



# Ecobon

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

## FEBRUARY PROGRAM *by: Alan Biggs, Program Director*

**Thursday, February 8, 2018 3:00 - 4:15 pm** at Palmetto Electric Cooperative's Community Room on 111 Mathews Drive, Hilton Head Island, (Community Room entrance and parking is at the back of the building)



## ***"Birds and Other Wildlife of Australia"***

*by Ray Thimineur*

Ray Thimineur has traveled extensively in Australia with six trips covering a period of 13 months in residence and 12,000 miles of driving (on the left-hand side!). Ray will cover the "Top End" in the Darwin area, including Kakadu NP, a portion of the South Flinders area in the state of South Australia, and the

coast in the state of Western Australia, including the Shark Bay world heritage area. Because Australia is such a mystery to many people, he will give us clues as to when to visit these areas, what to expect while traveling, and other helpful hints.

The Thimineur's are snow birds, spending Jan., Feb., and Mar. with us in Hilton Head. He will be bringing a book on Australian birds for anyone to review after the presentation.

Non-Audubon members are welcome, but seating is limited. Call 843-592-7968 or visit <http://hiltonheadaudubon.org/> for additional information.

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**Upcoming Audubon Programs:** Our program team has scheduled some interesting programs covering a range of topics. Below is the program schedule as it currently stands. Please note that the April meeting is one week later to avoid Heritage Week.

March 8th - Daniel J. Prohaska – Development Officer, Center for Birds of Prey

April 19th - (NOTE DATE CHANGE!) – Nancy Owen – Creatures of the Night

May 10th - Annual Picnic at Waddell Mariculture Center

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# HHI Audubon

## Board of Directors:

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#### Christmas Bird Count Liason

Susan Murphy ..... HHICBC@gmail.com

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## Standing Committee Chairpersons:

### Audubon Newhall Preserve

Bob Clemens .....rclemens318@roadrunner.com

Tom Hennessey .....tmhennessey@outlook.com

Rita Kernan

Matt Matoon

### Bird Walks/Field Trips

Bob Speare ..... bobspeare@gmail.com

Martha Worthy .....mworthy2000@gmail.com

### Conservation

To be appointed

### Education

Grant Greider ..... greider38@gmail.com

Vicky McMillan ... Vicky.mcmillan@gmail.com

### Membership

Carol Clemens..... cclemens318@gmail.com

Fran Baer..... seattwo@roadrunner.com

### Programs

Kathy Greider..... greider38@gmail.com

Alan Biggs ..... alan.biggs2@gmail.com

### Communications/Historian/Web site

Miho Kinnas..... miho.kinnas@gmail.com

## 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 email one of the above officers or chairpersons or send a general email to [hhiadubon@gmail.com](mailto:hhiadubon@gmail.com)



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Robert Rommel*

I've attempted to write this President's message for four months now. Each time I started, stopped, and postponed it because a part of me didn't want to write it. I hate to deliver bad news or be a cynic. My love for wildlife grew out of a joy for life in all its myriad forms, but this month I couldn't put it off any longer. Painful though it might be, it must be told.

We as humans are doing a terrible job as caretakers for the earth. The reality is that we are getting worse and we are NOT making substantial progress. The amount of wildlife in the world is half what it was a generation ago. We are losing roughly 1,000 species of wildlife per year. That's 3 species every day that are casing to walk, fly, or swim across our planet. That extinction rate is between 1,000 and 10,000 times as high as the natural rate and has been accelerating not slowing in recent times. Even our common animals are becoming less common. It's not just a problem of the tropics or third-world counties, it's happening in our own backyards. About 10-15% of all the species in the United States are endangered. And again, it's not just the rare and endangered; most of the common species are suffering precipitous declines.

Conservation likes to focus on the feel-good stories. The handful of species that have made comebacks like the Bald Eagle or the possible rescue from the brink for the California Condor. But while we've spent over a generation and \$5 million a year of dollars on just the Condor, many others have gone extinct or plummeted to unsustainable levels. I'd love to see the Condors soaring over the West like they used to, but realistically we're not close to it yet. The numbers are increasing, but this covers up the truth of the situation. In 2016, there were 8 fledged chicks which sounds like a success story, but that is until you hear that there were 15 deaths. The numbers are only increasing because each year the recovery program is releasing more than die. The population is not sustainable and maybe never will be with the absence of what many believe are the historical food sources of the Condor: frequent dead whales that wash ashore and large salmon die offs in the rivers of the west. Both of these food sources are full of population problems of their own.

While these recovery programs may do a miraculous job of saving individual species on the brink, they aren't putting a dent in the rampant loss of wildlife and biodiversity that is going on in our backyards. Nature out there is not the same as when I was a kid and surely is not close to what my grandparents saw in their childhood. The only efforts that I've really seen make a difference on the large-scale issues we're facing are setting aside large areas for land preservation. Herein lies the big problem. Very few people want to go around destroying our wildlife. But on the other hand, economic interest take precedence in just about every situation. When they don't win out, compromises are made where small tracts of land are set aside. These small tracts of land are not sufficient for the survival of populations of animals. I'm pretty sure that even with millions of dollars and a high-effort reintroduction program, we could not get Bobwhite reintroduced on Hilton Head in places like Sea Pines Forest Preserve or any of the other areas set aside for preservation. Even in a larger place like Pinckney Island, this species hasn't been seen in a few years. We're just not setting aside large enough areas of important land for much of our wildlife to survive. But then again, it seems to enough for us to drive a few hours to a national or state park and see the wildlife hanging on there to make us feel like we are preserving.

Much of the blame lies in our daily lives. It just takes a lot of land to produce all the food, energy, and goods we use on a daily basis. Around the world, the average cost is about 2 acres needed per person per year. In some countries people are much more efficient, using less than an acre per person. America is by far the most wasteful and inefficient in the world, with each person using a whopping 25 acres per person. 25! More than ten times the average! But it's all ok because we don't see the effects directly. And naturally, much of the land used to provide for us is passed off on other countries adding to the plight of ecosystems in the tropics and other sensitive areas. To compound things, the population is growing and fast. How on Earth can there be land to set aside for wildlife. And if there is some now, what will it be like in a generation or two?

I don't have any answers to offer. I don't have a shining light at the end of the tunnel. We are losing wildlife faster than we ever have in the past. We are paying lip service to making efforts to save it, but in reality we're not stemming the tide. Individual species conservation efforts may offer a life jacket for a few animals, but it is only a trickle against a raging surf. The most successful large scale conservation improvements that I know of have come through hunting conservation efforts or the park systems. It's some what natural, hunting provides vast sums of money that can be used for protecting game species. Waterfowl, large game mammals, and turkeys are all doing fantastically over the last couple of generations. Much of this success has been through habitat protection. If only conservation could leverage similar funds to protect the other types of habitats that our other wildlife species require, our wildlife might stand a chance. Right now the funding levels aren't even close: hunting generates around \$2 billion per year just for conservation in the US; Audubon on the national level has an annual budget of \$100 million/year.

My apologies for a less than cheerful message, Robert

# RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

A 'super' birding month has been experienced in our area that includes Christmas Bird Count birds, four 'Accidental' species reported and many others! Our normal Winter ducks and songbirds are all here. We also continue to sight an unusual number of 'Out-Of-Season' species including very late Fall migrants and Summer birds.

'Accidental' (or unexpected) sightings reported during the last month in our area were: Golden Eagle on HHI, Northern Saw Whet Owl on Skidaway Island, Spotted Towhee in Beaufort, SC and Black Swan on HHI.

'Rare' species sighted were: Rufous and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Sandhill Crane, Eared and Red-necked Grebes, Brown Creeper, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Virginia and King Rails, LeConte's, Lincoln's and White-crowned Sparrows, Western Kingbird, Common Ground Dove and Roseate Spoonbill.

'Out-Of-Season' (OOS) species found: Summer Tanager, Chuck-will's-widow, Ovenbird, Northern Parula, Magnolia and Prairie Warblers, Northern Waterthrush, Least Bittern, Bobolink, Cattle Egret, Painted Bunting and many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.



**Northern Saw Whet Owl**

'Uncommon' species reported were many and included: American Bittern, American Woodcock, Baltimore Oriole, Dark-eyed Junco, Redhead (duck), Canvasback (duck), Long-tailed Duck, Goldeneye (duck), American Black Duck, Mottled Duck, Pintail (duck), Ruddy Duck, American White Pelican, Rusty Blackbird, Blue-headed Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, American Avocet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Sharp-shinned Hawk, endangered Piping Plover, American Pipit, Glossy Ibis, Stilt Sandpiper, Eurasian Collared Dove, Winter, Sedge and House Wrens, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Greater and Lesser Scaups, Loggerhead Shrike, Vesper Sparrow, Caspian Tern, Orange-crowned Warbler and Long-billed Dowitcher.

Other notables - 'Good Finds' or 'First-Of-The-Season' species reported included: Eastern Screech Owl, American Goldfinch, Wilson's Snipe, American Wigeon, Green Heron, Black Scotter, Spotted Sandpiper, Krider's Red-tailed Hawk, Cedar Waxwing, American Oystercatcher, Marbled Godwit, Red Knot, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Meadowlark, Green-winged Teal, many Bald Eagles and many other species.



**Rufous Hummingbird**

Many thanks to all reporting your bird sightings: Jane/Abe Hester, Pauline Jones, Dottie Bass, Carol Clemens, Fran/Denny Baer, Alan Biggs, Roger/ Shelia Johnson, Dottie Bass, Kathy/Grant Greider, Cindy/Ken Groff, Julia/Sean Dennis, Carol Tunnicliffe, Annette Hausman, Susan Murphy, Peter Cram, Diana Churchill, Steve Calver, Russ Wigh, Dorothy Mosier, Mary Alice Tartler, Dick Phillips, Bob Speare, Rita Kernan and many visitors.

To report a bird sighting that is Accidental, Rare, Out-Of-Season (OOS), Uncommon, First-Of-The-Year (FOTY), First-Of-The-Season(FOTS) or a species that you consider to be a "Good Find" e-mail: [BirdingFinds@yahoo.com](mailto:BirdingFinds@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 bird finds on Birding Friends.

*It's a great time of year to go into the 'great outdoors' and bird!*



**Brown Creeper**

Just a note ~ A birder from Skidaway Island sent us an email about his survey of wintering hummingbirds along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia. The study has been underway since November but if you are interested to contribute, please write to Mr. Russ Wigh of The Landings, Skidaway Island Chatham County, Georgia at his email: [russ.wigh@gmail.com](mailto:russ.wigh@gmail.com) . Please note this is not an Audubon activity.

# February Field Trip by Bob Speare

Date: Saturday, February 3

Place: Savannah National Wildlife Refuge

Meeting Spot: SNWR Visitor Center

Time: 8:30 am

Limit: 20

Leader: Jane Hester



After a fantastic trip to the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge in early December, when over 50 species were sighted including 8 American bitterns, we have decided to return again for our February field trip. If the weather allows, we'll board the refuge's wagon to experience the Laurel Hill Drive together once again. This will be an excellent trip for those interested in wading birds, ducks, hawks, wintering songbirds and more.

**Important Information:** We'll meet at the Refuge Visitor's Center (with restrooms) at 8:30 am and carpool to the place where we'll board the wagon. The Refuge Visitors Center is located at 694 Beech Hill Lane, Hardeeville, SC.

If folks wish to carpool to the Refuge Visitor's Center, plan to meet at the parking lot at Moss Creek Village - right by the now closed Neo's Restaurant at 7:30 am. This field trip is free to Hilton Head Audubon members, \$5 for non- members.

To sign up for this field trip, please contact Bob Speare at [bobspeare@gmail.com](mailto:bobspeare@gmail.com) or (843) 715-9772.



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.*



Festival Centre at Indigo Park  
45 Pembroke Dr., Suite 130  
Hilton Head Island, SC 29926  
843-802-2010  
[HiltonHeadWBU@yahoo.com](mailto:HiltonHeadWBU@yahoo.com)

*Wild Birds Unlimited*  
Nature Shop

- Bird Seed, Blends & Suet
- Bird Feeders & Houses
- Mounting Hardware
- Birdbaths & Accessories
- Binoculars & Field Guides
- Nature Books & Gifts

*New Ownership / Same Location*

## Birding Programs offered at the Coastal Discovery Museum

During the winter months, the Coastal Discovery Museum is offering a series of programs of interest to birders. The programs are normally offered on Wednesday afternoons at 3:00 PM.

Each program requires **ADVANCE REGISTRATION** and a \$7 FEE. These programs fill up so don't delay!

### *Programs include:*

Wood Storks: January 31st

Brown Pelican Ecology: February 7th

Protecting our Nation's Birds: February 14th



Visit the museum's website for details and to register. <https://www.coastaldiscovery.org/home/discover-and-learn/discovery-lecture-series/> You **MUST** make a reservation and pay to attend.

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## **Audubon Newhall Preserve** by Bob Clemens

At a recent volunteer workday to help restore the Audubon Newhall Preserve from the ravages of Hurricane February Audubon Newhall Update

The Preserve continues to enjoy the attention and affection of many out-of-state visitors, so we're collecting visitors' log pages in hopes of support for a future ATAX grant from the Town! We thank our trail monitors, who are dutifully checking the trails to make sure they're clear! Our chainsaw is ready in case of any fallen trees. We may try a mid-week afternoon work day as soon as the weather warms a bit. We still have yards and yards of mulch to move!



We also have good news in that the Rotary Club of Hilton Head Island has offered to replace plants lost to Hurricanes Matthew and Irma, as a Rotary Service Project. Rita Kernan and Matt Matoon are coordinating the work, which will be tentatively scheduled for a work day in March.

Karen Marts reported on the Christmas Bird Count in the Preserve, with the highlight being a pair of Bald Eagles. More recently she photographed a beautiful whitetail doe in the Preserve.

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## **Hairy vs Downy Woodpeckers**

These two birds are often difficult to tell apart... especially if you get just a glimpse of the bird. The calls of these two birds are quite different and may help you identify which woodpecker it is.

Check out this link with an image of each but also their sounds.

<https://www.birdnote.org/show/downy-and-hairy-woodpeckers>

Want more info? Try this link, too.

<http://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/bird-species/tell-difference-downy-hairy-woodpeckers/>





## Membership Report for February 2018

*Hi fellow birders!*

Please welcome the following new members who have joined us since our January Ecobon was published.

**Wayne Baird**

**Lou and Jeffrie Natale**

**Julia and David Buzzard**

**Jerry Rubin**

**Bill and Susan Duggins**

**Tish Scroggin**

**John Grobe**

**Gary Shepherd and family**

**Ginny and Dick Hillegas**

**Marshall Stone**

**Kathy and Harry Kettel**

**Joe Sudomir**

We appreciate the support of our local members! We currently have roughly 200 local members. Remember, dues are paid yearly, based on the quarter in which you last paid. You will get an email reminder the quarter in which it is time for you to renew. Have a membership question? Has your email address changed? Please be sure to contact us with questions or updates.

### ***Your membership team:***

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

**Remember:** You may receive emails from Audubon that come from either of the above addresses and the monthly Ecobon and Field Trip info from [HYPERLINK "mailto:hhiadubon@gmail.com" hhiadubon@gmail.com](mailto:hhiadubon@gmail.com) Please be sure you are not blocking any of these three email addresses. Also, please check your junk/spam folders just in case! Thanks!



Want to join? Need to renew? Please print this form and mail or bring to the next meeting with your dues. To contact us, email: [hhiadubon@gmail.com](mailto:hhiadubon@gmail.com)

Local Membership: select either  1 year individual \$15 or  1 year family \$25

I wish to make an extra donation of \_\_\_\_\_(amount)

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For LOCAL residents, please indicate your plantation/neighborhood such as Sea Pines, Indigo Run, Bluffton, Sun City etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ (please print clearly!)

Can you help us with any of these activities on an as needed basis? Please check any of interest to you.  Audubon Newhall Preserve  Help with Field Trips  Conservation  Education  Christmas Bird Count  Publicity/Programs  other

**Please mail to: P.O. Box 6185 – Hilton Head Island, SC – 29938**

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For committee only: Renewal date \_\_\_\_\_ new \_\_\_\_\_ (revised 3/17)  
National \_\_\_\_\_

# 2017 Christmas Bird Count

by Susan Murphy, CBC Coordinator

Our CBC report for 2017 has been submitted to the Regional Editor. Our numbers will be “final” once that review is complete. Here are the numbers submitted:

**Total number of birds: 24,665 • Total species: 139**

The species number is up from 130 last year, but our total number of birds, though just under last year’s, is the lowest of the 10-year history. Even with lower numbers, most of the species we normally see are represented.

The 10-year history of our count is now on the website. I encourage you to take a look at it to see which species are up or down this year and which are found consistently year after year. Here is the link: <http://www.hiltonheadaudubon.org/audubon-christmas-bird-count>

Rare Bird Forms were submitted (with photos for most) for Sandhill Cranes, Black Swan, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, Painted Bunting, Summer Tanager and Baltimore Oriole. A few comments on those and other unusual finds:

As mentioned in last month’s article, a Black Swan was seen by the team at Palmetto Bluff. We thought it might have escaped from a collection but were unable to determine where it came from. Photos and documentation were submitted with our report. Flocks totaling 21 Sandhill Cranes were counted in two areas.

In the December 2016 count, the only Black-Bellied Whistling-Ducks in South Carolina were in the Sun City-Okatie count. This year was the first we had them (27) in our Hilton Head count, seen at Palmetto Bluff.

Although in December 2016 we had a record number of Baltimore Orioles (8), this year we had only one, at a feeder near the May River.

We map the time and location and age (adult or immature) for Bald Eagles to eliminate duplicate sightings. Even after the reductions this year, we submitted a count of 61, a 10-year high for our count.

Other unusual finds include (marked “U” on the Checklist): 22 Lesser Scaup in two areas (plus 30 non-ID scaup species), one Cattle Egret on Daufuskie, a Sharp-shinned Hawk and seven Eurasian Collared Doves in Sea Pines, three Caspian Terns at Colleton River Plantation, a Merlin at Palmetto Bluff, nine Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in five areas, five Loggerhead Shrikes in two areas, five House Wrens in two areas, three Marsh Wrens in 2 areas, one Orange-crowned Warbler in Shipyard and 23 Dark-eyed Juncos in 3 areas.



In the photos are a few more finds: There were more Blue-headed Vireos than in past years with one each in four areas. A Greater Scaup in Palmetto Dunes was the first counted in five years. With Fran Baer’s photo, Robert Rommel helped us identify the bird by looking at the head-on view, in which you can see the distinguishing bulging cheeks. Also in PD, a male Summer Tanager was at my feeder on count day for his sixth winter here.

And now to the counters! There were 292 participants: 213 field observers and 79 feeder watchers. This is an increase of 30 feeder watchers over last year! Many thanks to Carol Clemens for her recruitment and customized guide for the feeder watchers. Her team in Hilton Head Plantation had 43 of the 79! I would also like to give a special thanks to our boaters, who often account for some of our highest numbers (with the fewest observers), representing over 20% of the total birds counted.

The dates for the 2018 local counts have already been set. The Hilton Head count will be on Friday, December 14th. Sun City-Okatie will be on Saturday, December 15th and the Lowcountry (Beaufort) count will be Sunday, December 16th.



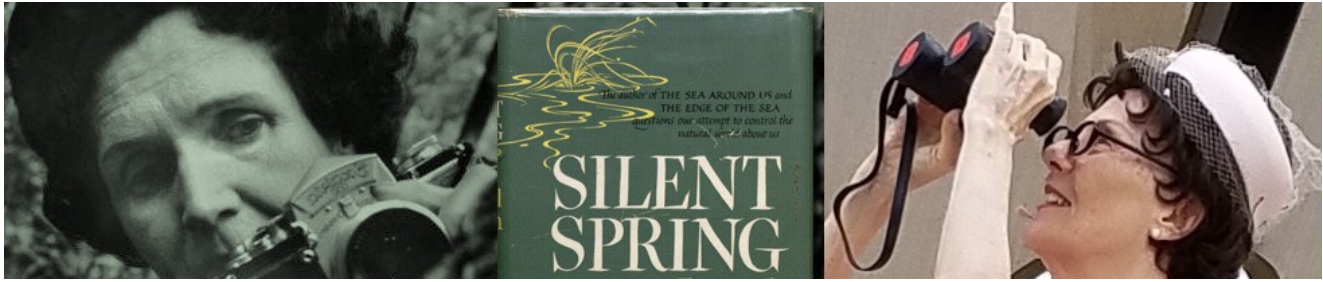
***Thank you to all who participated in  
our 2017 count!  
I hope you can join us for 2018!***

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# A Special Lowcountry Birding Event

February 12, 2018, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Magnolia Hall in Sun City



## *Rachel Carson's Silent Spring*

*a History Alive performance by Caroline McIntyre*

Step inside the revolutionary book that changed America, “Silent Spring” as Rachel Carson reveals the reckless destruction of our living world. Written more than 55 years ago, “Silent Spring” inspired the Environmental Movement and has never been out of print. Silent Spring entered the words “ecology”, “reverence for life” and “balance of nature” into our common language. It inspired a nation to proclaim “our fundamental right to a healthy environment.” It etched on our national consciousness the Jean Rostand words: “The obligation to endure, gives us the right to know.”

Caroline McIntyre will appear as Rachel Carson and speak in Carson’s profound, prophetic and poetic words. It is a powerfully uplifting glimpse of a personal struggle, witness for nature and ground -breaking crusade against the reckless pollution of our living world. The audience will be able to question and dialog with this expert on the work of Rachel Carson and share their own experiences.

Caroline has performed as an historical interpreter since 2006. A former historyteacher, theater manager and corporate presenter, she holds BA and MA degrees in American Studies. She recreates the roles of three of her personal heroes - Frances Perkins, first female presidential cabinet member, Rachel Carson and Mary Draper Ingles, SW Virginia frontierswoman captured by Shawnee Indians. She likes to point out that one word describes all three - fearless!



- Program; Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup> 2:00 to 4:00 PM – Sponsor Displays 1:00 PM.
- This is a no cost event.
- Pre-registration is required.
- [Online registration is available at South Carolina Audubon at www.sc.audubon.org](http://www.sc.audubon.org)

### Rachel Carson Quotes

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.”

“The human race is challenged more than ever before to demonstrate our mastery - not over nature but of ourselves.”

“The beauty of the living world I was trying to save has always been uppermost in my mind – that and anger at the senseless, brutish things that were being done. I have felt bound by a solemn obligation to do what I could – if I didn’t at least try I could never again be happy in nature.”



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## *Seen any Baltimore Orioles this winter ?*

For the third year in a row, in 2017 South Carolina had the largest number of orioles wintering in the United States. Those results were recorded during the third annual Baltimore Oriole Winter Survey, conducted by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources last winter.

You can help with the 2018 annual state count of Baltimore Orioles seen during the current winter. While the “official” count time is February 16-19, to coincide with the Great Backyard Bird Count, any orioles seen any time this winter should be reported.

Lex Glover of the SC Department of Natural Resources needs our help to get an accurate count for the Hilton Head area. It is easy to participate. Just keep a log of the dates you spot an oriole and try your best to get a photo if possible. Photos help with the proper identification of juvenile males and female orioles. A form will be emailed to you to fill out which you simply email back. That is all it takes to be part of this important survey.

For additional info or to be emailed the form, contact Lex Glover at:  
gloverl@dnr.sc.gov (please note...after Glover that is the letter L not the number 1.)



# Audubon



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

Non Profit Organization  
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## FEBRUARY ~ MARCH 2018 Calendar

### FEBRUARY

- Thurs. Feb. 1 Board Meeting .....10:00 am
- Sat. Feb. 3 Field Trip .....7:30 am
- Thurs. Feb. 8 Monthly Meeting .....3:00 pm  
at Palmetto Electric
- Mon. Feb. 12 "Rachel Carson's Silent Spring" ..... 2-4:00 pm  
at Magnolia Hall in Sun City

### MARCH

- Thurs. Mar. 1 Board Meeting .....10:00 am
- Thurs. Mar. 8 Monthly Meeting .....3:00 pm  
at Palmetto Electric

.....  
 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.