



March 2022

Inside this issue:

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



New Board of Directors Slate

Your HHIAS Board Elections are coming up again soon. Below are listed the current Board members, those cycling off the Board, and suggested new Board members with basic biographical information for the latter.

According to our by-laws, the membership elects the Board. The Board

elects officers from among its members. The President then names Committee Chairs.

Proposed Hilton Head Island Audubon Society Board

Term 5/1/2022 – 4/30/2023

Current members continuing on the board, in alphabetical order:

Carlos Chacon

Jack Coleman

Kay Grinnell

Natalie Hefter

Jane Hester

Lynn Hodgson

Patricia Kappmeyer

Lois Lewis

Susan Murphy

Current members cycling off the Board:

Mary Ellen Blankenship

John Bloomfield

David Buzzard

Julia Buzzard

Bob Clemens

Tony Johnson

Proposed new members of the Board:

Sarah Gustafson

Laura Voight

Shannon Wilkinson

Sarah Gustafson is a recent Hilton Head Island resident, moving to the island in 2020. Previously Sarah resided in northern Virginia. Sarah is a former CPA, starting her career with PricewaterhouseCoopers, working for the firm in Washington D.C., Moscow and London. She also was VP-Finance for an insurance company in D.C. Sarah served on the Board as a Treasurer for an advocacy group and search and rescue group in Virginia. Sarah is an avid birder, who loves birding in new places and is thoroughly

enjoying exploring the low country birding spots.

Laura Voight moved to Hilton Head in the fall of 2019 from Montana, but has visited the island during the last four decades. In Montana, she worked as a Development Officer at the public radio station in Billings. Prior to that she had a career in academia as an Art Historian. In Montana, she shifted her long appreciation of the arts into making her own mixed media works. She also served as the board secretary for a Fair Trade store for six years and now works at Wild Birds Unlimited Hilton Head. Since moving here, she has developed an incredible love of birding and enjoys learning about and photographing birds in the Low Country.

Shannon Wilkinson, a native of Beaufort, S.C., grew up on Hilton Head. She worked here as a freelance writer for local publications and produced “The Daufuskie Kids Magazine,” subsequently featured on NBC’s “Today” show, before moving to New York City and graduating from the Parsons School of Design. In New York, she worked as Public Affairs Coordinator for the Guggenheim Museum and in the public relations industry before establishing her own PR consultancy. In 2009 she established Reputation Communications, an online reputation management practice focusing on internet communications. She returned to Hilton Head in 2021 to live full-time and operates her NYC-based business virtually.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

JOIN US



Field Trips

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

March 6 Pinckney Island NWR

Leader: Stephen Dickson

[Details and Registration click here.](#)

March 26 Roxbury Park Meggett SC

Leader: Lynn Hodgson and Terry Cerisoles

[Details and Registration click here.](#)

March 29 Beidler Forest Audubon Sanctuary

Leader: Jen Terryll

[Details and Registration click here.](#)

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.

March

Newhall Work Day

Saturday March 12 @9:00am

[For details click here](#)

Newhall Weekly Bird Walk

Tuesdays @8:30am. No registration required

[For details click here](#)

Newhall Weekly Nature Walk

Fridays @9:30am. No registration required

[For details click here](#)



May 12 at the Coastal Discovery Museum

Guided Gallery Tour and Reception

The Image Hunter: On the Trail of John James Audubon

Italian Artist Hitnes' Retracing of the Travels of Audubon in the South.

[For details click here](#)

To learn more about the artist, please [view this short film created by the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art.](#)

Here is a peak into the images that will be displayed at the Coastal Discovery Museum.





External Events

Garden & Gun presents:

BIRDWATCHING

Charleston, SC

February 11 - April 3, 2022

Drawing from nature, the splendors of bird-watching, and the interconnectivity between humans and the natural world, this immersive experience takes viewers on a journey between the Joseph Manigault House, The Dewberry hotel, and the Garden & Gun offices at the Cigar Factory, sparking wonder and awareness of avian conservation.

Curated and artistically directed by Kelly S. Turner, each individual birdscape is inspired by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artist-naturalists and features the work of artists Brandon Ballengée, Clare Celeste Börsch, and J. Drew Lanham.

[Please click here for more details.](#)

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

HILTON HEAD AUDUBON IN THE NEWS



Annual bird count helps develop science, conservation policies in South Carolina

HHIAS Audubon members Susan Murphy and Robert Rommel co-authored an article on the Christmas Bird Count published in The State. The article publicizes this annual tradition and its link to informing science policy and conservation efforts. To view the article, [please click here.](#)

Local Students Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count

Students in six Beaufort County Schools recently participated in The Great

Backyard Bird Count, thanks to Hilton Head Audubon's Education Committee volunteers. This international effort was held this year on Feb. 18 – 21. During the 2 weeks preceding the count, HHA volunteers and teachers presented in-class lessons about local birds and why we count them. Then, volunteers lead students and teacher groups on bird walks. Our group borrowed binoculars from Coastal Discovery Museum to supplement 15 pairs that HH Audubon has. The children learned to use these essential tools while showing great enthusiasm for spotting our feathered friends.

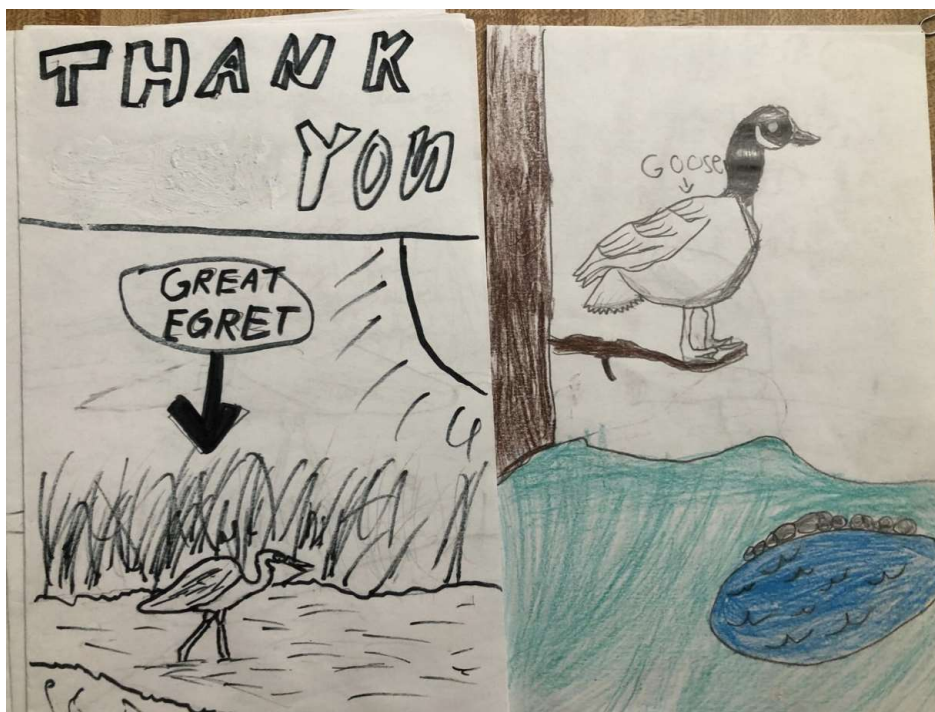
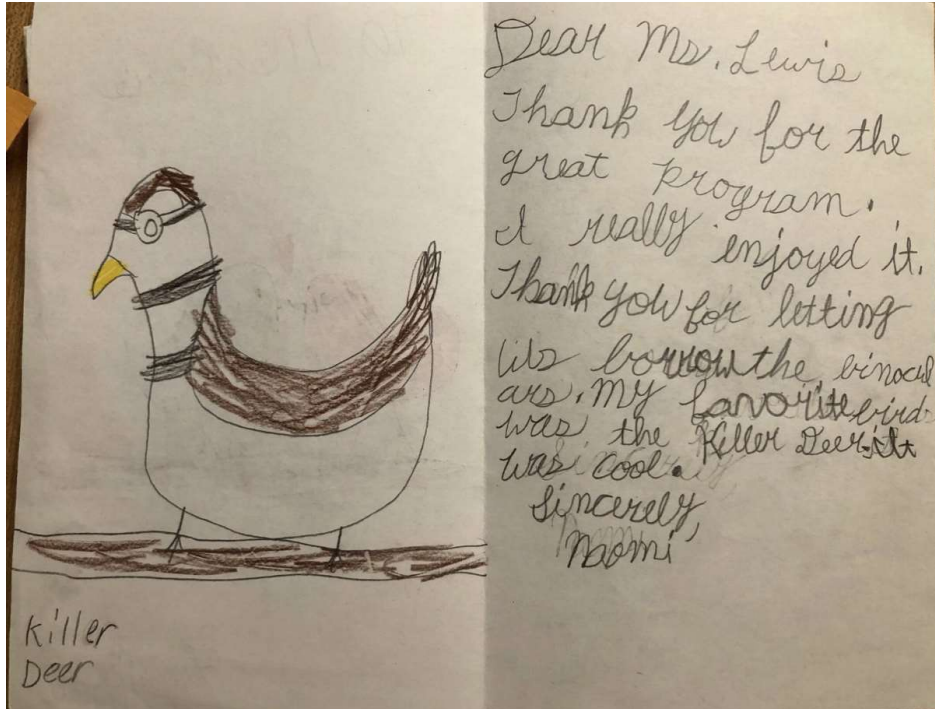


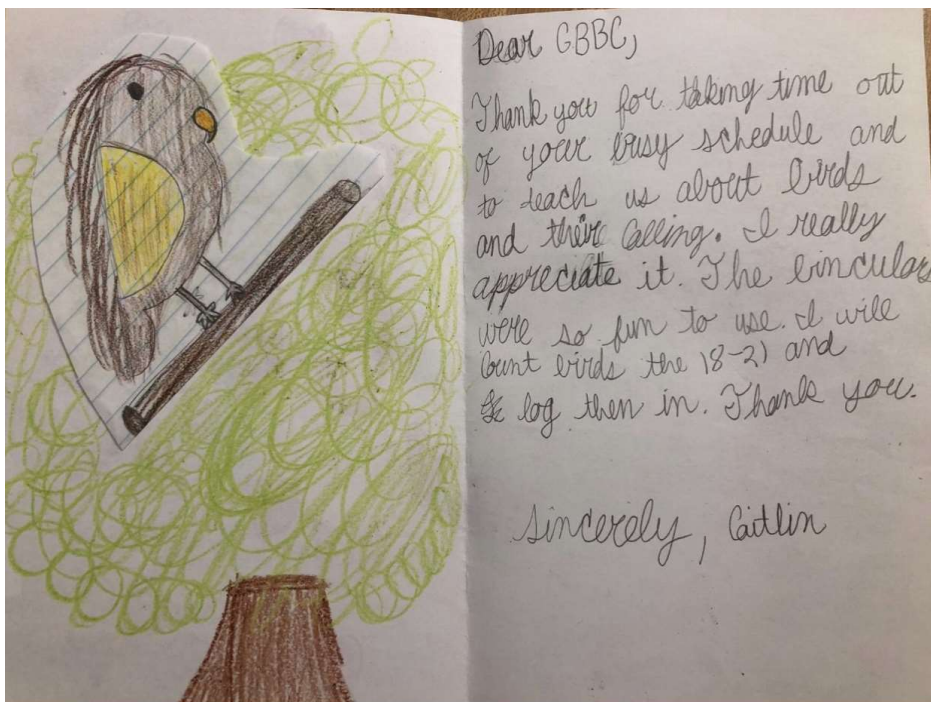
On Feb. 11, three volunteers headed to St. Peter's Catholic School in Beaufort to explore the beautiful campus near the river to identify birds. Palmira Brummet, Angie Hutchins and Lois Lewis started in the library with 32 fourth, fifth and sixth graders. After a lively discussion about their previous experiences, they all headed outside. Teachers Veronica Preziosi and Karen Kessinger joined their classes for the walk around the field and forested campus. The outdoor exercise inspired some drawings and thank you notes that are included here.

On Feb. 18, Mary Ellen Blankenship joined teacher Kathleen Sanz from HH Prep on a bird walk with her service class that pairs middle schoolers with 4- and 5-year-olds. Lois Lewis visited Emily Reitveld's classes at McCracken, Laurie Bigg's class at Heritage Academy, and River Ridge Academy's science classes with teachers, Lindsey Lindberg and Christopher Haywood. Karen Penale's Cross School students' and their

families enjoyed a special birding event with Bob Speare on Pinckney Island. These experiences serve to ensure that we can expect a new generation of birdwatchers and wise stewards of the places birds need.

We are delighted to share thank you notes and drawings from students at St Peter's Catholic School.





Ways to Give

Your contributions are crucial to help the Hilton Head Audubon Society better achieve its mission: To be a leading voice for birds and conservation in the LowCountry, where people and nature thrive together. Hilton Head Audubon board members, committee heads, and volunteers work throughout the year on projects that fulfill our goals.

These activities include: advocacy regarding conservation / birding in our region, providing birding education programs to area schools, maintaining and interpreting through signage and tours the Audubon Newhall Preserve, managing the annual Christmas Bird Count, actively participating in regional Citizen Science programs, and increasing awareness about local conservation projects or concerns. Please note that donations may also be made in honor or memory of a loved one.

[To support Hilton Head Audubon, Donate Now.](#)





Newhall Update

Save the Date! Saturday March 12 9am to 1030am for the next Newhall work day. We will lay a water pipe from the parking lot area to the Audubon Pond, trim vegetation, and work in the pollinator gardens. Bring water, gloves, and insect repellent. RSVPs are not required, but helpful, to Bob at Rclemens318@gmail.com or text (317) 989-5777.

Nature walks with Debby Boots at Newhall Preserve will resume on Friday, March 4th, 9:30 a.m. come and discover how this 50-acre maritime forest has been preserved to sustain an amazing diverse wildlife community. No registration required. Meet at the parking lot. A guided walk is also available to groups by appointment. Call Debby Boots at 843-715-4220 or email debboots5@gmail.com

Correction

In the February issue, this image of a Carolina Wren at Newhall was incorrectly attributed. The photographer of this image is Cliff Amos.



THROUGH OUR BINOCULARS

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED

COMMUNITY SIGHTINGS & STORIES



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 are media collages of February birding activity from the [HHIAS Facebook group page](#).

Field Trip Reports

Bear Island WMA, Green Pond, SC

February 12, 2022

HHIAS tries to plan a late winter field trip to Bear Island in Green Pond, SC as soon as duck hunting season is over, because the managers lower the water levels to encourage the presence of waterfowl. Last year, that led to large numbers of shorebirds, but this year water levels were a little higher and Mary's Pond was full of tundra swans and white pelicans. 10 hardy HHIAS members joined leader Lynn Hodgson with binoculars, scopes, and cameras for those easily seen and photogenic birds. Among them, we also found a couple of mottled ducks, a group of lesser yellowlegs, a few killdeer, and 3 avocets.



With 10 of us mostly avoiding car-pooling due to CoVid distancing, we were quite the caravan of 6 cars. Lynn's instructions were: "If I stop the car but do NOT get out – open windows, look around and listen. If I stop the car and DO get out, you should jump out too because I've spotted something you should see". And it worked fairly well. We did 2 Bear Isl. e-bird lists – one for the Mary's Pond area (41 species), and the other for everywhere else (44 sp). In addition to the swans, pelicans and avocets, high points were a cooperative kestrel, surprise roseate spoonbills, and huge masses of double-crested cormorants flying far away in messy skeins (Lynn reported 900 to eBird, but that was an underestimate for sure). Tree

swallows were everywhere. One of our party even saw a tiny ruby-throated hummingbird!

About 1 pm, we stopped for lunch and several car-loads had to leave. The remaining 3 cars detoured for a rather speedy tour through Donnelley WMA where we were treated to 43 species – many of the same as seen at Bear, but including a delightful little eastern screech owl watching us from a large hole in a tree. Thank goodness for other birders in the area who clued us in to its presence. All-in-all a beautiful birding day with lots of birds and good company.

Images courtesy of Karen Seminary and Laura Voight.

Lesser Yellowlegs



White Pelicans

HHIAS first-ever “Stationary Field Trip”, hosted by President Kay Grinnell and VP Lynn Hodgson

February 19, 2022

On a chilly breezy, sunny day 12 birders joined Kay and Lynn on Kay's back patio for our first ever "stationary field trip". Most folks wanted to chat and visit as much as watch the birds, but we ended up with a very satisfactory 29 species. Discussions centered around the feeders Kay had set up, and fascinating round packages of "nesting material" that were also hanging about. At the feeders were pine and yellow-rumped warblers, brown-headed nuthatches, lots of eastern bluebirds, a well-behaved mockingbird, a downy at the suet, etc. Using spotting scopes, we could just see over the back-beach shrubbery and black needle rush to the sandy beach, where the tide was receding. As more of the beach appeared, so did shorebirds such as large flocks of dunlin mixed with a few willets, semi-palmated plovers, and marbled godwits. The oyster bank also attracted a few ruddy turnstones and 3 gorgeous American oystercatchers. Way down the emerging beach toward Fish Haul, we could see the usual large flocks of gulls and black skimmers. The sea was very choppy, but we could see ring-billed and laughing gulls, occasional terns too far out to be sure which, and brown pelicans.

About half-way through the afternoon, an uninvited but very welcome visitor appeared, poking its nose out from between the stones in the patio wall – an eastern ribbon snake (identified by Kathy Byrd via Google). Just as things were calming down and a few folks were thinking of leaving, a beautiful adult bald eagle soared in and landed in its favorite large pine tree just back of Kay's house. Most of us felt that was the "grand finale" and decided to wrap it up. We thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and hope to do it again soon.

Bald Eagle



Eastern Ribbon Snake



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

GET INVOLVED



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.