



March 2016
No. 362

Ecobon

The Hilton Head Island Audubon Society is a Chapter of National Audubon Society, Inc.

MARCH PROGRAM *by: Kathy Greider, Program Director*

Thursday, March 10, 2016 3:00 pm at Coastal Discovery Museum/Honey Horn, 70 Honey Horn Dr in Sea Island Room



"Low Country Birds in Transition"

by Diana Churchill

The Low Country of South Carolina and Georgia offers a wide diversity of habitats, which makes for a wonderful diversity of birds. March and April are great months for birding, since many of our winter birds are still in the area, while the neo-tropical migrants begin arriving from Central and South America. Add to that the spring nesting of song and wading birds and you have a virtual merry-go-round of bird excitement. This program will help you know who to expect in a variety of habitats as we move from winter into spring.

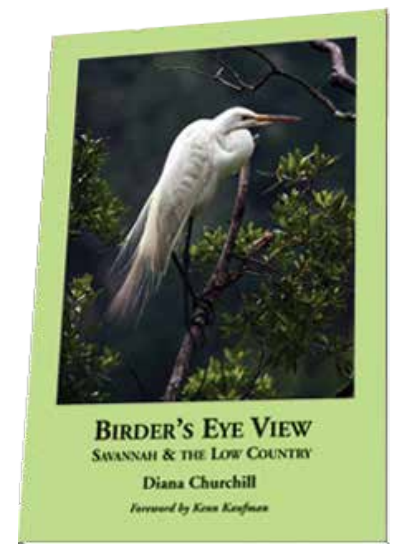
Our presenter, Diana Churchill has a passion for birds. She loves watching them, photographing them, and reading about them. Diana especially loves sharing her passion with others. Whether working at Wild Birds Unlimited, leading field trips, or writing articles, Diana's enthusiasm for birds is contagious.

Since 2001, Diana has been writing a twice-monthly column, "Birder's Eye View," for the Savannah Morning News. Now Diana has assembled 53 of these articles into a book. *Birder's Eye View: Savannah & the Low Country* includes an overview to each season followed by four articles per month. Articles feature particular bird families that visit the Low Country during a given season, showcase celebrity birds, or provide information about seasonal bird events, such as nesting or migration. The book is illustrated with nearly 500 color photographs, almost all taken by Diana herself.

Written with both the casual bird watcher and the dedicated enthusiast in mind, *Birder's Eye View* offers guidance for turning your yard into a welcoming bird habitat, as well as a detailed list of thirty-four of the Low Country's top bird watching locations, ranging from Charleston, SC down to Cumberland Island, GA. Her book will be available for purchase and to be autographed.

FREE. Open to the public without registration. SNOWBIRDS WELCOME!

Info: Coastal Discovery Museum at 843.689.6767 or
HHI Audubon's Website: www.hiltonheadaudubon.org



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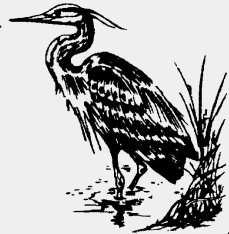
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The *Ecobon* is a monthly publication (September through May) of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society. Subscription is a benefit of membership. Direct inquiries to P.O. Box 6185, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29938 or call one of the above officers or chairpersons.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Robert Rommel*

A Plea for Help

Hilton Head Island Audubon Society used to have a wonderful program working with school children in a classroom setting. Unfortunately as teachers changed in the schools and curriculum time constraints arose, our program ceased although not through lack of effort on our part. We remain fully committed to bringing nature and birds into the minds of children, for they will become the next stewards of the natural world.

HHI Audubon is looking to renew our efforts with youth but in a way that adapts to the present circumstances. We have many ideas of how to involve youths including art projects, science fairs, summer fellowships, and bird-watching field trips. We are looking to engage children not only through school but other organizations like scouting. We are taking a long-term approach to this effort and realize that it will take time to build up these type of programs. We wish to start small but start strong!

This is where you might be able to help. The current HHI Audubon board and officers have a full plate in front of them and to add this to an existing position's responsibilities would do both a disservice. So we're looking for someone who is energetic, full of ideas, and most importantly enthusiastic about helping us start up a youth program. These efforts will take some time, but we'll be happy with whatever time people have to offer. We will of course be willing to provide any help or assistance you might need. If you think you're interested in helping out in this capacity, please contact me personally at rommel@robertrommel.com or (734)274-1796. Not only is this effort incredibly important, but I'm sure it will also be wonderfully enjoyable for anyone fortunate enough to work with the children of the Hilton Head area.



Thank you,
Robert



--- Reminder ---
**April's Meeting will be April 7th.
due to the Heritage Golf Tournament**

RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough



Brown Creeper

The reporting of significant bird sightings in our area continues to be outstanding with more than 140 reports during the last month. Winter ducks, Goldfinches and other Winter birds have arrived here but are still not in the large numbers as in years past. However, a few of the irruptive species like the Pine Siskin and Purple Finch and also the Dark-eyed Junco have arrived on HHI with onset of our recent colder weather. Spring and its bird migration is «right around the corner»!

Rare species reported during the past month were: Fox Sparrow on HHI, Brown Creeper at Fort Pulaski, Western Kingbird and Virginia Rail on Hutchinson Island, Snow Goose and King Rail on Onslow Island at SNWR, Lark Sparrow and Roseate Spoonbill in Beaufort, SC and Red-necked Grebe on Pinckney and Spring Islands and Purple Sandpiper on Tybee Island.

An Out-Of-Season and Rare migrant Wilson's Warbler was sighted at the Coastal Botanical Gardens near Savannah, GA. Other Out-Of-Season species reported included: Uncommon migrant Yellow-throated Vireo and several overwintering Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Painted Buntings.

Many Uncommon species were reported included: Baltimore Oriole (a high number), purple Finch Dark-eyed Junco, endangered Piping Plover, Pine Siskin, Common Goldeneye, Redhead (duck), Rusty Blackbird, Lesser and Greater Black-backed Gulls, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nelson's, Saltmarsh, Seaside, Vesper and Field Sparrows, American Kestrel, Eurasian-collared and Common Ground Doves, Ruddy, American Black and Mottled Ducks, Northern Pintail, Red-throated Loon, American Pipit, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, American Avocet, Golden-Crowned Kinglet, American White Pelican, Wilson's Plover, White-winged Scoter, Red-throated Loon, Peregrine Falcon, American Bittern, Loggerhead Shrike, American Pipit, Glossy Ibis, Winter, Sedge and House Wrens, Blue-headed Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Merlin, Muscovy (duck), Long-billed Dowitcher, Caspian Tern and Greater Scaup.



Baltimore Oriole

Other “good finds” reported included: Bald Eagle, Sora, American Goldfinch, Lesser Scaup, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Common Loon, Surf and Black Scoters, Horned Grebe, Great Horned Owl, American Robin, Northern Gannet, Mallard, Spotted Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, American Oystercatcher, Cattle Egret, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Meadowlark, Gray Catbird, Black & White Warbler, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Wilson's Snipe, Bonaparte's Gull, Red Knot, Northern Gannet, many Cedar Waxwings and others.

Many thanks to all reporting their sightings: Robert Rommel, Kathy/Grant Greider, Barry Lowes, Mary Alice Tartler, Diana Churchill, Carol Clemens, Fran/Denny Baer, Cindy/Ken Groff, Joanne McMemamin, Dottie Bass, Jane/Abie Hester, Jim Grove, Mark Hymer, Doreen Cubie, Shelia/Roger Johnson, Paul Weatherhead, Karen Marts, Susan Taylor, Deb Beam, Rita Kernan, Debra Hausrath, Steve Calver, Chris Marsh, Buddy Campbell, Russ Wigh, Annette Hausman, Mary Ann Lueckel and a number of visitors.



Lark Sparrow

To report a bird sighting that is Accidental, Rare, Uncommon, Out-Of-Season, First-Of-The-Year (FOTY) or First-Of-The-Season (FOTS) or a species that you consider to be a ‘good find’ e-mail: BirdingFriends@yahoo.com or call 843-432-2661. Please state your full name, the bird species sighted, date and location and other pertinent sighting information.

It is a great time of year to bird with our Winter birds still here and some of early migrants beginning to trickle into our area for our Spring migration! Please continue reporting your significant and “good bird finds”



Check out our new HH birding app!
<https://www.hiltonheadislandbirdingtrail.org/>
and the State Birding app:
<https://www.southcarolinabirdingtrail.org/>
You can go to the App store and download them for free or use them on the above web sites.

Membership Report for March 2016

Please welcome the following new members who have joined the Hilton Head Audubon Society since the February Ecobon was published.

John Quinton Ables / An Louise Grosshuesch
Nancy Biel
David Davis
Claudia Gant
Lloyd and Shelly Ketchum
Maurice and Diane LaRoche
Charles and Kimberly Marshall

Our members are not just from the local area, but come from all over. In this group of new members, the Ketchums are from Indiana and the Marshalls from Ohio! Welcome to all!

Remember that all correspondence is done by email. To ensure that you don't miss email reminders about the Ecobon and special events, please be sure to update your email address as needed by contacting either Fran or Carol. Thanks!

Carol Clemens clemens318@roadrunner.com
Fran Baer seatwo@roadrunner.com





Festival Centre at Indigo Park
45 Pembroke Dr., Suite 130
Hilton Head Island, SC 29926
843-681-4461

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March Field Trip



Date: March 5, 2016
Place: James W Webb Wildlife Center
Meeting Spot: Neo's Restaurant in the parking lot at Moss Creek Village.
Time: 7:30 am
Limit: 20
Please contact Cindy Groff to sign up at 843-682-3840 or smilingcin@yahoo.com

April Field Trip



Date: April 2, 2016 - Start: 8:15am
Place: Beidler Forest
Leader: Matt Johnson
Carpool time: 6:00am @ Neo's Restaurant in the parking lot at Moss Creek village
Cost: \$12.00 per person prepaid before March 15th. Make checks payable to HHIAS.
Limit: 15
We are planning on box lunches from a local restaurant, cost will be under \$10.00 for anyone interested.
Please contact Cindy Groff to sign up at 843-682-3840 or smilingcin@yahoo.com

Blue Jay, Backyard Enigma



Audubon.org, Brian Kuchner

Even a nonbirder knows a blue jay when he sees one. It's a bird found in backyards all over eastern North America. Yet, few ethologists have studied its social life, and most of blue jay society remains a mystery.

We do know that blue jays are monogamous. In early spring, the male feeds the female as part of courtship. In many cases, the bond is lifelong, but some blue jays find a new partner after one or several breeding seasons.

Each pair has a home range, in which it nests and feeds. However, it does not defend this range against other blue jays, unless one threatens the nest. Pairs can have overlapping home ranges, and unmated jays may also share the space.

Flocks of jays feed and hang out together, but membership is fluid.

You don't hear blue jays singing in the dawn chorus of spring the way other passerines do. However, blue jays vocalize a lot, with an immense variety of sounds. No one has characterized them all.

A blue jay reveals much about its mood and intentions by the crest posture. Relaxed, feeding with friends or getting a drink, a jay usually wears its crest sleeked to its head. In moments of excitement, the crest springs up. We can only speculate whether this is reflexive behavior or whether it can also be intentional communication.

(From BirdWatcher's Digest, by Diane Porter)



Photo by Fran Baer

Fun Feather Facts

- The feathers of a bald eagle weigh more than twice as its skeleton.
- Birds molt and replace their feathers at least once a year.
- A small songbird usually has fewer than 4,000 feathers. A swan might have as many as 25,000.
- Hummingbirds beat their wings about 60 times per second, creating a soft buzzing sound.

(From Birds & Blooms)



Photo by Fran Baer

New Hall Bird Walks

The Hilton Head Island Audubon Society is conducting guided walks at the Audubon Newhall Preserve on Palmetto Bay Road on Hilton Head Island at 10am on Thursdays in March, April, and May (weather permitting). Experienced naturalists will discuss the history, plants, and wildlife found on the 50 acre nature preserve. The walks are free to the public but donations are appreciated. Reservations are not required. Additional information can be obtained by calling 651-491-1851.

Wisdom, who is the world's oldest known bird at 65 years old, has exceeded all expectations by becoming a mom for the 40th time. Unlike other Laysan Albatrosses, who typically live between 12 to 40 years, Wisdom has astounded scientists time and time again, since females are thought to become infertile later in life.

The newborn chick, named Kukini after the Hawaiian word for 'messenger', emerged from its shell earlier this month at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge in Hawaii, about 1,300 northwest of Honolulu. Wisdom the 65-year-old Laysan Albatross, gave birth to Kukini at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge in Hawaii earlier this month. Most Laysan Albatrosses live between 12 and 40 years, and scientists say the females become infertile in their later years. Pictured, Wisdom feeding baby Kukini. Kukini, named after the Hawaiian word for 'messenger', can be seen breaking out of her shell earlier this month. She is thought to be Wisdom's 40th chick.

ALBATROSSES UNDER THREAT

Five trillion pieces of plastic litter are floating in the world's oceans, which is killing countless animals a year, including albatross chicks. It is thought that 269,000 tons of plastic are clogging up the oceans - weighing the equivalent of two large cruise liners. Scientists reported finding billions of plastic shopping bags, bottles, toys, action figures, toothbrushes, fishing gear and even toilet seats floating in the waves. Plastic pollution kills huge numbers of seabirds, marine mammals and other creatures, while discarded fishing nets trap dolphins, sea turtles and manta rays. Fragments also lodge in the throats and digestive tracts of animals, attracted by the bright colours of the plastics and mistake them for fish. One horrific picture of an albatross chick, dead on a beach in the north Pacific, reveals the scale of the global problem.

Laysan albatrosses are monogamous animals, laying at most just one egg each year. Wisdom was tagged by scientists in 1956 when she was about five years old. Since then, she's given birth to about 40 chicks and has flown more than 3 million miles. Because the birds are seen as a barometer for the ocean's ecosystem and its ability to sustain life, Robert Peyton of the Midway refuge, said: 'Wisdom is an iconic symbol of inspiration and hope.' Experts at the US Fish and Wildlife Service claim Wisdom is the oldest bird they know of in the organisation's 90-year history. She has consistently laid eggs over the past three decades, giving birth to eight chicks since 2006. Refuge manager Dan Clark said: 'She provides to the world valuable information about the longevity of these beautiful creatures.'

'In the case of Wisdom, she has logged literally millions of miles over the Pacific Ocean in her lifetime to find enough fish eggs and squid to feed herself and multiple chicks, allowing us the opportunity to measure the health of our oceans which sustain albatross as well as ourselves.'

Laysan albatrosses breed on the Hawaiian islands of Oahu, at Kaena Point, and on Kauai, at Kilauea Point. About 99.7 per cent of the bird's population of 2.5 million live in the northwestern Hawaiian islands. Their feeding grounds are off the west coast of North America, including the Gulf of Alaska, and they spend their first three to five years constantly flying, never touching land. Scientists believe they even sleep while flying over the ocean.



Source: DailyMail.com Wednesday, Feb 17th 2016

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3445877/Wisdom-65-year-old-albatross-outlives-birds-25-years-gives-birth-40th-baby-chick.html#ixzz40RjmdUC8>

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Sylvan Heights Bird Park

by Carol Clemens



Heading north on I-95? Think about taking exit 154 and making a side trip to the Sylvan Heights Bird Park located at 500 Sylvan Heights Park Way, Scotland Neck, NC. This outdoor center is home to over 2,000 waterfowl and birds from around the world, including many endangered species. The educational center also

helps protect and breed endangered species. Stroll the park and view the waterfowl and birds grouped by geographic area. Enjoy birds such as the Scarlet Ibis, White Faced Whistling Duck, Common Goldeneye, and even a Whooping Crane. If you are lucky, you may see the male Peacock wooing the female. I highly recommend planning on spending a couple hours at Sylvan heights. Entrance fee is \$10 and \$8 for seniors. Want more info? Go to: <http://shwpark.com/>



Save this Date

Wednesday, May 4th 5:30 pm
Annual Hilton Head Island Audubon Society Annual Picnic
Waddell Mariculture Center



Audubon

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ECOBON
P. O. Box 6185
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29938

Title: Ecobon
Issue Date: March 2016
Frequency: Monthly Sept.-May
Organization: Hilton Head Island Audubon Society
P.O. Box 6185
Hilton Head, South Carolina 29938
Issue #: 362

MARCH ~ APRIL 2016 Calendar

MARCH

Thurs. Mar. 3 Board Meeting at CCHH.....10:00 am
Sat. Mar. 5 Field Trip at Webb Wildlife.....7:30 am
Thurs. Mar. 10 Monthly Meeting at Honey Horn..... 3:00 pm

APRIL

Sat. Apr. 2 Field Trip at Beidler Forest.....8:15 am
Thurs. Apr. 7 Board Meeting at CCHH.....10:00 am
Thurs. Apr. 14 Monthly Meeting at Honey Horn..... 3:00 pm

Monthly meetings of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society are regularly scheduled at 3:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month, September through May. Meetings are held at the Coastal Discovery Museum, 70 Honey Horn Drive. Members and guests welcome!



BEQUESTS

If you wish to honor a family member or friend with a memorial gift, or remember the Audubon Newhall Preserve or the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society in your will, your gift may be in the form of securities, cash, life insurance, real estate, or other property.

Contact your own estate planner or our Audubon Chapter at P.O. Box 6185, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29938.

Sharing your estate with Audubon not only reduces the taxes on your estate but will help protect birds, wildlife, and their habitat in the years to come.