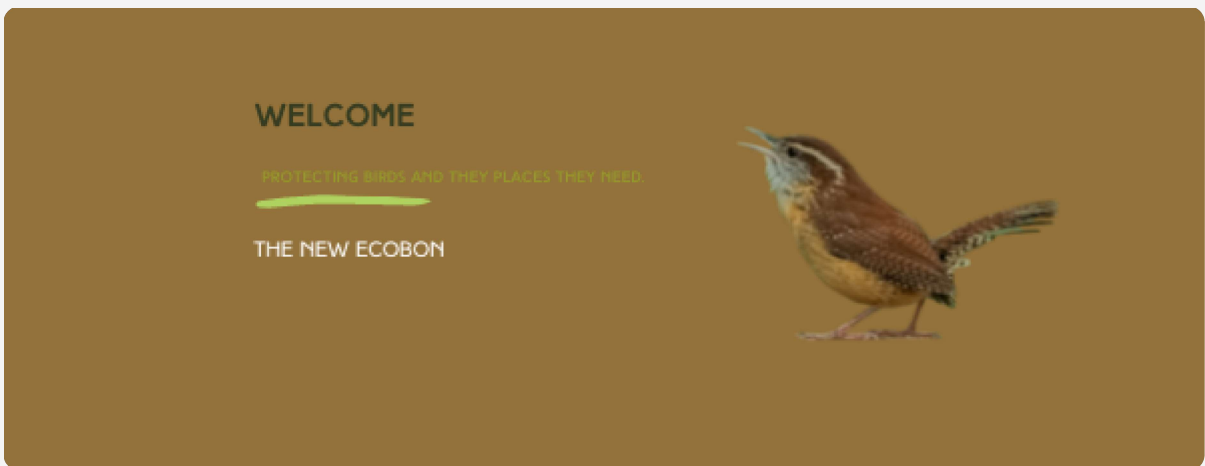




November 2021

Inside this issue:

- Letter from the President
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Field Trips and Events
- New & Noteworthy
- Audubon Newhall Preserve
- Through Our Binoculars
- Community Science



Letter from the President

We've got a lot going on, so I thought I'd share my take on it all. First and foremost, we sent you a membership survey, you responded, and we (your

board) are listening. We're making changes; I hope you've noticed some already.

We're in transition from our initial creation in 1974 as a bird club to becoming a leading member of the conservation community: one who speaks for the birds and conservation.

We're still an all-volunteer organization, so we need your help to accomplish this metamorphosis. Our membership meeting in October was a Volunteer Fair – giving you, as you requested in the survey, more information about how you can be more involved. We've posted [volunteer position descriptions on our website](#) to help you find a way to contribute that fits your talents and availability. Some are ongoing leadership and committee positions; others are needs for one-time or intermittent contributions. You don't need to be a full-time resident to be a volunteer – just have time and energy to give. We've seen your interest and willingness for the Christmas Bird Count and are hoping to capture your enthusiasm with other avenues where you can volunteer your time.

It was exciting to see how many members expressed interest in participating or even taking a leadership role in advocacy. We had an Advocacy Training session in October and will continue to grow our activities in this area.

I admit I dream that one day we might afford part-time or even full-time employees to maintain and even accelerate our momentum, as many other Audubons have done. But for now, we'll start by taking some bigger steps and asking you to help us ramp up our activities thru volunteerism.

My husband Phil and I love to travel, and I spend a lot of time looking at Audubon websites around the country. It's evident that the transition from bird clubs to conservation organizations is happening and at different stages in Audubons across the U.S. Many offer wonderful field trips and education opportunities to both members and visitors alike. Some Audubons in areas who have seasonal tourism gear up for tourist season to offer their guests a more informed appreciation of the local ecosystems and bird life. I'd love to think that we might be able to do more of this not

just for our members, but for our tourists as well... spreading the appreciation of what a precious environment we have here and sharing our love of local birds.

In addition to inviting you to volunteer, we're also inviting you to give. Most of you responded to the survey by saying that you would be willing to make larger donations – and would like some or all of those additional contributions to go to conservation and education. We're not planning to change our \$10 student (fledgling), \$25 individual (Carolina Wren) or \$35 family (Cardinal) membership base fees, but are suggesting additional levels of giving: \$100-\$249 Snowy Egret, \$250-\$499 Ruddy Turnstone, \$500-\$999 Painted Bunting, >\$999 Bald Eagle. We'll be rolling out this new membership structure starting January 1st, but of course if you're in a giving kind of mood during these Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, we'll be glad to accept donations earlier!

It's not news that there are so many factors challenging the health and numbers of our birds these days. We need YOU to get involved, to help us recognize their needs and be their voice, thru education, advocacy, and conservation initiatives. Let's get busy and find ways to help our birds and the habitats they need to thrive.

You'll find our renewed website a convenient place to check out our calendar, browse volunteer needs, and donate to our organization. www.HiltonHeadAudubon.org. If you have comments or questions for me, feel free to email any time at k.grinnell@yahoo.com.

Thanks for all you do and Happy Holidays!

Kay Grinnell
President

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

JOIN US



Field Trips

To register click on the links or go to the [website](#).

Saturday, November 6 @8:00am - Mid-Island Tract Hilton Head Island
[Mid-Island Tract Field Trip](#)

Tuesday, November 9 @8:00am - Colleton River Plantation
[Colleton River Plantation Field Trip](#)

Saturday, November 13 @8:00am - Jarvis Creek Park

[Jarvis Creek Park Field Trip](#)

Saturday, November 20 @8:00am - Sea Pines Forest Preserve

[Sea Pines Forest Preserve Field Trip](#)

Saturday, November 27 @8:00am - Mitchelville Freedom Park

[Mitchelville Freedom Park 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

NOVEMBER

Newhall Weekly Bird Walk

Tuesdays in November @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.

Newhall Weekly Nature Walk

Friday November 5 and 12 @9:30am

Guided Nature Walk at Newhall Preserve

Join Debby Boots for a stroll around the pond. We will learn how the forest prepares for winter, all about the underground woodwide web and investigate the medicinal and culinary uses for over 30 native trees, shrubs and flowers. Following walk, participants can sample some edible teas and snacks from plants we find along the trail. Bring binoculars. Beautyberry bug repellent provided.

Webinar with Guest Speaker Suzie Gilbert , Author and Wild Bird Rehabilitator

Tuesday, November 9 @7:00pm

[Please register in advance for this webinar](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

About Suzie Gilbert: My novel Unflappable (as well as my other books) were inspired by my work as a bird rehabber. I worked at a raptor center for 11 years, then opened my own all-species bird rehab center at my home. I have great stories of individual birds as well as the dedicated people who go to extraordinary lengths to help them. The large and tight-knit cast of Unflappable were combinations of people I know

November Monthly Member Event

Wednesday, November 17 @3:00pm Member Meeting at TBD

Topic: Feral Cats

[November Member Meeting with Guest Speaker](#)

DECEMBER

Newhall Weekly Bird Walk

Tuesdays in December @8:30am

[Weekly Bird Walk at Newhall Preserve](#)

December Monthly Member Event

Thursday, December 9 @7:00pm CBC Information Meeting at First Presbyterian Church, Hilton Head Island.

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

CBC Bird Count

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

[2021 Christmas Bird Count](#)

Our count area is a 15-mile diameter circle covering Hilton Head and Daufuskie Islands, parts of Bluffton and our waterways. We identify species and count each bird we see or hear. If you participated in the count last year, your Area Captain will be contacting you soon. If you are new to our count or visiting our area and interested in being a part of this international effort, please [e-mail Susan Murphy](#) and an Area Captain will contact you.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

HILTON HEAD AUDUBON IN THE NEWS



Update on Mid-Island Tract Initiative

Reflecting on our broader vision, HHIAS is emphasizing our advocacy for the Mid-Island Initiative Area project to develop a passive nature park, creating a rich eco-system for island birds and wildlife.

HHIAS sent an email to members and posted on social media to encourage advocacy. We can report that as a result of our efforts, approximately 70 surveys were completed! A great example of advocacy in action.

If you have not already completed the survey, please read our position statement below along with a link to the survey.

As you know, the Town of Hilton Head Island is currently researching options for how to develop the last remaining undeveloped, 100-acre tract on the island. The Mid-Island Initiative Area project will include a redevelopment strategy and plans for a new community park.

We urge all members to make our voices heard during this vital process. To contribute to the planning, please participate in the Town's 2-minute survey if you have not already done so. Visit survey link for the Mid-Island Area Initiative (5th from the top).

[HHI Town Mid-Island Tract Survey](#)

It will be open through November 12, 2021. The results will be utilized by consultant, MKSK to prepare a redevelopment strategy for the area.

We at Audubon advocate creating a natural, passive eco-park there to support the island's rich, but declining bird life, including almost 300 species of birds that regularly inhabit or visit the island. The Mid-Island Initiative Area contains the only known nesting colony of Red-headed Woodpeckers on Hilton Head. It is directly on the Atlantic Flyway.

Please participate in the survey and share this with your friends on the island!

Christmas Bird Count 2021

By Susan Murphy

This is the 122st 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. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this long-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations, and to help guide conservation action.

Count Day: The Hilton Head area count is on Wednesday, December 15th. 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 Susan Murphy at HHICBC@gmail.com and she will have a Captain contact you. You do not have to be an accomplished birder. 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.

December Meeting: Our annual Christmas Bird Count meeting is on Thursday, December 9th. It will be at First Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall, 540 William Hilton Parkway. We will meet at 7:00 pm. The presentation, by Robert Rommel, begins at 7:30 pm. Robert is a past president of Hilton Head Audubon and is our science advisor for the CBC. He always has some great tips on bird identification to share!

We will follow the COVID-19 guidelines for the venue and, as of now, we will not be permitted to have refreshments. We will let you know if this changes. We hope to see you there!

Climate Change Advocacy Workshop

By Julia and David Buzzard

On Saturday, October 23, the Conservation Committee hosted Bradley Williams, SC Audubon Campaigns Coordinator, for a Climate Change Advocacy workshop. Ten attendees were treated to a morning presentation tailored to a current issue on our island, preservation of the Mid-Island Tract property. We received tips on successful letter writing, op-eds, and in-

person meetings with local and state leaders, to help protect our birds and environment. Following the training, Lynn Hodgson led interested attendees on a bird-walk tour of the Mid-Island Tract.

The Conservation Committee is exploring shorebird protection signs to help inform beach visitors and residents on the beach. We are working with the Town of Hilton Head and SC Audubon on this project.

We are looking forward to our HHAS monthly November speaker, Hilton Klein, VMD as he provides information on feral cat colonies.

We are always looking for volunteers to assist in our conservation efforts! Please feel free to contact us, davidmbuzzard@gmail.com or juliajbuzzard@gmail.com.

Barry Lowes Scholarship

By Lois Lewis

Hilton Head Audubon is sponsoring a class field trip to Port Royal Sound Maritime Center next week as the first of many, we hope, in memory and honor of Barry Lowes. Barry was our past president, former manager of the Christmas Bird Count, fabulous wildlife photographer and outstanding outdoor educator. Below is a photo of him with Jane Hester and me. He died in 2020 and we hope to establish a scholarship to continue his work by sending local students & teachers for hands-on lessons in our beautiful Lowcountry outdoors.



Next week, on November 2, Karen Penale will lead a group of 4th graders from Cross School in exercises at the Port Royal Sound Maritime Center. The educators there have several on-shore activities planned, including a hike and discovery cruise on The Chechessee River led by Captain Amber Kuehn. Start time is 10 AM at the Maritime Center. I will be there during the morning to share a bit about Barry with the kids and share in their activities.

AUDUBON NEWHALL PRESERVE

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

NEWHALL NOTES



Newhall Notes

Newhall Alert! On October 26 Lynn Hodgson reported that Big Al was spotted on her Tuesday morning guided walk, and he appears to be bigger than ever.

Please be alert on your walks around the Audubon Pond.

On our October work day eight hardy souls met at the Newhall Preserve

and braved a battalion of mosquitoes, and accomplished a great deal. Sherm Barker and Kristin and Logan Cambron cleaned up the area around the Pollinator Garden compost bin, and mixed in mushroom mulch. Sherm then joined Vice-Chair Lynn Hodgson as she finished a nature tour, and together they located and cleaned out eleven bluebird houses. David and Julia Buzzard undertook the never-ending task of culling invasive dog fennel from among the longleaf pines and native trees and shrubs, and Kristin and Logan joined in after their compost bin task. Logan took charge of snake-management, placing a copperhead in “time out,” to be released later after the work was accomplished. Chair Bob Clemens and Vice-Chair Jack Coleman cleaned out the three owl boxes, tended to the pond pollinator garden irrigation system, played lumberjack, mowed grass, and blew off the Pocosin boardwalk and Pond deck. The Preserve has never looked better. Thank you to our many volunteers, trail monitors and tour guides for making Newhall a special place.



Next workday is November 13 from 9:00 to 11:00am.

THROUGH OUR BINOCULARS

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED

COMMUNITY SIGHTINGS & STORIES

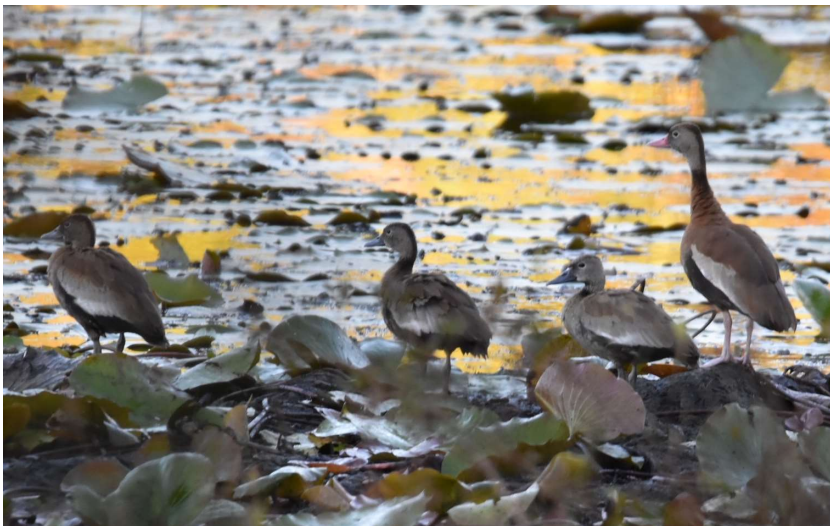


Field Trip Report: Kingfisher Pond

By Lynn Hodgson

On October 30, 2021, 12 HHIAS members met at Kingfisher Pond (including, confusingly, 3 Karens), for a field trip led by Lynn Hodgson. The earliest arrivers were treated to watching about 150 white ibis flying overhead from the central island in the pond, where they roost. As others joined in at the viewing platform, we used a spotting scope to watch a few boat-tailed grackles, snowy egrets, a little blue heron, and a couple of flocks of black-bellied whistling ducks. Most of the latter were juveniles, so we think the small flocks might have been family groups with young of the year.

Black-bellied Whistling Ducks by Rick Schies



Walking counterclockwise around the pond we saw a variety of year-round resident birds such as cardinals, heard American crows and plenty of blue jays, and a couple of phoebes. 4 ring-necked ducks were lazily moving around out in the middle, as well as a beautiful male wood duck spotted by Laura Voight. As we entered the forest, we saw a few yellow-rumped warblers, ruby-crowned kinglets, and a yellow phase American redstart. Jack Coleman spotted a prairie warbler among them, probably the “bird of the day”.



At the junction with the Tupelo Trail the whole group decided to continue hiking about 1.7 miles, nearly as far as the trail is currently open to the public. It was a beautiful walk, in cool mosquito-free weather. In the woods, the birds were mostly silent except for a few red-bellied woodpeckers, overflights of red-winged blackbirds, and one vocal white-eyed vireo. So, we botanized along, identifying trees and shrubs until we entered the bald cypress / tupelo swamp. It is beautiful and serene, with a bright emerald green coating of duck-weed and a large pair of alligator eyes peeping out at us. At Lynn's "turnaround" tree in the middle of the trail, we turned around! Herve Cerisoles and Rick Shies led the way back toward the parking lot until we could get close to the other shore of Kingfisher Pond. There we spotted more whistling ducks, red-winged blackbirds, phoebes, and, finally, Jack again came through with a pied-billed grebe for our 30th species. Excellent day for "almost winter" birding. We all hope to go to Kingfisher Pond again next spring, when the spring warblers should be sounding off.

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.

COMMUNITY SCIENCE

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

TURN YOUR PASSION FOR BIRDING INTO SCIENCE



MOTUS Update

By Bob Speare

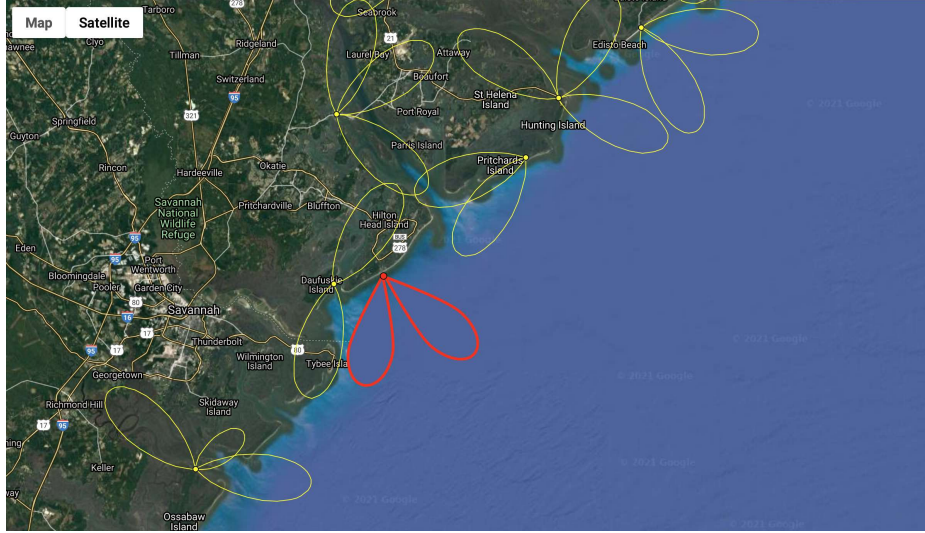
After almost two years of starts and stops related to location negotiations, Covid delays, equipment supply chain challenges, and staff turnovers at our host site, I am very pleased to announce that our Motus receiver is up and running! With tremendous support from our friends at Marriott's Grande Ocean Resort on South Forest Beach Drive, our receiver station is mounted on the roof of a five story building facing directly out to the Atlantic Ocean. Matt King from South Carolina DNR assembled all the pieces, and together he and I installed the two VHF antennas and the electronics needed to collect signals from birds, bats, and even butterflies and dragonflies carrying tiny nano-transmitters. (Approximate direction and antenna range is shown in red on the map below.) The final step in the setup will be connecting our receiver to the Motus system so that any project using tagged animals will be able to access the information we receive. This should be completed within the next couple of weeks.



What this means is that Hilton Head Audubon has now joined roughly 1300 other receiver stations on four continents collecting important information on bird movement. As tagged birds fly by we are contributing location-based data related to the specific migration routes and timing of each individual bird. Additionally, we are collecting information on the movements of our local populations of breeding and overwintering birds.

Motus not only offers incredible data to researchers, but a wonderful educational opportunity as well. We can use the information we collect to help people of all ages learn more about how this technology plays a critical role in bird conservation. In our next phase of this project, we will develop educational materials which can be used both at schools and local public venues to illustrate the important information we learn from this technology.

As you can see from the map below, between the various local groups involved, our coastline is now pretty well covered with receivers. One of the goals here in South Carolina is to create a greater Motus presence inland to help us learn about bird populations away from the coast too. There will be opportunity for Hilton Head Audubon to take part in this effort by working with South Carolina Audubon and others to determine the best location for a second station we can install. We'll keep you informed as this opportunity develops.



A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made this project possible through your generous contribution. A special thanks also to South Carolina Audubon for their support of this project, and their continued support of Motus statewide.

Please visit www.motus.org to see the growing number of receivers as well as learn about the many projects underway using the Motus technology.