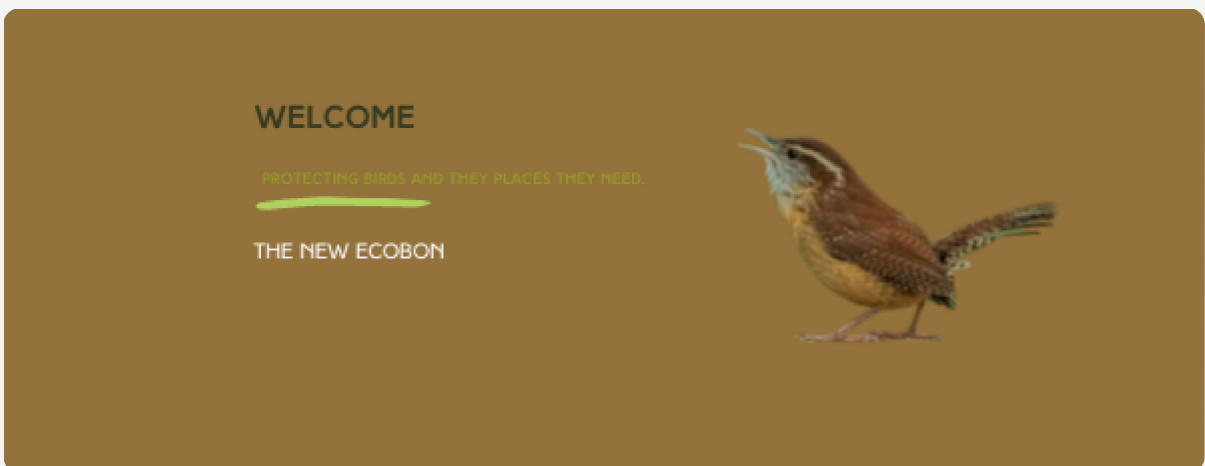




## September 2021

### Inside this issue:

- Welcome to the new Ecobon
- Field Trips and Events
- New & Noteworthy
- Audubon Newhall Preserve
- Through Our Binoculars
- Community Science
- Volunteer Opportunities



## Welcome to Ecobon

Your leadership conducted a Member Survey in July to learn about:

- Interests of our membership base so we can craft benefits and programs to serve those interests and align with our mission
- Interest in volunteering and advocacy
- Communication preferences

While we will share our in-depth findings in October, this issue incorporates content and delivery that is important to members.

Let's start with **Field Trips**. You can register for a field trip directly from Ecobon using the links provided or from the website.

An **Events Calendar** lists upcoming programs with links to event details. A **Volunteer** section provides volunteering and outreach opportunities.

In the spirit of Jack Colcolough's **Through Your Bincoculars** column, we are using it as forum to share member stories and sightings.

A **Community Science** column highlights HHIAS citizen projects.

Any questions? Drop us an email at [ecobon@hiltonheadaudubon.org](mailto:ecobon@hiltonheadaudubon.org)

## 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, September 4 @8:00am - Jarvis Creek**

[Jarvis Creek Field Trip - September 4, 2021](#)

**Saturday, September 11 @8:00am - Pinckney Island NWR**

[Pinckney Island NWR Field Trip - September 11, 2021](#)

**Saturday, September 18 @8:45am - Fish Haul Park**

[Fish Haul Beach Park Field Trip - Saturday September 18, 2021](#)

**Friday, September 24 @7:45am - Mid-Island Track**

[HHI Mid-Island Track Field Trip - Friday September 24, 2021](#)

**Sunday, September 26 @8:00am - Pinckney Island NWR**

[Pinckney Island NWR Field Trip - Sunday September 26, 2021](#)

## Events Calendar

Please click on the links for more details.

### **SEPTEMBER**

#### **September Monthly Member Event**

Thursday, September 16 @4:00pm Member Social at Honey Horn under the pavillion. BYO snacks, drinks and chairs.

[September Member Welcome Back Social](#)

#### **Newhall Weekly Nature Walk**

Fridays in September @8:30am

[Guided Nature Walk at Newhall Preserve](#)

#### **Newhall Work Day**

Saturday, September 18 @8:00am

[September Newhall Volunteer Work Day](#)

#### **Audubon South Carolina Bird and Brews in Bluffton (Southern Barrel Brewing Co)**

Thursday, September 23 6:00 to 8:00pm

[Registration required: link here.](#)

## **OCTOBER**

### **2021 National Audubon Virtual Convention**

Two-day event: October 1-2 from 1:00 to 4:00pm

[Register here](#)

### **Newhall Weekly Bird Walk**

Tuesdays in October @8:30am

[Weekly Bird Walk at Newhall Preserve](#)

### **Newhall Weekly Nature Walk**

Fridays in October @9:30am - starting October 15

[Guided Nature Walk at Newhall Preserve](#)

### **Newhall Work Day**

Saturday, October 16 @8:00am

[October Newhall Volunteer Work Day](#)

### **Climate Advocacy Training with SC Audubon**

Saturday, October 23

[Details to follow in October Ecobon or visit website for updates](#)

### **October Monthly Member Event**

Thursday, October 28 @3:30pm Member Volunteer Fair at Dolphin Head Recreation Center, HHI Plantation.

[October Member Volunteer Fair](#)

## **NOVEMBER**

### **Newhall Weekly Bird Walk**

Tuesdays in November @8:30am

[Weekly Bird Walk at Newhall Preserve](#)

### **November Monthly Member Event**

Wednesday, November 17 @3:00pm Member Meeting at Palmetto Electric Community Room, Hilton Head Island.

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](#)

## NEW & NOTEWORTHY

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

HILTON HEAD AUDUBON IN THE NEWS



## News



## Website Gets a Refresh!

Hilton Head Audubon's website has a new look and enhanced content.

Two questions that people often ask is "where do I go birding?" and "what birds can I expect to see?".

A new **Go Birding** section contains information about local and regional birding hotspots and links to eBird and other citizen science reporting tools.

The **Birdability** page lists accessible birding locations in and around Hilton Head Island.

**Birding FAQs** is a resource that provides answers to common questions such what to do if you find an injured bird to how to report a banded bird.

Learn about our Board and committee chairs and our **Mission**.

## New Beach Sign

Beachgoers can look forward to a new conservation sign to be erected on Hilton Head Island. Our Audubon chapter has sponsored this sign in conjunction with The Coastal Discovery Museum.

Students at Holy Trinity Classical Christian School in Beaufort created artwork to educate locals and tourists alike about protecting native shorebirds. One drawing was chosen to be recreated on the sign. The photo shows how it will look when it's erected by the Town of HHI.

Two signs were posted in 2020 at Fish Haul Creek Beach to remind people about the beautiful birds on our beaches who nest and rest there during their migrations.

Be sure to watch for the signs and share the message with friends and family!

## In Passing

With the passing of Joan Wilson in late July of this year, Hilton Head Audubon lost one of its long-time supporters and leaders. Moving to our area over 30 years ago Joan and her husband, Bob became members and leaders of our local Society. Joan served in many capacities; she was a long-time member of our board, past program chair and vice-president, decades long Co-Captain of the Moss Creek Christmas Bird Count and past Editor of the Ecobon.

A great birder, Joan enjoyed many a field trip with our group. You could also find her helping host every Audubon social event. She was, in her non-Audubon life, someone who also enjoyed tennis, travel, bridge and volunteering. Always the kind and gracious person Joan continued her volunteer work at the Bargain Box until late in life. Her dedication and kindly presence will be sorely missed.

Over \$1,000 have been contributed to Audubon in Joan's name. Thank you to all who have made a gift in her honor.

Dee Ann Hammel

Stephen McLaughlin

Patricia Ulrich

Roanne Burech

Linda Volkhart

Nancy Butler

Lynette Colvin

Janet & John Turley

Susan Murphy

Cheryl Shafer

Tarrant Putnam

Moss Creek Nature Club

Sheila & Roger Johnson

Judith Brown

Lois Wilson

Betsy Pehrson

Kenneth Collins

## Coastal Discovery Museum Family Fun Day

On August 10, Hilton Head Audubon participated in the Coastal Discovery's Museum's annual Family Fun Day. Our booth conveniently located on Osprey Pier overlooking the marsh attracted many young people who had the opportunity to see resident birds who frequent this habitat. As the tide was receding herons and egrets came to feed and roost including a great egret, snowy egret, great blue heron, tri-color heron, green heron, and yellow-crowned night heron. The clapper rails were calling and we even spotted a couple of rails feeding among the grasses. A belted kingfisher sounded its alarm while in the skies above flew an anhinga, mississippi kite, white ibis and laughing gulls. The pier at Coastal Discovery Museum is an accessible spot to sit and birdwatch just bring a pair of binoculars and let the scene unfold.

Thanks to Mary Ellen Blakenship, Karen Seminary and George Westerfield for manning the booth and sharing their love and knowledge of birding with visitors.



## Announcing Climate Advocacy Training

The Conservation Committee in partnership with Audubon South Carolina will host climate advocacy training on October 23. South Carolina Audubon will provide the training and will include a bird banding demonstration before the training.

Event details will be coming to the website and in the October Ecobon. If this training fills we will schedule an additional session.

We hope you can participate in this important issue affecting our birds!

### AUDUBON NEWHALL PRESERVE

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

NEWHALL NOTES



## Newhall Notes

The Newhall volunteer work crew has been busy this summer sprucing up and making improvements to the Preserve. The Audubon Pond deck has been rebuilt and painted, two new bike racks and new bulletin board have been installed. A Memorial birdbath and dripper at the pond pollinator gardens is installed.

The work crews have also been improving trails for wheelchair accessibility and constantly battling the incursion of invasive species like dog fennel. Kudos to these hardy souls who show up to volunteer every month. To read about all the work that has been done at Newhall visit the Newhall Notes section of our website.

Year-to-Date we've had almost 1,100 visitors from 42 states (and DC) and if we had a nickel for every "Beautiful" in the comments space on the visitor log we'd be rich!

## Debby Boots

*Please welcome Debby Boots as a new Nature Walk guide at Newhall.  
Check the events calender for dates.*

*One guest raved about Debby and sent this glowing review:*

*"This is a fabulous nature walk!! Debby is a wealth of information!"*

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to join Rita Kiernan and Lynn Hodgson to lead nature walks at Newhall. This 50-acre sanctuary is an intact native maritime forest on Hilton Head Island! The diversity presents an important teaching tool for residents as well as visitors. So come over to walk the easy trails around the pond and experience five different habitats with over 50 native plants identified for a self-guided tour.

Audubon volunteers have done amazing hard work planting 200 longleaf pine seedlings and 180 native trees and shrubs donated by the two Rotary Clubs on Hilton Head. And volunteers are establishing two pollinator gardens with host and nectar plants, another important educational tool because of the dire need to save habitat for insects as well as birds.

I've lived at Seabrook retirement community since mid-2015 and am beach and Pinckney docent for CDM, took a master naturalist course and counted beach birds for the Audubon Christmas count. My two loves are the beach and weeds.

Of course, there are no weeds in nature. Every plant has a purpose and it's our job to discover what each one is doing here on earth. I have written a little wild foods cookbook entitled "Cattail Cakes and Chickweed Snakes." It's pretty hard to give delicious weed tasting parties on Hilton Head because the homeowners and landscapers get rid of (poison) any alien that dares to peek up uninvited.... without even asking its name!

As far as the beach goes, we do live on an island surrounded by sand and water and salt marshes and need to learn more about our beach backyard. I should love to come to any small organization meeting to give a program on the secret life of animals that live in those seashells, what they eat and how they grow their houses (shells) and lay eggs and have babies, and of the city underneath the sand, and the lives of the shorebirds who call the beach their home. I will bring my local shell collection to share if any group is looking for a speaker.

Thank you for the opportunity to lead Friday nature walks starting in September. Hope you will come and lend your expertise and enthusiasm.

For more information, contact Debby Boots debboots5@gmail.com or 843-715-4220.

## THROUGH OUR BINOCULARS

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED

COMMUNITY SIGHTINGS & STORIES



### Fall Migration

Based on observations from HHIAS members and other individual birders, fall migrants are making their way through the Hilton Head Island area.

Here is a sampling of what species have been sighted at local birding hotspots in the month of August.

#### **Sea Pines and Forest Preserve**

Red-eyed Vireo  
Yellow Warbler  
American Redstart  
Prairie Warbler  
Pied-billed grebe  
Yellow-throated warblers  
Prothonotary Warbler

#### **Jarvis Creek Park**

Blue-gray gnatcatcher  
Yellow-throated warbler  
White-eyed vireo  
Red-eyed Vireo  
Eastern Towhee  
Great Crested Flycatcher

Northern Parula  
Prothonotary Warbler

### **Mid-Island Tract (Planter's Row)**

Yellow warbler  
Prairie Warbler

### **Fish Haul Beach Park**

Spotted Sandpiper  
Piping Plover  
Semi-palmated Plover  
Willet  
Marbled Godwit  
Black-bellied plover  
Least Sandpiper  
Ruddy Turnstone

### **Beaufort County (Port Royal)**

Red Knot  
Sanderling  
Semi-palmated plover  
Willet  
Piping Plover

## **Mary Alice Tatler on Fall Migration**

I believe that Fall Migration is the best birding season Hilton Head Island has to offer bird lovers. So many beautiful new arrivals of warblers, shorebirds, hawks and falcons who touch down to take a short break from their exhausting night journeys from the North. It is also the time that your chances increase to possibly spot an uncommon bird passing through that you might not otherwise see. It is however, a bittersweet time as well with some of our summer regulars leaving the area - Northern Parulas, Summer Tanagers, Painted Buntings, and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, to mention a few. It all ends around January or so with a renewed hope that we will hold on

until Spring Migration arrives and the cycle of life starts over again! Two of my favorite lifers I have found during Fall Migration are the Chestnut-sided Warbler and Ash-throated Flycatcher. Happy Birding!



### Reports from Afar

"Carol Tunnicliffe, HHIAS member and active photographer, who does an amazing job documenting our local bird population shares this special sighting from afar.

"Visiting the North Carolina mountains in August I was excited to find a new "life bird". This beautiful female Canada Warbler was spotted in her nesting habitat in the Pisgah National Forest at an altitude of 4700'. This is a species whose numbers are declining, so I felt very fortunate to have

spotted one."

## Our Online Birding Community

The [HHIAS Facebook group page](#) is an active, engaging and fun place to share your birding experiences and learn from experienced birders.

A community of 880 birders share photos and report sightings, ask questions and contribute to the general knowledge of bird activity and habitat on Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County. It is real-time forum documenting birding activity in our area.

Take a peak at our page and also enjoy beautiful photography from our pool of talent photographers - you do not have to be a photographer to contribute - many of pictures are cell phone shots - the objective is to document and share among all levels of birders. [Click here to view.](#)

## Chuck-Will's-Widow – Where are you?

**By Alan Biggs and Bob Spear Photograph by Mary Alice Tartler**

Nightjars, (also known as goatsuckers due to their habit of swooping among herds to pick up insects, giving farmers the impression they were after their milk), are one of the most enigmatic group of birds in North America. Very little is known about the basic aspects of their biology, habitat use, and population status due to their cryptically nocturnal lifestyle. We write “cryptic” in the ecological sense of the word because this group of mainly insectivorous birds appears to have a knack for avoiding detection,



and thus our ability to study it, at night. While we have at least three species of Nightjars in the Lowcountry, i.e., Common Night Hawk, Whip-Poor-Will, and Chuck-Will's-Widow (CWWI); the latter is the most common here and its call is easily recognized.

In recent years, conservationists and the public have come to share a general sense that populations of Nightjars are dramatically declining, perhaps in large part to a decline in insect populations. However, there were no standardized data available to help describe these changes or to help with reversing population losses. The Nightjar Survey Network was established in 2007 by The Center for Conservation Biology. This survey program was created to gain a better understanding of population status by implementing a standardized approach across the country that will help determine the magnitude and scale of population changes so a course for conservation may be plotted. The Nightjar Survey Network relies entirely on volunteer participation. The program is coordinated by The Center for Conservation Biology at a national level with the help of partner organizations at state and local levels. Currently, there are 9 survey sites in South Carolina. We are hoping our preliminary work will lead to creation of a survey route on Hilton Head Island or other parts of Beaufort County.

Nocturnal behaviors of CWWI and other Nightjars are influenced strongly by moonlight. Activities such as calling and foraging increase under bright moonlight conditions and it is thought that breeding may actually be timed with the lunar schedule. We hope to use designed protocols to take advantage of these behaviors by conducting surveys only during bright moonlit nights so detection rates will be higher and more consistent.

CWWI surveys are only conducted one time per year (in the Lowcountry between May 19 and June 2) and are easy to perform. For a typical survey, volunteers conduct roadside counts at night, on scheduled bright moonlit nights, by driving and stopping at 10 points along a predetermined 9-mile route. At each point, the observer counts all CWWI seen or heard during a 6-minute period. No artificial broadcast of the species call is used. When surveying a route, you are gathering information on changes in CWWI populations over time while simultaneously increasing the knowledge on numerical changes in population to the composition of habitats in the

landscape.

Because of the structure of Hilton Head Island neighborhoods, with their limited residential access points, we thought we might accomplish a 10-point survey across the area with volunteers listening somewhat simultaneously and then reporting to the local survey coordinators. With this approach we hope to emulate the typical survey described above. For the first exploratory year (2021), we wanted to gauge interest and obtain an estimate of potential volunteer locations. We had also hoped to calculate a rough estimate of the number of CWWI on the island and nearby locations.

### **What did we learn?**

First, we learned that we have an enthusiastic group of 30 volunteers for this project, 27 of the 30 from Hilton Head Island, and we feel confident that we can build a survey route on the island. However, recruiting additional volunteers in some neighborhoods will be needed to ensure more complete coverage of the island in 2022 and beyond.

We had requested that volunteers report listening sessions in which they did not hear any CWWI calls, known as negative encounters. We only received a few reports of no CWWI calls. While it is not very satisfying to listen and not hear anything (and return indoors with only a few mosquito bites to show for your efforts), population size estimates rely on the relative proportions of positive and negative encounters. So, we encourage everyone to participate and let us know that they listened and report whether they heard any calls or not.

One year of data such as we collected in 2021 cannot produce a valid estimate of CWWI on Hilton Head Island, but based upon the data we collected, we feel confident that the areas in which we collected positive encounters, we believe there were approximately 9 to 12 singing males this past spring. We make this determination based on the recommended 1-mile survey distances that reflect approximately an average territory for CWWI.

We will reach out early next spring as we begin to set up a plan for 2022, but if you are interested in helping us learn more about this important

nocturnal bird, you can also contact us at

[communityscience@hiltonheadaudubon.org](mailto:communityscience@hiltonheadaudubon.org) and we will add you to our list.

Fig. 1. Positive Chuck-Will's Widow call locations during the period 5/24/2021 to 6/2/2021. Some locations had multiple reports that included both positive and negative listening sessions. A yellow pin indicates at least one positive report.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

GET INVOLVED



## Volunteer Opportunities

### October 23 Climate Advocacy Training

Details in October Ecobon or visit website for updates

## **October 28 Volunteer Fair**

We're looking for committee members and those interested in occasional volunteering to help expand our impact, including conservation, advocacy, education, communications, programs, field trips and membership. Come to the volunteer fair to learn how you can get more involved.

[October 28 Volunteer Fair and Information Session](#)

## **Program Chair Committee**

Program Chair is vacant. If you are interested in joining the Program committee or serving as Chair, please contact Kay Grinnell, President for more information at [hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org](mailto:hhiaudubon@hiltonheadaudubon.org)

## **Audubon Newhall Preserve**

Workdays are scheduled once a month on Saturday mornings. Also, we have special projects that may require volunteers to lend a hand. If you would like to be added to volunteer list, please contact Bob Clemens at [rclemens318@gmail.com](mailto:rclemens318@gmail.com).

Next scheduled work days are:

[September 18 Volunteer Work Day](#)

[October 16 Volunteer Work Day](#)

## **Ecobon**

Article submissions are encouraged. Content should be relevant to birding and habitat in the lowcountry of South Carolina. To submit or exchange ideas on an article please contact us at [ecobon@hiltonheadaudubon.org](mailto:ecobon@hiltonheadaudubon.org)

## **Community Science**

Participating in community science can be as simple as [submitting an eBird list](#) while out birding.

## **2022 Nightjar Survey**

Alan Biggs and Bob Speare are planning a follow-up nightjar survey in 2002. If you are interested in participating, contact us at [communityscience@hiltonheadaudubon.org](mailto:communityscience@hiltonheadaudubon.org)

