



DECEMBER 2016  
No. 368

# Ecobon

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

**DECEMBER PROGRAM** *by: Kathy Greider, Program Director*

**Thursday, December 8, 2016** 7 pm Social - 7:30 pm Presentation

**Location:** First Presbyterian Church, 540 William Hilton Parkway (Hwy. 278, next to the Bargain Box)

Please enter through the doors by the office area at the back of the complex.

## ***“Christmas Birds of Hilton Head”.***

We'll gather in Fellowship Hall for refreshments at 7:00 pm. The presentation, “Christmas Birds of Hilton Head,” by Robert Rommel, begins at 7:30 pm. Robert is a local wildlife photographer and author and is the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society President.

Coffee will be provided, and we invite our generous members to bring cookies, cakes and other goodies!

This meeting is free and open to the public. Bring your friends! We'll have a membership table if you would like to join or renew your membership in the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society. Donations for this event are optional, but welcome, to help pay for our use of the wonderful space at the church.

For More Information: [HHICBC@gmail.com](mailto:HHICBC@gmail.com)  
We look forward to seeing you there!



# HHI Audubon

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Website: [www.hiltonheadaudubon.org](http://www.hiltonheadaudubon.org)

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*

### *Weathering the Storm*

First of all, I hope everyone and their loved ones made it safely through Hurricane Matthew. Secondly and less importantly I hope that any property damage was minimal and easily repairable. For those wondering about how our feathered friend fared during this storm, you have little to fear.

In general, birds have been dealing with hurricanes for countless years. Birds and most wildlife are very adept at telling that a major storm is coming long before it arrives and seek out sheltered locations that provide safety. The one exception is birds that are migrating if a hurricane happens to come through in the night during the time when most migration happens.

A migrating flock can divert from its usual migration path to go around the hurricane and occasionally birds will wind up inside the hurricane where they often take refuge in the hurricane's eye. In this case they may be forced to fly with the storm for a few hundred miles. These effects can lead to some of the best birding conditions as rare species may show up on land that rarely do or species can be found some distance from their normal migration routes. It's thought possible that a storm may have aided Cattle Egrets in making the flight from Africa to South America.

While direct mortality is usually very low on birds and other wildlife in hurricanes, the indirect effects are much stronger. Most of the indirect effects are through short-term and long-term habitat changes. Loss of trees may result in birds losing their favorite perches but this is typically just an annoyance. Hurricanes also come through well after the nesting seasons for nearly all birds. The flooding associated with hurricanes creates new foraging grounds and the wading birds and insect-eaters may move to newly-flooded locations to take advantage of the new feeding bonanzas. The fallen trees also quickly become hosts to new food sources and possible nesting locations for many species within a few months. The gaps opened up in the forest canopy allow new species of plants to come in and colonize, again increasing the diversity of food sources for many bird species.

While hurricanes can be a serious danger and cause severe financial loss for us humans, hurricanes are not a major threat to birds and in many ways are actually a net positive for our feathered friends. Take care and enjoy any of the unusual birds you might see because of Matthew.



Robert

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## RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

We have had a very good Fall migration despite Hurricane Mathew with 26 species of warblers reported and 22 other transient migrant species in our area. Most of our Winter birds have arrived in our area while most of our Summer species have departed southward. Only a few of our Winter duck species have been reported in our area so far but more should be coming soon as the weather cools.



**Black Swan**

Rare species reported this month include: Wilson's Warbler and Black Swan (domestic) on HHI, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Clay-colored Sparrow in Chatham County, GA, Gray-cheeked Thrush in Beaufort and Cape May Warbler, Purple Sandpiper and Common Tern on Tybee Island, GA.

Uncommon species found this last month included: Peregrine Falcon, endangered Piping Plover, Rusty Blackbird, Dark-eyed Junco, Reddish Egret, Hairy Woodpecker, migrant Baltimore Oriole, migrant Northern Waterthrush, Orange-crowned and Prairie Warblers, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Loggerhead Shrike, American Kestrel, Merlin, Eurasian-collared Dove, Sedge Wren, late migrant Bobolink, Yellow-throated Vireo, Golden-crowned Kinglet, migrant Veery and White-breasted Nuthatch.

Arriving Winter birds and «Good Finds» reported this month included: Late migrant Black-throated Blue, Black & White and many arriving Yellow-rumped Warblers, migrant American Redstart, migrant American Robin, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Painted Bunting, many Bald Eagles, Northern Flicker, many Rudy-throated Hummingbirds, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Gannet, Eastern Phoebe, Hooded Merganser, Song and Savannah Sparrows, Marbled Godwit, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone and others.

Many thanks to all reporting your bird sightings: Jane/Abby Hester, Dottie Bass, Carol Clemens, Fran/Denny Baer, Joanne McMenamin, Cindy/Ken Groff, Shelia/Roger Johnson, Dorothy Mosior, Kathy/Grant Greiger, Mark Doreen Cubie, Annette Hausman, Deb Beamer, Diana Churchill, Steve Calver, Mary Ann Lueckel, Buddy Campbell, Mary Alice Tartler, Dick Phillips, Kay Grinnell, Mary Monaghan and many visitors who reported their sightings.



**Red-breasted Nuthatch**



**Wilson's Warbler**

To report a bird sighting that is Accidental, Rare, Out-Of-Season, Uncommon, 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](mailto:BirdingFriends@yahoo.com) or call 843-432-2661. Please state your full name, the bird species sighted, date and location of your sighting and other pertinent information. Keep up the good work of reporting your «good bird» finds!

Our annual Christmas Bird Count will be upon us very soon! Now is the time to get out into the field and find where the birds are in your CBC Area so we can have yet another great CBC on HHI on our Count Day on December 15th!

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# 2016 Christmas Bird Count

*by Susan Murphy, CBC Coordinator*



The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a program of the National Audubon Society and is now in its 117th year! It is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the Western Hemisphere go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to identify and count birds.

Our 2016 Hilton Head Christmas Bird Count will be on Thursday, December 15th.

The CBC mobilizes over 70,000 volunteer bird counters in more than 2,400 locations. We use the power of volunteers to track the health of bird populations at a scale that professional scientists could never accomplish alone. Last year we had 296 counters in the Hilton Head circle (236 Field Observers and 60 Feeder Watchers)! We counted 142 species and 32,297 birds, contributing to a vast citizen science network.

The Regional Summary for the 2015 South Carolina count is now available at:  
<http://www.audubon.org/news/the-116th-cbc-south-carolina>

Here are a few tips for the count:

- It is helpful to scout your assigned area a few days before the count. Then, on count day, go to those “hotspots” and quietly wait for the birds to come to you.
- Brush up on the birds you might see. Attend the meeting on Thursday evening, December 8th, at First Presbyterian Church, and review your field guide or birding app.
- Be comfortable. Dress in layers! It can be cold out there on the water/golf course/beach. Bring a snack.
- In addition to using binoculars, it’s helpful if someone on each team brings a camera. Even if not a great shot, a photo can help narrow down the size, color and habitat of an unusual bird.
- Don’t forget the owls! If you hear owls in the early morning or evening be sure to listen on count day. You can count birds you hear as well as those you see.

Want to stay home? There are other ways to contribute! Feeder Watchers count the birds at their home feeders. Results are turned in to the area Captains.

Since the Christmas Bird count began over a century ago, it has relied on the dedication and commitment of volunteers like you. What a great way to play a small part in a big conservation picture.

If you would like to participate and are not yet assigned to a team, let me know and I will have an area Captain get in touch with you.

For more information and forms, visit the website at:  
<http://www.hiltonheadaudubon.org/audubon-christmas-bird-count>  
You can contact me at [HHICBC@gmail.com](mailto:HHICBC@gmail.com) or (843) 686-3733

Note for our Sun City-Okatie members: The count for the Sun City-Okatie circle is Friday, December 16th. If you are interested in participating there, please contact Jim Cubie at [jimcubie@gmail.com](mailto:jimcubie@gmail.com) or (843) 991-1059

***Thank You and Happy Birding!***

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## Swifts' Nonstop Flight

The common swift flies faster and higher than most other birds, earning it the nickname “greyhound of the skies.” New research reveals swifts are also astonishingly durable, holding the record for nonstop flight: They can stay airborne for up to 10 months straight. Every year, swifts embark on an epic 6,000-mile migration, flying round-trip from Europe to sub-Saharan Africa. A Swedish study tracked 19 of these tiny, torpedo-shaped birds for two years, after fitting them with lightweight devices that monitored how fast and high they flew as well as when they rested. The researchers found the swifts spent less than 1 percent of their migration on the ground. Remarkably, three of the birds never stopped flying. “They feed in the air, they mate in the air, they get nest material in the air,” researcher Susanne Åkesson tells NationalGeographic.com. “They can land on nest boxes, branches, or houses, but they can’t really land on the ground.” Swifts’ long wings and short legs prevent them from taking off from flat surfaces. The birds likely evolved to fly continuously, feeding on insects and possibly even sleeping during flight.



Common Swift: photo from Audubon.org  
Found from Western Europe to eastern Asia.  
Winters in southern Africa from Zaire and  
Tanzania south to Zimbabwe and Mozambique

*Article From: The Week Magazine, November 18, 2016*

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Understanding the scientific names of birds helps us understand the species. Early European naturalists and scientists faced a welter of confusion regarding species names. A single kind of bird might be known by many local and regional names, in multiple languages and dialects. Discussion among colleagues speaking different languages were difficult at best - they could never be certain they were discussing the same organism.

In 1758 Carolus Linneaus proposed a binomial (two-part) naming system that is still used today. All discovered, described, living (or once living) organisms now have unique, two part names. You don't need to be a language expert to understand scientific names; most consist of compound words using segments derived from Latin and Greek roots, prefixes and suffixes.

Using Linneaus' basic system, taxonomists can sort, split and group species by their common characteristics, then assemble the genera into complex family trees that graphically display their interrelationships. The genus name identifies the greater group containing the organism, based on common characteristics. The species name is unique to a particular type of organism in that genus. For example, everyone knows the mallard. Named for its beak, its scientific name is *Anas platyrhynchos*: platy for flat and rhynchos for snout. The American robin is *Turdus migratorius*. The English word “migrate” came from the Latin term *migrato*, so the robin then, is the “migrating thrush”



*(from Bird Watcher's Digest, by D. M.. Recktenwalt).*

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## NOTES FROM THE NEWHALL PRESERVE and Conservation Committee

by Jack Greenshields

Hello Everyone,

Because we have a contractor and due to the concern that fallen trees will be destroyed by blue stain fungus and bark beetles, we will start the process of harvesting fallen, damaged, or leaning trees. It took a while but the technicians from Folk Land Management marked many trees for removal. These are mostly slash and loblolly pine. We will remove no long leafed pine or black gum trees. (I am certain that some will be saddened to hear that the redbud tree in the parking lot was totally crushed by a very large pine.

The logger will start bringing his equipment into the Preserve on Monday and is expected to be on site for about three weeks. We will be selling the salvaged timber to South Carolina Timber Company. They have offered a reasonable price for the pine and hardwood sawtimber and a fair price for pine pulpwood. Their labor is higher because our trees are scattered in every direction and not felled by professional loggers. Our revenue will hopefully exceed our costs. We can use this money to further enhance our fuel break by using a Gyrotrac Machine to grind up the larger limbs and smooth out the large root balls. For economic and logistical reasons, we will coordinate our efforts with Sea Pines CSA.

Sea Pines is notifying the abutting property owners of Audubon plans using the verbiage that we used applying for a salvage permit from the Town of Hilton Head. Tom Hennessey, a Sea Pines neighbor provides beneficial communication in the attached neighborhoods.

(Tom also is our project lead on replacing the entrance gate so that two cars can enter and exit safely )

This project will attract attention, so please feel free to direct any inquiries to either me or to our new Public Relations and History Committee Chair, Miho Kinnas.

Thank you for your patience! Jack 651-491-1851



# 2016 Christmas Bird Count

by Susan Murphy, CBC Coordinator



**Mark these DECEMBER DATES on your calendars!**

NEWS: Our annual Christmas Bird Count meeting is on **Thursday, December 8**, at First Presbyterian Church, 540 William Hilton Parkway.

The social begins at 7:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. The program begins at 7:30 pm. Our Chapter President, Robert Rommel, will preview the birds we might see on count day. Plan on attending this festive and informative event!

The 2016 Count Day is **Thursday, December 15**, for the Hilton Head area. If you are interested in being a part of this international effort, please e-mail me and I will have a Captain contact you!

Susan Murphy  
HHICBC@gmail.com  
(843) 686-3733

Note for our Sun City-Okatie members: The count for the Sun City-Okatie circle is Friday, December 16. If you are interested in participating there, please contact Jim Cubie, (843) 991-1059 or jimcubie@gmail.com.



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 November 2016

*Hi fellow birders!*

Please welcome the following new members who have joined us since our last Ecobon was published. Our membership stands at 224 members...we do appreciate your support!



**David and Julie DesJardins**

**Carolyn Mohr**

Remember that dues are based on a rolling calendar. For example, if you joined or renewed in March 2016, you are a paid member through March 2017. Once your dues have been received and processed, you will get an email from Membership confirming your renewal. We send an email reminder with a renewal form in the quarter your dues expire. The renewal may be mailed to us or turned in at a meeting.

Have a question about your membership? Have you changed your email? Please contact Carol cclemons318@roadrunner.com or Fran at seatwo@roadrunner.com



Christmas Bird Counters



# Audubon

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

ECOBON

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Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29938

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Hilton Head, South Carolina 29938

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## DECEMBER 2016 ~ JANUARY 2017 Calendar

### DECEMBER

Thurs. Dec. 1 Board Meeting .....TBA

Thurs. Dec. 8 Annual Christmas Bird Count Meeting and  
Social Hour at First Presbyterian Church.....7:00 pm

Thurs. Dec. 15 Christmas Bird Count..... All Day



### JANUARY

Thurs. Jan. 5 Board Meeting .....10:00 am

Thurs. Jan. 12 Monthly Meeting at Palmetto Electric .....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.