate the voice of Hilton Head Audubon in conservation."

Audubon Newhall Preserve, Bob Clemens - Returning

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.

Christmas Bird Count, Susan Murphy - Returning

Susan 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."

Education, Lois Lewis - Returning

Lois is a "snowbird" who lives in Michigan during the summer and in Sun City during the school year. She has been involved with HH 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.

Education, Mary Ellen Blankenship - Returning

Mary Ellen Blankenship returns to the HH Audubon Board as Education Co-chair. A Sea Pines resicontinued on next page

dent, Mary Ellen retired from a 20-year early child-hood teaching career in 2019 and relocated from Virginia to Hilton Head. Retirement has allowed her to pursue interests including birding, photography, and paddle boarding. She recently completed the Master Gardener program through the Clemson Extension program.

Field Trips, Carlos Chacon - Returning

Carlos 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.

Programs, Wendy Dickes - Returning, new position

Wendy will move over to Programs after serving as our Treasurer for the past two years. Wendy joined HH 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.

Special Projects, John J. Coleman III - Returning, new position

Jack moves from Conservation Chair to Special Projects Chair, where he will help coordinate work on the Mid-island Tract as well as our partnership with the Pinckney Island NWR. 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.

At Large, Alan Biggs - Returning

Alan Biggs has lived on Hilton Head Island since 2014. A former Professor of Plant Pathology at West Virginia University, he's been involved with National Audubon since his youth and served as Program Chair and board member for the Potomac Valley Audubon Society for four years.

Fall Costa Rica Trip

October 30 - November 8

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

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

The trip starts in north Pacific slope of Costa Rica with two days exploring the foothills of the Tenorio Volcano National Park. From there, the group will visit the northern wetlands and the famous Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge for two days of birding on land and by boat. Then we'll spend three days 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.

With six species of toucans, and more than 50 species of hummingbirds, Costa Rica is a great bird-watching destination. For more information about the trip please email Carlos at: ecoladven-tures@gmail.com



A warm welcome to our new members:

Patricia Burke

Karen Lucey

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:

hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org

To fill out a form and mail in a check - click here to download the form

Field Trips

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.

April 3: Mid Island Tract - SOLD OUT

Formerly known as the Planter's Row Golf course, these 103 acres have been renamed as the Mid-Island Track and have recently opened to the public.

The land is bordered by William Hilton Parkway, Dillon Road and Union Cemetery Road. The town purchased the former golf course in 2013, and recently cleaned the paths to make it accessible to public use. Some portions of the property have been left untouched, including 10 acres for bird and wildlife habitats and five acres around stormwater ponds for riparian habitats

One of the few locations on Hilton Head Island where is easy to observe Red-headed Woodpeckers, the diversity of habitats that include maritime forest, fresh water lagoons, secondary forest, and some grasslands make this location a great new addition to the list of hot bird-watching spots in the area.

Expert bird watcher and Audubon Field trip coordinator Carlos Chacon will lead this trip. Limited to 15 participants.

April 6- Beidler Forest Audubon Sanctuary - SOLD OUT

Beidler Forest is an 18,000-acre bird and wildlife sanctuary known among birders as a great location to see the beautiful Prothonotary Warblers. The beauty of this wetland is unsurpassed in the South Carolina Lowcountry.

Beidler is the world's largest virgin cypresstupelo swamp forest — a pristine ecosystem untouched for millennia. Enjoy 1000-year-old trees, a range of wildlife, and the quiet flow of blackwater.

Biologist Matt Johnson will lead the group through an exploration of the all from the 1.75-mile boardwalk at the swamp. Matt, a native of South Carolina, is the Director at the Audubon Center & Sanctuary at the Francis Beidler Forest and conducts yearly research on the breeding Prothonotary Warblers at the swamp. Beidler Forest is closed on Tuesdays, which means the tour is a private excersion for those who signed up for the

trip. This field trip is limited to 12 participants.

April 10- Newhall Forest Preserve - SPACE AVAILABLE

HH Audubon Vice President Lynn Hodgson will lead a group on a birding and nature walk at Newhall Forest Preserve. Lynn is an expert bird watcher and naturalist who regularly leads outings on the preserve.

The preserve, operated by Hilton Head Audubon, offers easy-to-walk trails that will give you the chance to explore maritime forest, a fresh-water pond, pocosin and other Lowcountry habitats. 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. In 1976, she deeded the preserve to the then recently formed Hilton Head Island Audubon Society, together with an endowment fund for its ongoing maintenance.

April 17- Pinckney Island Wildlife Refuge - SOLD OUT

The Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge. With over 5000 acres of various bird-friendly habitats, Pinckney Island is a fantastic bird haven, sitting right between Hilton Head Island and Bluffton. By mid-April, we expect the rookery at Ibis Pond to be active with numerous species of wadding birds at different degrees of nesting progress. The rookery at Ibis pond is one of the best easy access rookeries in the Lowcountry.

Expert bird watcher Stephen Dickson will lead the group.



Through Our Binoculars

Migration is on the air

As spring is fast approaching, our bird life in the Lowcountry is changing. Our winter migrants such as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Ruby-crowned Kinglet are about to depart to their breeding grounds in the northern U.S. or Canada, and our spring and summer migrants are about to arrive to breed here during the summer.

As I write this column in mid-March, I am already



Northern Parula by Bob Speare

seeing Northern Parulas, Yellow-throated Warblers and Black-and-white Warblers. Some of the first spring arrivals, these are among the birds typically referred as neotropical migrants, birds that fly to the tropics of Central America and northern South America where they live during the winter and

return in the spring. Although some individuals of this species may remain here through the winter, most move south to the tropics.

About 200 species of songbirds migrate to the tropics yearly. Most migrating songbirds travel through the night guided by the stars and the magnetic fields of the earth, rest and feed during the day.

The Lowcountry has numerous species of new neotropical migrants from different taxonomic groups including Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Great-crested Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Painted Bunting

and South America, the low a route over the Gu of 600 miles over mostl time these birds are iming the day, blue sky ar

Rose-breasted Grosbeak by Mary Alice Tartler

and the tiny Ruby-throated Hummingbird, just to name a few. Some breed in the Lowcountry, such as the Orchard Oriole, Blue Grosbeak and colorful Painted Bunting, while others such as the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Cape May Warbler will go through here briefly in their way to breeding grounds further north. Some of these species arrive to the Lowcountry in spotty matter, with small groups of few individuals. And, while we get reports of Painted Buntings by early to mid-March, we do not see them consistently until mid-April. Other species arrive in what looks like a big wave all at once.

Every spring I anxiously await the moment where I hear my first Great-crested Flycatcher. This usually happens while sitting on my back porch drinking my morning coffee. Whenever that first call happens, I know I will hear several others throughout the same day. I hear them as soon as I step out of my car when arriving at work, and wherever I happen to go on errands through the day.

It looks as if the Great-crested Flycatchers arrive in the Lowcountry in the expanse of one night. This matches what I see in the tropics while leading birdwatching tours in Costa Rica, where you often see migrating birds in large numbers at once — such as hundreds of Eastern Kingbirds, flying south or north depending on the season.

The most astonishing fact about songbird migrants is that in order to get to the tropics of Central and South America, the majority of songbirds follow a route over the Gulf of Mexico. This is a flight of 600 miles over mostly open water. Most of the time these birds are immersed in a blue world during the day, blue sky and blue ocean, and then dark-

ness with no landmarks except for the stars during the night.

It is hard to imagine birds that are unable to rest on water and that do not seem particularly strong, such as a Ruby-throated Hummingbird or Painted Bunting, flying over open ocean. These species are easily seen perfectly at home in Costa Rica, Cuba and the Bahamas during the winter.

As we learn more about this unique feat of nature, many unanswered questions remain that complicate the migrating puzzle. Why is it that the Great-crested Flycatcher breeds in North America and winters in Central America and northern South America, while other closely-related species in the genus Myiarchus, such as the Brown-crested Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher and Panama Flycatcher are perfectly happy as year-round residents of the tropics and have no need to migrate? You could also ask why the Great-crested Flycatcher doesn't just stay in the tropics where other relatives seem successful, without exposing themselves to the perils of migration and a crossing over open ocean.



Great-crested Flycatcher by Carol Tunnicliffe

The standard answer to explain bird migration is that birds fly south to avoid the hard winter conditions and return for the great breeding conditions in the northern hemisphere during the long summer days. This explanation does not address why some birds migrate, while other related species don't. It also does not address why there isn't a similar songbird migration from the temperate areas of southern South America to the American tropics. This unanswered question makes bird migration all the more interesting, and as new technology gets scientists ever closer to answers, the spring season remains a wonderful and exciting time to watch birds in the Lowcountry.

Carlos Chacon is the Manager of Natural History at the Coastal Discovery Museum and Field Trip Coordinator for Hilton Head Audubon. Carlos leads weekly bird-watching outings for the Coastal Discovery Museum on Wednesday mornings at the Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge and organizes and leads multiple nature and bird-watching trips to his home country of Costa Rica every year.



Red knot courtesy of David Sibley on behalf of National Audubon

AuduBon Mots by: Roger@RogerSchillerstrom.com

"Share The Beach This Summer"





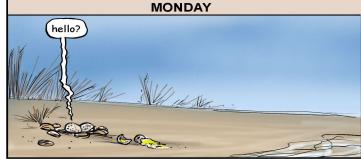












April - May 2021 Calendar

April

Thursday, April 8 3 pm HH Audubon Program Meeting Speaker: Rex Garniewicz Coastal Discovery Museum

May

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

Click here to join the Zoom Meeting

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 <u>website</u> and in each issue of Ecobon. All are welcome.



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