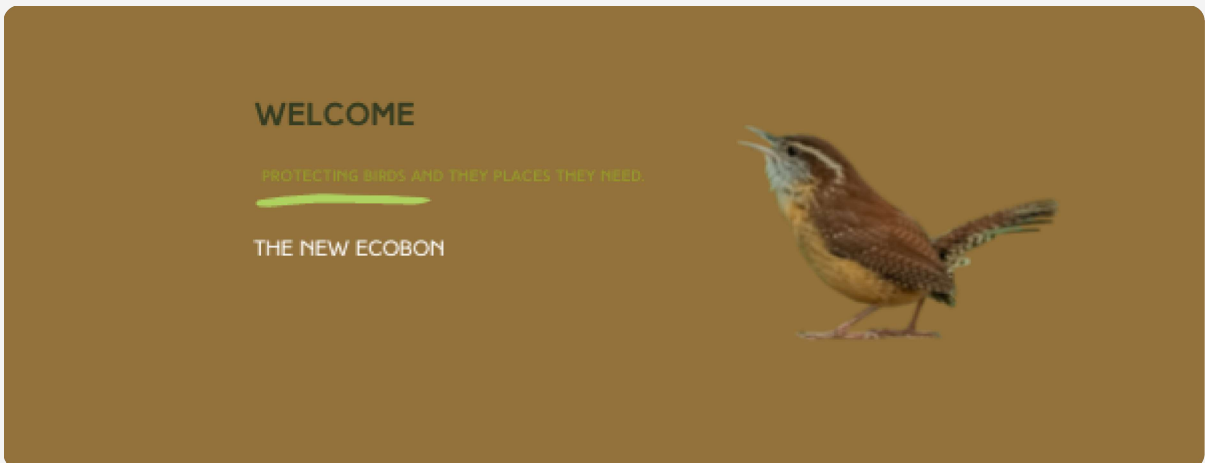




December 2021

Inside this issue:

- What's New
- Field Trips and Events
- New & Noteworthy
- Audubon Newhall Preserve
- Through Our Binoculars
- Volunteer Opportunities



What's New

November was an eventful month for Hilton Head Audubon. Trudi Gilfillian, South Carolina Opinion Editor for The State, The Island Packet, The Beaufort Gazette, and The Sun News interviewed President Kay Grinnell

and expressed support of [Hilton Head Island Audubon's position statement](#) on the Mid-Island Tract. You can read the [full article here](#).

Hilton Head Audubon is dedicated to remaining engaged in this project until completion and encourage our members and supporters to continue advocacy efforts with Town Officials.

In this issue we ask members to read about the proposed changes to our Hilton Head Audubon bylaws. These changes will be voted on in our January 2022 member meeting.

The annual Christmas Bird Count takes places on December 15! If you are interested in participating there is still time to sign up by contacting Susan Murphy at: HHICBC@gmail.com. The pre-count information meeting will take place on Thursday, December 9th at 7:00pm at the First Presbyterian Church on Hilton Head. Please [visit our webiste for more information and to download the 2021 CBC forms](#).

As part of our member survey feedback, we heard many voices asking for events for beginning birders and more variety in birding opportunities. We are happy to announce that on Saturday, December 11 Lynn Hodgson will be leading a beginners bird outing to Jarvis Creek Park. In January, Lynn has arranged for a birding and kayak trip down Ebenezer Creek in Rincon, Georgia. You can sign up for both trips in the field trip section below.

And finally we would like to wish Happy Holidays to All!

UPCOMING EVENTS

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

JOIN US



Field Trips

To register for field trips, please click on the links.

Saturday, December 4 @12:00 Noon - Widgeon Point Preserve-

Lemon Island

[Widgeon Point Preserve Field Trip](#)

Saturday, December 11 @8:00am - Beginners Bird Outing at Jarvis

Creek Park, Hilton Head Island

Are you new to birding? This field trip is targeted towards beginning birders.

[Jarvis Creek Park Field Trip](#)

Thursday, December 16 @8:00am - Maritime Center, Port Royal Sound

Foundation

[Port Royal Sound Foundation Field Trip](#)

Saturday, December 18 @8:00am - Mid-Island Tract Park, Hilton Head

Island

[Mid-Island Tract Field Trip](#)

Sunday, December 19 @10:00am - Harbor Island, St. Helena Island,

SC

[Harbor Island Field Trip](#)

2022

Saturday, January 8 @9:00am - Kayak & Birding Ebenezer Creek

Meet at the Tommy Long Boat Ramp, Rincon, GA, about an hour and fifteen minutes' drive from Hilton Head. Our outfitter will be Beaufort Kayak Tours and additional fees required. Register as usual with Hilton Head Audubon.

[Ebenezer Creek Field Trip](#)

March 30 - April 7, 2022 Costa Rica Birding Trip

We are thrilled to announce this 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. A group of 10 Lowcountry birders will

accompany professional naturalist and expert bird watcher Carlos Chacon through 8 days of exploration at 3 different birding destinations within Costa Rica. Carlos is a native Costa Rican biologist who has lived in the Lowcountry for the last 20 years, where he is the manager of Natural History at the Coastal Discovery Museum and volunteers as field trip coordinator for Hilton Head Audubon. The trip starts in northern Costa Rica in the foothills of the Rincon de la Vieja Volcano, followed by 2 days in the cloud forest at the famous Monteverde Mountains and 2 days exploring the tropical rain forest near the Arenal Volcano. This is an area of high biodiversity that is home to rare species including over 35 species of hummingbirds and 4 species of toucans. Accommodations are in comfortable eco-lodges and transportation is in a private, air-conditioned microbus. For more information and a detailed itinerary email Carlos at eco1adventures@gmail.com

Events Calendar

Please click on the links for more details

DECEMBER

Newhall Weekly Bird Walk

Tuesdays in December @8:30am

[Weekly Bird Walk at Newhall Preserve](#)

BIRDS! Join Lynn Hodgson for an hour's walk to welcome back our migratory birds and learn about the habits of wintering and native residents. Lynn will help us learn to identify the birds by their songs, flight patterns and habitat preferences. Bring binoculars and come often as each week we discover new visitors who just stop by on their travels south or old familiar friends who call Newhall their home.

December Monthly Member Event

Thursday, December 9 @7:00pm CBC Information Meeting

Location: First Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall, 540 William Hilton Parkway, Hilton Head Island. Note: Fellowship Hall is entered from the back of the church complex.

[Christmas Bird Count Information Meeting with Guest Speaker](#)

The social will begin at 7 pm and the presentation at 7:30. Our guest presenter is Robert Rommel, past president of our local Audubon Chapter, local naturalist, photographer and author. Robert will review some of the birds we are likely to see on the count and share some identification tips.

For our social, leaders of our local Audubon Chapter will be available to tell you about some of the interesting initiatives we have in progress and planned. As in past years, we will have coffee/decaf and water available and invite members (and guests) to bring cookies for the snack table. This is always an enjoyable event and we are pleased to be able to hold it in person this year! Face masks are recommended. We hope to see you there!

CBC Bird Count

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

[2021 Christmas Bird Count](#)

Christmas Bird Count Birders Needed!

We count all of the birds we see or hear from midnight to midnight. We have field teams throughout the area and more birders are still needed. We also welcome feeder watchers who count from the comfort of home. Contact Susan Murphy at: HHICBC@gmail.com if you would like to participate and she will put you in touch with one of our Area Captains.

JANUARY 2022

Newhall Weekly Bird Walk

Tuesdays in January @8:30am

[Weekly Bird Walk at Newhall Preserve](#)

January Monthly Member Event

Thursday, January 13 @3:00pm at the Island Recreation Center, Hilton Head Island

General meeting to vote on proposed bylaws followed by a guest speaker.

[Topic: MOTUS Project Speaker: Bob Speare](#)





Proposed Changes to our Hilton Head Audubon Bylaws

It's a good practice for boards to periodically review their bylaws to ensure they're consistent with the current organization's needs and reflective of best practices. With this in mind an ad hoc committee of the Hilton Head Audubon board was formed in April 2021 consisting of 3 members: then current president John Bloomfield, incoming President Kay Grinnell and Vice President Lynn Hodgson. During the summer and fall of 2021, the bylaws were reviewed, changes discussed, modifications made, and pro bono legal reviews sought and accomplished. The board reviewed these revisions and voted in October 2021 to recommend the bylaw changes to our membership

One note about the suggested changes: while Hilton Head Audubon is currently an all-volunteer organization, these bylaws changes include language allow for hiring staff without a further need for bylaw changes. This language does not necessitate hiring staff. Your board identified a series of actions that might be taken in response to our August member survey. We'll need more volunteers to accomplish these actions, many of which relate to adult education, field trips, advocacy, and communications. One means of supplementing our volunteers' work might be to hire interns from local universities to conduct field trips, teach classes etc.

Here's a [link to view a summary of the purpose, process and proposed key revisions to the bylaws.](#) If you would like to receive the full set of proposed bylaws, [click here.](#) A member vote will be conducted at the January 2022 member meeting.

Conservation Committee Updates

At our November HHAS meeting, our Conservation Committee member, Dr. Hilton Klein, VMD MS, presented a very informative presentation on outdoor cats, their effect on the bird population and other wildlife, feral cat colonies, and public health.

Important facts:

- 2.6 billion birds are killed each year by outdoor cats in the US - USFWS estimates that cats are a leading cause of bird mortality second only to habitat loss and destruction
- Trap, Neuter, and Release (TNR) cat colonies allow a number of diseases to spread among the cats and the public
- Feeding cats doesn't reduce instinctive hunting behaviors
- Cats' presence leads to decreased nesting success
- Feral cats live on average less than 5 years compared to 15 years for a domestic cat

Important take homes:

- Always seek ways to Improve public health, welfare of cats and birds in a compassionate, ethical, and humane manner
- Strategies for reducing feral and free roaming cats aim at reducing populations of cats, BUT are not highly effective for reducing bird kills e.g. TNR
- Public support, perceptions, and positions are essential to the welfare of all animals –regardless of species

Feral and free roaming cat issues are complex and sometimes emotional, but solutions can be found from good wildlife biology research, veterinary medicine(shelter medicine), and public health to address the problems

Thank you, Hilton, for this very educational and thought provoking presentation!!

On other issues:

The Conservation Committee continues to encourage bird-safe building design. Our friends at the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) have been

working with the U.S. Government Services Administration (GSA) to incorporate bird-safe building design specifications for new and major renovation projects on all federal buildings. This language was incorporated into the October, 2021 release of the GSA mandatory facilities standard titled Facilities Standard for the Public Buildings Service (P100). A big CONGRATULATIONS and THANK YOU to ABC! There is also a pending bill in Congress to incorporate similar language into the U.S. Code, which would essentially make this a permanent standard. Please help in this effort at the national level by contacting our elected officials, Lindsey Graham, Nancy Mace and Tim Scott, and encourage them to support the Bird-Safe Buildings Act (HR 1986/S 791).

Conversation with Wild Bird Rehabber Suzie Gilbert

On November 9 HHIAS members attended a webinar with wild bird rehabilitator and author Suzie Gilbert. She shared her journey into wild bird rescue and how a snowy owl in upstate New York inspired the story behind her book [Unflappable](#).

Suzie is also a contributor to the popular [10,000 Birds](#) blog. She shared her favorite stories and also helpful resources in bird rescue:

[Two Nests in One Tree Section](#)

[How to deal with power companies who say they have an easement and can cut down your trees in the spring](#)

[Birds and a Dangerous Utility Pole](#)

And for a laugh (read the comments as well!)... [funny bird misidentifications](#).



Newhall Notes

Wildlife Sightings

Steve Fishman took this picture of a Hilton Head Island white-tailed buck sporting a nice set of antlers. According to the U.S. United States Department of Agriculture, the island has its own subspecies of white tail deer called the Hilton Head White Tail Deer.



November Workday

First, our thanks go out to the sixteen volunteers who attended our November Work Day! Vice-Chairs Matt Mattoon, Lynn Hodgson, and Rita Kernan, along with Stephen Streeter, Kathy Byrd, Kristin and Logan Cambron, Carrie Jones, Mary Ellen Blankenship, Michael Mingione, Pam Shirley, Hilton Klein, David and Julia Buzzard, Morgan Thompson and Fearless Leader Bob Clemens worked in the Preserve to “tube” young trees to protect them from whitetail deer rubbings, weeded the Parking Lot

Pollinator Garden, trimmed trails, and removed debris from around Audubon Pond. We'll reconvene on Saturday, December 11th at 9 AM to spread milled asphalt to elevate wet sections of the Branch Woods Trail, and we'll cover additional portions of entry to the Audubon Trail.

In other news, Debby Boots will be taking a few weeks off from her regular Friday Guided Walks, and we hope she will return to duty in January. Our visitor sheets are always very complimentary regarding Debby's and Lynn's walks, and the Donation Post seems appreciative as well. See our latest poster below advertising the nature walks.

GUIDED NATURE WALKS AT NEWHALL



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA

BIRDS! Each Tuesday at 8:30 a.m. Join Lynn Hodgson for an hour's walk to welcome back our migratory birds and learn about the habits of wintering and native residents. Lynn will help us learn to identify the birds by their songs, flight patterns and habitat preferences. Bring binoculars and come often as each week we discover new visitors who just stop by on their travels south or old familiar friends who call Newhall their home.

And by appointment:
NATURE INTERPRETIVE WALKS with a **LOWCOUNTRY MASTER NATURALIST**
Contact ritakernan48@gmail.com for details.
GROUPS WELCOME

We gratefully welcome donations which can be placed in the post next to the bulletin board. Monies will be used to expand our pollinator garden. Don't forget to sign our guest book with your sightings. The trails are easy with flat terrain. Guided walks will be cancelled when inclement weather. Questions are directed to Bob Clemens, Newhall Preserve Chairman, at 317-989-5777 or Lynn Hodgson at 898-282-5218

Newhall Preserve is a treasured habitat for wildlife and probably the most intact 50-acre native forest ecosystem on Hilton Head Island. This peaceful sanctuary hosts over 200 birds, three wetland habitats, scrubs, side trails and is a haven for pollinating insects. Our gate is open every day from dawn to dusk

We had 206 visitors to the Preserve in October, bringing the annual total to nearly 2100, and we know that only a small percentage of visitors make entries on the log. If you greet visitors at the Preserve, please ask them how they found us and encourage them to "log" their visit on the clipboard in the trail guide box. We generally find that about half of the visitors we encounter found us on the internet and the rest noticed the signage on Palmetto Bay Road.

Finally, for our newly added volunteers, or in case you missed it, the Audubon Board approved Newhall Committee's Newhall Management Plan at its November meeting. What started as a "Strategic Plan," and evolved into a Management Plan was the fruit of months of hard work by the Newhall Committee . . . but especially by Lynn Hodgson, who was its principal architect. Note that Appendix 4, page 17, as the "Tasks" listed there are constantly evolving as crises and opportunities arise, feel free to make suggestions or volunteer! [Please click here to view a copy.](#)

THROUGH OUR BINOCULARS

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

COMMUNITY SIGHTINGS & STORIES



Field Trip Report: Colleton River

Thank you to Stephen Dickson for leading a most outstanding, sold-out HHIAS field trip at Colleton River Pete Dye Golf Course on November 19. 50 species were observed! Photos courtesy of Alan Biggs.

Wood Stork



Roseate Spoonbills



Killdeer



Palm Warbler



Dunlin



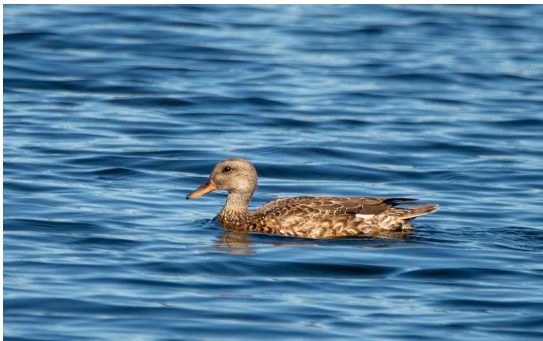
Least Sandpiper



American Kestrel



Gadwall

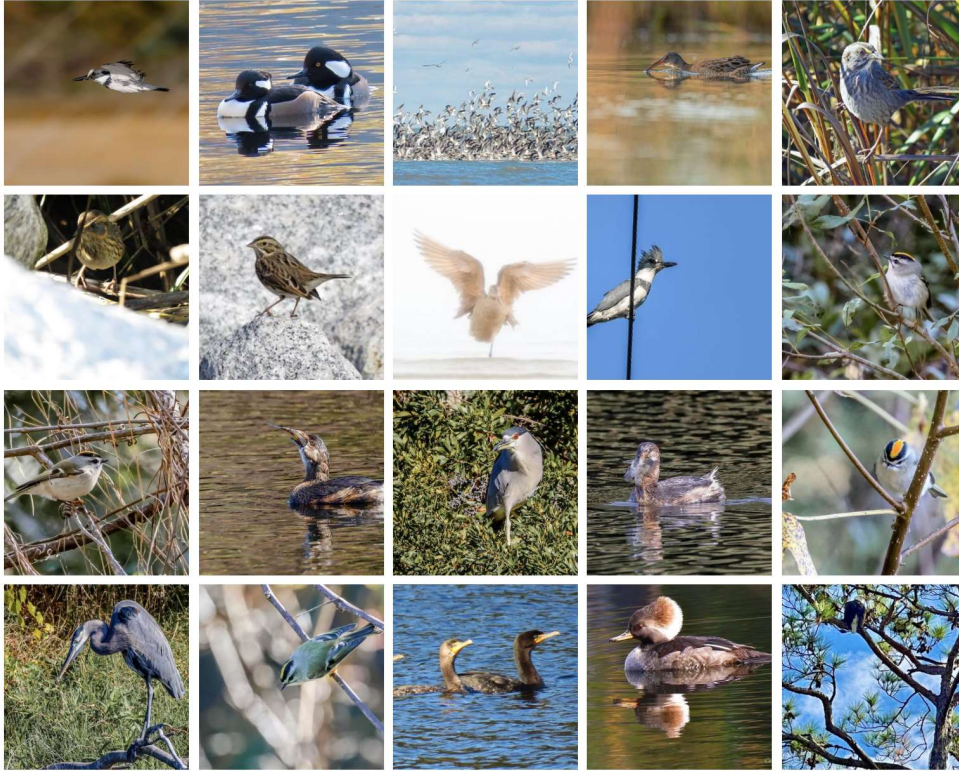


Our Birding Community

There are several ways to report sightings and general birding activity: use eBird or join the HHIAS Facebook group or Birding-Friends@google.com.

If you would like to join the Birding-Friends google group please send an email requesting access to ecobon@hiltonheadaudubon.org.

Here is a media collage of November birding activity from the [HHIAS Facebook group page](#).



Interested in Taking Over this Column?

Through our Binoculars has been a beloved section of Ecobon since its inception by Jack Colcolough. Jack relied on his expert network of birders and reports from birding-friends@google to compile the monthly column of birding activity and sightings. Without Jack's personal touch, the concept is now covered by eBird lists, birding-friends@google and the HHIAS Facebook group page.

To keep this column alive, we are seeking a volunteer or volunteers to compile and report for Through Your Binoculars. This would be a great learning opportunity!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

GET INVOLVED





Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer with us! Hilton Head Audubon is an all volunteer organization and relies on the contributions of many passionate and dedicated individuals who help make our mission of promoting the understanding, and conservation of native birds and their habitats possible. People with a range of skills and interests are needed to support our educational programs, activities, and conservation efforts.

If you are interested in volunteering, [explore our website for current opportunities](#) that fit your interest, skills and schedule.