



May 2022

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Board of Directors Election Results

Members voted and approved the Board of Director slate. The new Board will take effect on May 1, 2022.

Carlos Chacon

Jack Coleman

Kay Grinnell

Natalie Hefter

Jane Hester

Lynn Hodgson

Patricia Kappmeyer

Susan Murphy

Sarah Gustafson

Laura Voight

Shannon Wilkinson

Statement on Palmetto Bluff Proposed Marina Development

Hilton Head Audubon Society condemns the proposed Palmetto Bluff Marina development on the New River in Bluffton, S.C. The project will destroy irreplaceable habitats for bird, fish and wild animals already declining and at risk of extinction, shatter the original covenant that enabled the development of Palmetto Bluff; and serve as a precedent for more development that threatens the long term health of our ecosystem.

To read the full statement, [please visit the Advocacy section of the HHIAS webiste.](#)

Ecobon Update

The Ecobon newsletter will not go on hiatus this summer! We will publish June/July and Aug/Sept issues and resume monthly in October.

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.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

JOIN US



Field Trips and Walks

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

May 11 Sun City

Leader: Carlos Chacon, Noah and Mary Helen Rosenstein

[Details and Registration click here.](#)

May 14 Bear Island Wildlife Management Area

Leader: Lynn Hodgson

[Details and Registration click here.](#)

May 14 is Global Big Day!

Global Big Day is an annual celebration of the birds around you. No matter where you are, join us virtually on 14 May, help celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, and share the birds you find with eBird. Participating is easy—you can even be part of Global Big Day from home. If you can spare 5 or 10 minutes, report your bird observations to eBird online or with our free eBird Mobile app. If you have more time, submit several checklists of birds

throughout the day. You never know what you might spot. Your observations help us better understand global bird populations through products like these animated abundance maps brought to you by eBird Science.

May 19 Buckwalter Recreation Center

Leader: Carlos Chacon

[Details and Registration click here.](#)

Newhall Weekly Bird Walk

Tuesdays @8:30am with Lynn Hodgson

No registration required

Lynn's last walk is May 17. Walks will resume in October.

[For details click here](#)

Events

Please click on the links for more details. To view all upcoming events in a calendar format, [click here](#).

May

May 7 -Newhall Work Day

Saturday May 7 @9:00 - 10:30am

[For details click here](#)



May 12 - 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.

4:30pm Guided Gallery tour, followed by 5:00-6:30pm Reception on the Terrace

Registration is required for this event. \$10 per person. Follow link

below to register.

Please RSVP by May 8, 2022

[For details click here](#)

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

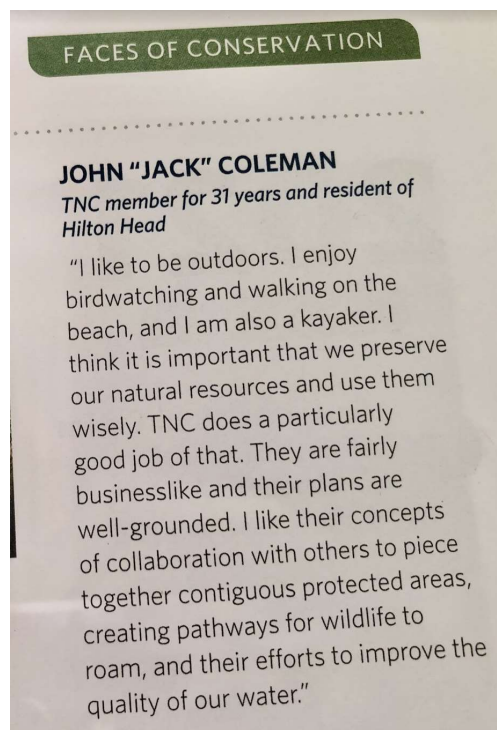
PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

HILTON HEAD AUDUBON IN THE NEWS



HHIAS Board Members in the News

Jack Coleman has been a member of The Nature Conservancy in South Carolina for 31 years. He is featured as one of the "Faces of Conservation" in the 2021 Annual Report.



Lois Lewis and Patty Kappmeyer gave an Earth Day presentation to The Haven community in Bluffton. A crowd of 45 new and seasoned birders attended the presentation on "An Introduction to Lowcountry Birds". Lois entertained the fellow birders with bird calls and the importance of preserving habitat. Patty led the audience through identifying common

"waders and soarers".

Click on the image below to view the presentation.



Support Green County Space Sales Tax

Are you shocked by the rapid pace of development in Beaufort County? Do you find yourself thinking “why did they have to cut down all the trees?” or “what happened to all of the birds and wildlife that lived here?” Wondering where it will stop?

You are not alone. Our own District 46 State Senator Tom Davis has authored a bill to help preserve our ecologically significant open spaces. The Bill, S.152, Green County Space Sales Tax Act, has passed the State Senate and has been introduced in the House, currently with the Ways and Means Committee. Hilton Head Audubon is joining South Carolina Audubon in support of this legislation.

Senator Davis was interviewed recently on the Beaufort County Channel program Coastline (December 30, 2021, program #84) and had the following comments regarding the bill (edited for brevity):

IF YOU LOOK AT SOUTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY NOW, IT IS RAPIDLY DEVELOPING. IF YOU LOOK AT THE UNITS THAT HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR DEVELOPMENT... WE'RE GOING TO DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF RESIDENCES THAT ARE IN SOUTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY.

WE CANNOT SUPPORT THAT. OUR ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEM, OUR

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM IS TOO FRAGILE. IF WE'RE NOT CAREFUL, WE'RE GOING TO SEE SOUTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY END UP LOOKING LIKE MOUNT PLEASANT, AND JUST PAVEMENT EVERYWHERE.

WE'RE GOING TO LOSE THE THING THAT BROUGHT A LOT OF US HERE TO BEGIN WITH. WE'RE ON THE CUSP OF LOSING SOMETHING THAT MAKES US VERY SPECIAL.

WE HAVE TO BE PROACTIVE. WE HAVE TO BE AGGRESSIVE IN THAT REGARD.

WHAT (THE SALES TAX ACT) WOULD DO IS ALLOW COUNTY COUNCIL TO IMPOSE OR SUBMIT TO THE PEOPLE FOR A REFERENDUM, A PENNY SALES TAX, TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE PURPOSE OF BUYING UP OPEN SPACE, BUYING UP DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS.

If you agree with Senator Davis' assessment, it is clear that we need to take action to help preserve our open spaces.

This legislation is not to initiate a tax but only to permit individual counties in South Carolina to PROPOSE a tax through a referendum submitted to voters. Each county would determine how the revenue would be managed, although Senator Davis' opinion is that the Beaufort County Open Land Trust should be entrusted with this task, as it is with the current Rural and Critical Lands Program.

What can you do?

Contact your legislators to let them know that you support Bill S.152, Green County Space Sales Tax Act: District 46 Senator Tom Davis – thank him for introducing this important legislation.

For most of us on Hilton Head, District 123 Representative Jeff Bradley– ask for his support of this legislation in the House District 118 Representative William G. "Bill" Herbkersman, Beaufort County resident on the Ways and Means Committee- ask for his support of this legislation in

the House District 124 Representative Shannon S. Erickson- Beaufort County resident on the Ways and Means Committee- ask for her support of this legislation in the House

Summer Reading Recommendations

We asked members what are you reading now?

From Lois Lewis: [A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds](#)

From Joy Pointon McIlwraith:

Two fictional works to consider: [The One-in-a Million Boy by Monica Wood](#), about the relationship between an 11 year-old boy and a 104 year old woman, formed when he takes on the task of filling her bird feeders for a boy scout project; [Where the Forest Meets the Stars by Glendy Vanderah](#), about a woman and bird researcher who forms a relationship with a young and apparently uncared for girl who visits the property she is renting. Birds feature in both although they are not the main plot line. I was drawn to these books as an avid reader of fiction after I began birding during lockdown in 2020 as a way to combine two interests.

From Carol Tunnicliffe: [Kenn Kaufman's "A Season On The Wind"](#) and ["Mozart's Starling" by Lyanda Lynn](#)

SCDNR Statement on Avian Influenza

SCDNR biologists are not aware of any songbirds in South Carolina being impacted by the highly pathogenic avian influenza seen elsewhere in the country. However, it's always important to clean feeders and birdbaths monthly to reduce bacteria and the spread of disease among birds. Clean your feeders and birdbaths by soaking in a diluted bleach mixture and scrubbing clean. Rinse thoroughly and allow to air-dry before refilling. Do your part to #KeepSCWildlifeWild! To find more tips for supporting a healthy bird population in South Carolina, [visit the website linked here](#).





Newhall Work Day

Save the Date! Saturday May 7 from 9:00 - 10:30am for the next Newhall work day. RSVP Bob Clemens by email or text to better plan our work crews: rclemens318@gmail.com or text (317) 989-5777. Bring water, gloves, and eye protection. Donuts will be provided.

April Work Day Report

Fueled by donuts to fortify ourselves against the chill, eleven hardy souls worked to improve and beautify the Audubon Newhall Preserve on Saturday April 9th. Our medium age was lowered considerably by two community service volunteers from Bluffton High School, Thaddaeus and Nathanael Rios. The “elders” included nine “Regulars:” Jim Reynolds, Sal Gioia, Julia and David Buzzard, Hilton Klein; Vice-Chairs Matt Matoon, and Rita Kernan, and Co-Chairs Jack Coleman and Bob Clemens.

You’ll easily pick out the high school students in the group photo, but almost as important in the photo is the new handicap parking area, complete with a handicap sign and outlined with logs painted “safety” bright blue! This feature was suggested by Aliceon Stillman and Vice-Chair Lynn Hodgson, who have completed an accessibility certification for the Preserve. In addition, we have added wheelchair “bumpers” on the ramp to the deck on Newhall Pond, and several weeks ago Matt used a stump grinder to reduce roots on the pond perimeter trail. On the Work Day, we had a crew locate and cover the remaining roots with safety blue paint. In the future we’ll add railings at the rear of the deck to make it less likely that visitors might back up to take a photo and find themselves on their backsides. Other crews removed vegetation to improve sight lines for our signage and spruced up the parking lot in our never-ending war against encroaching vegetation and pine cones. The Preserve has never looked better.





Office of Cultural Affairs Honors Caroline Newhall

The Office of Cultural Affairs at the Town of Hilton Head to produce a large wall mural depicting six pioneers that played a significant role in shaping HHI. Caroline Newhall is one of these individuals. To learn more about Caroline "Beany" Newhall, [click here](#).

THROUGH OUR BINOCULARS

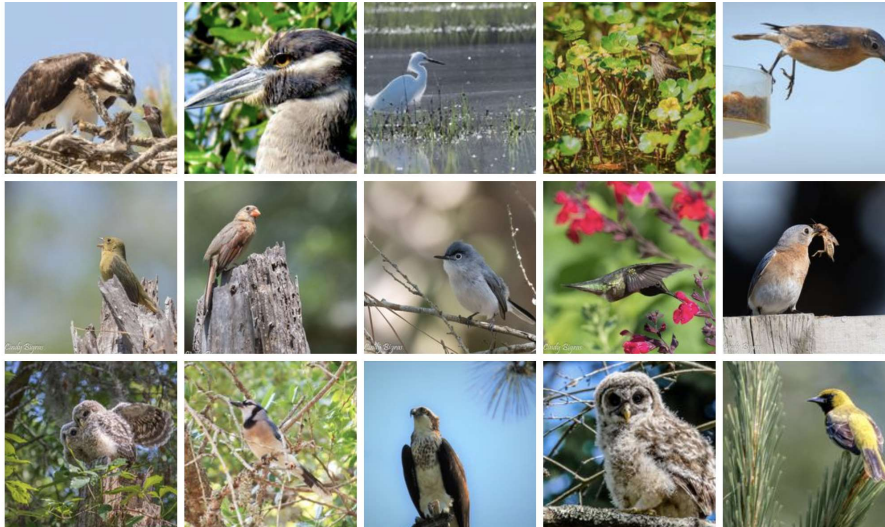
PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED

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 the media collage of April birding activity from the [HHIAS Facebook group page](#) which now has over **1,700 members!**



Welcome Back Red Knots

by Patty Kappmeyer

Much is documented about the symbiotic relationship between horseshoe crabs and red knots and it is an “event” I look forward to witnessing every Spring. The red knot (*Calidris canutus*) is a medium-sized sandpiper that migrates an extreme 9,000+ miles from its non-breeding sites in Chile and Argentina to its breeding grounds in the high-Arctic tundra and back again. In South America they fatten up for three months feeding on clams and muscles. An interesting fact: When Red Knots eat mollusks, they swallow the shells whole and crush them up in the muscular part of their stomach, known as the gizzard. Recent studies indicate that knots have the largest gizzards, relatively to body mass, of any shorebird. Red Knots are known to fly non-stop for up to a week with no food, water or sleep. Much of this flight takes place over the ocean reaching our Southeast coast exhausted and

famished.

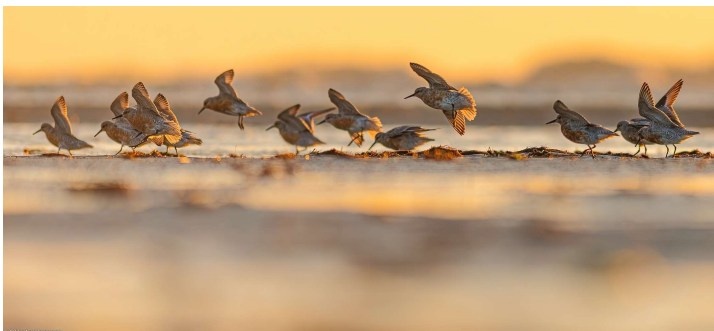
Red knots time their spring migration with the spawning of horseshoe crabs and rely on their eggs for refueling along with the abundance of organisms in the tidal mud flats. At this point in their journey, the birds are so emaciated that they cannot digest the whole mussels and whole clams they would normally eat, hence horseshoe crab eggs are the vital food source. Red Knots can be found along the Lowcountry shorelines in April and May.



Last April I photographed a banded Red Knot JC1. The bird was banded in Argentina in 2014 and re-sighted every year from 2014 to 2019 in New Jersey or Delaware. It was not sighted in 2020 but recorded on Hilton Head Island in 2021. This is the first time this bird has been sighted on Hilton Head island - showing the significance of our shores as an important stopover for these migratory birds. It also highlights the role all of us can play as citizen scientists.



Here is a photo essay that captures the experience of seeing horseshoe crabs spawn and red knots feed at dawn during a full moon and outgoing tide.





Field Trip Reports

Beidler Forest

March 29, 2022

by Ellen Blanchard

Seven Audubon members met at Beidler Forest on March 29th, 2022 at 9 am for a guided bird and nature walk along with Audubon biologist Jen Tyrrell. The 3 mile Beidler boardwalk winds through an old growth swamp of large Bald cypress. We saw and heard 28 species. Life birds for me were 2 Swallowtail kites, 3 Hooded warblers, 10 Prothonotary warbler males chasing, calling each other and swooping all around us.

A few Easter lilies were scattered throughout the swamp, as well as

Butterweed, *Packera glabella*. The Butterweed decorated 2 nurse logs. Jen (Audubon biologist Jen Tyrrell) spotted an Eastern cottonmouth (pit viper) coiled cozily beside a blooming Butterweed 3 feet from the boardwalk. Jen identified an odd 4 inch high pile of round balls of sand as a crayfish tower. It was a very enjoyable and informative bird walk and we all want to come back next year.

From Karen Seminary:

Great morning with Jen Tyrrell- we saw 10 male Prothonotary Warblers: they are diving bombing each other over territorial boundaries: they were flying over our heads, landing on branches over our heads, chasing each other over the boardwalk from one side of it to the other: absolutely amazing. Hooded Warbler was singing and singing and easy to see right above our heads on the boardwalk. Northern Parula, Yellow throated Warblers, a Cottonmouth warming in the sun: Hermit Thrush, and many more birds in the swamp and soaring above us in the sky -Swallow tailed Kites. Heard several Barred Owls. Great day and very educational. Photos courtesy of Karen S.





COMMUNITY SCIENCE

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

TURN YOUR PASSION FOR BIRDING INTO SCIENCE



Reporting Banded American Oystercatchers

By Alan Biggs

The American Oystercatcher was one of several species identified in the US Shorebird Conservation Plan as having small enough populations to warrant special attention. On December 19, 2001, a meeting of federal, state, and non-governmental agencies and scientists responsible for managing shorebirds was convened in South Carolina to discuss forming a regional oystercatcher working group to address research and conservation priorities for the species. An informal working group was formed, and members decided their first course of action would be to obtain a complete population estimate of wintering American Oystercatchers along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. This was achieved the following winter using a combination of aerial surveys, photography, and ground counts from New Jersey to Texas, which yielded a range-wide population estimate of 11,000 birds.

Since its first meeting in 2001, the American Oystercatcher Working Group has met every year at locations across the birds' Atlantic and Gulf coast range. Membership is open to anyone interested in American Oystercatcher research and conservation.

Working Group goals include the development of management objectives in a science-based, adaptive management framework. Primary objectives include monitoring population trends at local, regional, and continental scales, obtaining reliable estimates of demographic parameters and the factors that affect them, understanding how variations in demographic

parameters affect population viability over space and time, identifying threats to American Oystercatcher populations, and translating these findings into management actions that promote American Oystercatcher conservation.

How to report your banded American Oystercatchers: Visit the American Oystercatcher Working Group web site at <http://amoywg.org>. Go to the Banding and Re-sighting tab and read about the bands, their orientations, positions and colors, and how to read the codes. Then go the Report Form and report your re-sighting. There is even a “My Oystercatchers” page that allows you to search for all your reports. The web site has inputs for latitude and longitude and a map you can click on that automatically inputs these values into your report. Let’s get outside!

Chuck-Will’s-Widow Nightjar Survey Continuing in 2022

By Bob Speare and Alan Biggs

This year’s Chuck-Will’s-Widow (CWWI) survey period is on clear moonlit nights during the period May 8 – 22. We had such fantastic participation last year and are grateful to all who sent us their observations. For the 2022 survey period, we would like to limit the number of listening days from the full survey window (14 days) to something more manageable. **We are hoping to pick three good moonlit nights and suggest that listening sessions take place on May 8, 14, and 20.** If those night times are cloudy, then the backup would be the next day.

Last year we 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.

To familiarize yourself with the bird's call, go to:

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Chuck-wills-widow/sounds>

How to listen for Chuck-Will's-Widow: Go out anytime after dark when the moon is up. Listen for 6 minutes and then report whether (or not) you heard the bird calling. Try to estimate the compass direction so we can try to eliminate overlapping observations. **You can email us at communityscience@hiltonheadaudubon.org**. We hope everyone has some fun with this. We will post a summary of your findings in a Fall issue of the Ecobon.

SC Shorebird Project Reporting Banded Gulls, Terns and Skimmers

Seabird researchers need your help in understanding movement of terns, skimmers and gulls. If you see a banded seabird please report it!


Photo: Jeff Holmes



Have you seen us?

Since 2018, the Virginia Tech Shorebird Program has been banding seabirds with white plastic field-readable (PFR) bands that have alphanumeric codes in **black text**.

Please send reports of these individuals to vt.plover@gmail.com

Species to look for:  Royal Terns, Sandwich Terns, Common Terns, Gull-billed Terns, Black Skimmers, and Laughing Gulls	So far, we've received reports from the U.S. Atlantic Coast, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America! 	Additional information:  If you observe a banded seabird at a nesting colony, please let us know if it's nesting or raising chicks.
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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

PROTECTING BIRDS AND THE PLACES THEY NEED.

GET INVOLVED





SC Shorebird Steward Program

If you are interested in the Audubon South Carolina shorebird steward program, please visit their website ([linked here](#)) to learn more about training and volunteering.

Volunteer with Hilton Head Audubon

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.