

April 2010
No. 309

ECOBON



Newsletter of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society
Audubon Refuge Keepers

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Bill Nicol

The primary way the Hilton Head Audubon Society communicates with its members is through the ECOBON. For the past two years or so in an attempt to cut operating expenses, we have transitioned the newsletter to the internet and asked our members to provide Nan Lloyd with their e-mail address. The newsletter is now posted on our website: www.hiltonhead-audubon.org. Those members who have provided Nan with their e-mail address are notified to go to the website to view or download all or part of the newsletter. Before this transition, we printed 650 copies each month and distributed 525 copies by snail mail and 125 copies to various locations on the island. As of the March 2010 issue, we still mailed 327 newsletters. It is now time to limit the mailing of the ECOBON. The May 2010 issue will be the last one mailed except to those members who have advised Nan that they do not have a computer or do not use e-mail. So if you haven't already done so, send your e-mail address to nan@nanhiltonhead.com. You can also reach her at 843-363-2092 if you don't use a computer.

The internet allows us to communicate more easily and quickly with our members. Besides the newsletter, we can quickly alert you to local and state issues that need your attention and action. We will never share or sell our e-mail addresses.

See you at the meetings and please bring a friend.

APRIL PROGRAM *by Charlotte White*

Tuesday, April 13, 2010, 7:30 p.m. at the Seabrook

A Feathered Who's Who of the Low Country

We are fortunate that Diana Churchill will return for our April program. She is well known in Savannah as a leader and expert in the field of birds in this area. She gave one of our most popular programs last April on "confusing little brown jobbies" – sparrows. Her "Feathered Who's Who" program introduces folks to some of our signature birds. It is organized like a guessing game with clues, calls, and information leading up to pictures and finally the name of the bird in question. It is a fun way to test your ID skills and appreciate our wonderful avian diversity. We can close with a question and answer period with Diana regarding birds of our area.

Diana is very busy these days serving as Ogeechee Audubon president, working for Wild Birds Unlimited and being a naturalist guide for Wilderness Southeast. She has led field trips for the Colonial Coast Birding Festival, Carolina Bird Club and Georgia Ornithological Society meetings. For over nine years, Diana has been writing a twice monthly column about birds for the Savannah Morning News. Her "Birder's Eye View" column can be accessed at www.savannahnow.com under Closeups. Currently, she is leading a monthly expedition through Wilderness Southeast going to seasonal spots to catch birds in action. That information can be found at www.wilderness-southeast.org under Schedule.

To meet one of our Audubon Savannah neighbors who not only knows a great deal about birds but also writes about them and photographs them, come to our April Audubon meeting on Tuesday, April 13, WITH A FRIEND, at 7:30 p.m. at the Seabrook, 300 Woodhaven Drive, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

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From "Telling The Truth" by Alice B. Morgan

Bird watchers routinely believe the information they get from their birding peers, and this sets bird watching apart from many other activities.

We live in an untruthful world: Perpetrators of crimes regularly lie about their activities; advertisers tell us things about their products that aren't true; we are increasingly cynical about statements by our elected officials; and even our friends have been known to stretch the truth. There are few realms in which we can be pretty sure that information is full and accurate. We hope to get the truth from our doctors, and from our most intimate friends - and from other birders. In fact there are not many situations in which something that matters to the participants is based entirely on individual statements without external monitoring. Of course, no money (usually) is involved in birding success, so that may account for our willingness to accept what others tell us as true - and perhaps for the fact that it generally is true. There are also some inherent checks on birding veracity. If you report a bird and someone else sees it the next day, it suggests that your report was accurate. But, often, as we all know, you see a bird and report it, it is never seen again in that location. Rarely, however, does anyone suggest that you did not actually see the bird. Perhaps someone will believe you were mistaken - that the reported rarity was actually a common bird in a strange light, or a juvenal plumage - but not that you intentionally lied. I find this fidelity to truth to be one of the most attractive aspects of bird watching.

HHI Audubon

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Website: 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.

FIELD TRIPS *by Kay Hodnett*

Our next field trip will be Monday, April 12, to Botany Bay Plantation on Edisto Island, south of Charleston. Privately owned until 2008, Botany Bay is now a Wildlife Management Area open to public access. The Botany Bay naturalist is arranging to have a volunteer expert birder show us around.

Those wanting to car pool should meet at Moss Creek Village. We will leave there at 7:30 AM, and meet at the Botany Bay kiosk at the main entrance at 9:30 AM. It would be a good idea to take a restroom break at the Horizon gas station on Edisto Island, about 6 miles before reaching Botany Bay. There are no public facilities at Botany Bay, although we can use the restroom in the office during our lunch break.

To begin our tour we will drive a 3 mile loop trail, stopping along the way, and hopefully seeing a variety of songbirds. Then we will have a tailgate lunch, so pack some food and beverages, and bring a folding chair if you have space in your vehicle. There is a picnic table but there won't be room for all of us. After lunch we will walk half a mile to the beach, arriving a little before low tide at 1:15, which is the best viewing time for shorebirds at Edisto. This will be an all day trip, although some may choose to do only the morning driving loop and head back early. Those who stay for the beach walk could plan on getting back to Moss Creek Village around 5 PM.

To sign up for the trip call Kay Hodnett at 342-7485 or email sallyportk@gmail.com

Directions to Botany Bay:

- From Moss Creek Village travel on 278 about 8 miles until you reach 170.
- Turn Right (North) onto 170, headed toward Beaufort.
- Go about 18 miles until you reach 21.
- Turn Left (North) onto 21.
- Go about 12 miles until 17 veers off (at Garden Corner).
- Turn Right (North) onto 17 (at Garden Corner), headed toward Charleston.
- Go about 29 miles on 17 until you reach 174, which comes in from the Right at Osborn.
- Turn Right onto 174, toward Edisto Island
- Cross the McKinley Washington Bridge onto Edisto Island. Go a little over 8 miles South of the bridge and then turn Left onto Botany Bay Road.
- Follow the dirt road about 2 miles to near where the road dead ends. Turn Left at the gate and stop at the kiosk at the main entrance, where we will meet.

FIELD TRIPS IN MAY

On Friday May 7 Clem Dietze will lead a field trip in Pinckney NWR. Due to Fish & Wildlife Service restrictions on vehicles entering the reserve this trip will be limited to 20 people in 5 vehicles. First come first served. Contact Clem at clemd@hargray.com if you wish to participate. We will meet in Pinckney's parking lot at 8AM and finish by 12:30PM. If anyone wishes to bike the trip you may do so and not be in the restricted 20. Please let Clem know if you are participating in this manner. Our beloved painted buntings along with other summer residents such as white-eyed vireos, summer tanagers, and indigo buntings should be present. With global climate change who knows what else may show up.

NOTES FROM THE NEWHALL PRESERVE

by Joan Shulman

Thanks to Joanne Dugle for monitoring the trails in March. Thanks also to all who turned out to help on the spring Work Day on March 13: Ron Charles, Jack Colcolough, Marianne and Jim Currie, Niki Jordan, Arnold Rhiem, Connie and Jerry Voight, Mary Alice Walker. We cleaned out a lot of brush around the entrance gate and around the pond, took down a pine tree leaning over the parking lot. We enjoyed seeing the budding yellow Jessamine, Red Bud, and High Bush Blueberry. A four-foot alligator was touring the pond.

The water level in the pond and the pocosin is about as high as I have ever seen it in the eleven years I have lived here.

In April we will conduct two guided walks in the Preserve. They will be held on April 7 and 21 (Wednesdays) at 10:00 A.M. The leaders will identify the flowers, plants, shrubs, and trees unique to the lowcountry, talk about the history of the Preserve, and point out the special ecological systems found there. For more information, call 842-9246. Adults, \$7.00; Children under 12, Free; Maximum per family, \$14.00. April 7, "A Woodland Walk" led by Joan Shulman, Chair of the Audubon Newhall Committee. April 21, "The Birth and Growth of a Sea Island" led by Mary Alice Walker, an amateur naturalist and experienced docent.

We need Trail Monitors for May, June, July, August, September. If you can help out, please call me at 842-9246.

NOMINATED OFFICERS FOR 2010-2011

President – Bill Nicol, Vice President – Clem Dietze,
Treasurer – Fran Baer, Recording Secretary – Marianne Currie,
Corresponding Secretary – Sherman Barker
Board Members – at - Large- Howard Costa, Nan Lloyd,
Joan Wilson, Barry Lowes, Joan Shulman, Jim Currie.
Committee Chairpersons will be appointed by the President and names will appear in the next Ecobon.

Many will keep their present positions but we still are begging for more of you to step forward and help run this Chapter. We are especially in need of someone to train next year to succeed Fran Baer as Treasurer. Fran graciously agreed to take one more term even though with other responsibilities she wanted to be replaced. We could not find a candidate to step up to the plate. We also are in need of someone with new ideas for programs to replace Charlotte White who also has too many other commitments to continue to serve as Chairperson. Bill Nicol has agreed to serve a third term as President and Clem Dietze will serve again as he has already been a past President. If you enjoy your Audubon membership and are willing to help in any capacity please contact Clem Dietze at 837-2612 or email clemd@hargray.com. We cannot permanently exist with the same people serving year after year! WE NEED NEW BLOOD! Please consider volunteering.

RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

Spring has sprung and many bird songs are in the air after a cool winter here! Some of our early spring migrants and summer arrivals are beginning to show up.

Our highlights of the month were:

Our FOTY Painted Bunting (a beautiful male) was sighted at Marianne/Jim C's feeders in Hilton Head Plantation.

A uncommon male Baltimore Oriole found its way to Peter Z's bird bath in Shipyard. Females Orioles had been sighted there earlier but never the male.

Overwintering Hummingbirds were officially identified by expert Doreen Cubie as female Ruby-throated Hummers at Dottie B's and Miriam W's homes. A third Hummer locally identified as a rare Black-chinned did not show for the banding and identification session on HHI.

The only other rare birds reported this month were King and Virginia Rails at Savannah NWR and exotic Egyptian Geese on the south end of HHI.

Uncommon species found included: an early migrating Ovenbird, Rusty Blackbird, American Bittern, endangered Piping Plover, Red Knot, Greater Black-backed Gull, Blue-headed Vireo, Northern Gannet and White-breasted Nuthatch.

Other good finds reported were: Dark-eyed Junco, out-of-season Barn Swallow, Yellow-throated Warbler, Wood Duck, Common Loon, Sora, singing White-eyed Vireo, fifty-six Tricolored Herons, several hundred Cedar Waxwings and several Bald Eagles (two at the Indigo Run nesting site).

Thanks to all reporting their sightings: Miriam Waterhouse, Dottie Bass, Fran Baer, Marianne/Jim Currie, Dorothy Mosier, Wendy Hansen, Annette Housman, Peter Zachmann, Mary Jane Major, Diana Churchill, Kay Hodnett, Ed Nash and several visitors.

To report a rare, uncommon, first-of-the-year or season or out-of-season bird sighting, please e-mail: BirdingFriends@yahoo.com or call 290-1508. Please state your name, date and location of your sighting and any appropriate comments.

REMINDER TO BIRD WATCHERS

The beautiful Swallow-tailed Kites return to our area in March. Please report your sightings to the Citizen-Science Swallow Tailed Kites Count. Report WHERE (latitude and longitude if possible) the bird was sighted, BIRD ACTIVITY at the time of sighting, DATE AND TIME of sighting.

Report sightings to: ONLINE: www.thecenterforbirdsof-prey.org MAIL: Center For Birds of Prey, PO Box 1247, Charleston, SC 29402 PHONE: Toll Free: 1-866-971-7474.

BOOK NEWS *by Clem Dietze*

CROW PLANET

Author: Lynda Lynn Haupt – Publisher Little Brown & Co

Please don't be put off by the title. This is not a dry ornithological scientific dissertation on crows. In fact, you have to be halfway through the book before crows are discussed in any detail at all. Rather, Haupt has written a wonder filled book on what it means to be a naturalist and our place on earth as a part of the natural world. Her style is breezy, sometimes poetic, funny, philosophical, and just plain down to earth. Peppered with quotes by naturalists and deep thinkers, the book fascinates from introduction to the end. In my opinion, it is a must read for anyone interested in nature and our place in it.

Crows are probably our most widely distributed bird and in most ornithologists opinions the most intelligent bird. Haupt gets to crow behavior in the latter chapters of the book and her observations are fascinating. Experienced birders will recognize many, but there are nuances that may surprise you.

Haupt's philosophy is summed up in the final paragraph.

"I am no ecological Pollyanna. I have borne, and will continue to bear, feelings of wholehearted melancholy over the ecological state of the earth. How could I not? How could anyone not? But I am unwilling to become a hand-wringing nihilist, as some environmental "realists" seem to believe is the more mature posture. Instead, I choose to dwell, as Emily Dickinson famously suggested, in possibility, where we cannot predict what will happen but we make space for it, whatever it is, and realize that our participation has value. This is a grown-up optimism, where our bondedness with the rest of creation, a sense of profound interaction, and a belief in our shared ingenuity give meaning to our lives and actions on behalf of the more-than-human world."

The book is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble, including our local store.

BIRD SEED SALE STEADY THIS YEAR

The annual Seed Sale remained steady this year with over 250 bags of seed weighing over 2 TONS were bought by nearly 60 members and friends. This produced a net income over \$1000 plus additional "Plan B" donations of \$200 raising over \$1200 for support of the Audubon Adventures school program.

We wish to thank Virginia Culter of Wild Birds Unlimited for her continued support and generosity which makes this effort possible.

We also thank each of the following buyers and donors for their steady commitment to this Chapter:

Fran & Denny Baer, Sherm Barker, Susan Beck, Dianna Bennett, Laura Braun, George Cohen, Jim & Marianne Currie, Rich Danyi, Nancy Dinkel, Pat Farrand, John & Dianne Faucette, Joe Fromme, Judy Hadley, Elizabeth Hamilton, Bud Haughlum, Annette Hausman, Nancy Hayes, Dave Hicks, Kay Hodnett, Betty Inman, Sarah Jebo, Shirley Johnson, Mike Jordan, Eileen Joyce, M. Keller, Wanda Leopold, Doris Lindner, Barry Lowes, Thea Luba, Judy Lundin, Bob & Mary Jane Major, Rich & Mare Many, Peggy Martin, Karen & Mike McGinty, Linda Nelson, Kelly & Susan Murphy, Bill & Joan Nicol, Bill & Suzanne Ninabuck, Gail O'Kane, Phillip Roos, Sue & Bob Salmons, Allyn & Ann Schneider,

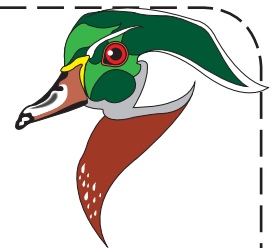
Bob & Ann Scott, Mary Socci, Doris Stoner, Jerry & Connie Voight, Betty Walter, Mariam Waterhouse, Steve & Charlotte White, and Martha Worthy.



PLEASE NOTE: Current members are encouraged to use this membership form to sign up friends, relatives, and neighbors as new members. Our Chapter benefits significantly from a "return of dues" from National if our local form is used for new memberships

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHAPTER

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1. Over 10,000,000 birds were counted on 90,012 checklists turned in for the 2010 Great backyard Bird Count. The Northern cardinal was the most reported bird for the 5th year in a row. Over a million American robins were seen roosting near St. Petersburg FL putting Florida in the #1 position of all states reporting. The HHIAS helped drum up local interest in the bird count by making presentations at several area schools.

2. A proposal by CONONCOPhillips to construct a bridge and elevated pipeline over a major channel of the Colville River on Alaska's North Slope was rejected by the Corps of Engineers. The proposal carried an unacceptable risk of an oil spill in an IBA along the route that is home to 74 bird species.

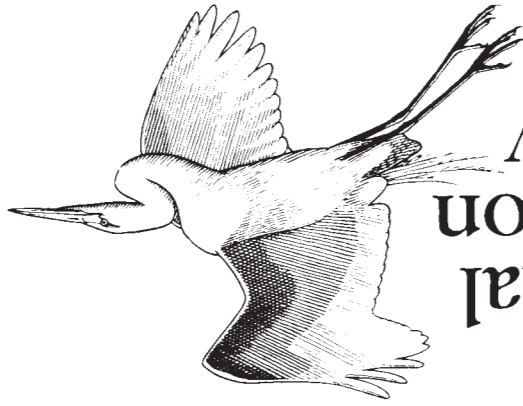
3. Congratulations are in order for the work done by the Fripp Island Audubon Chapter to get the 6 barrier islands off Beaufort, including Hunting and Fripp Island, declared an Important Bird Area.

4. Noted bird illustrator David Sibley and former United States Poet Laureate Billy Collins have collaborated to produce Bright Wings, an illustrated anthology of poems all about birds. Collins as editor has included a wide range of modern and classical bird poems. The poems are illustrated with 58 of Sibley's bird drawings.

Sherman Barker
Corresponding Secretary

Place your ad here!

Call Bill Nicol
for more information
671-4721



National Audubon Society

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P.O. Box 6185

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APRIL - MAY 2010 Calendar

APRIL

- Weds. Apr. 7 **Newhall Walk** 10:00 am
- Thurs. Apr. 8 **Board Meeting** 1:30 pm
at the Jarvis Room, Old Coastal Discovery Museum
- Mon. Apr. 12 **Field Trip to Botany Bay** 7:30 am
- Tues. Apr. 13 **Monthly Meeting** at the Seabrook 7:30 pm
- Weds. Apr. 21 **Newhall Walk** 10:00 am

MAY

- Thurs. May 6 **Board Meeting** 1:30 pm
at the Jarvis Room, Old Coastal Discovery Museum
- Fri. May 7 **Field Trip** to Pinckney Island 8:30 am
- Tues. May 11 **Monthly Meeting** at the Seabrook 7:30 pm

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Monthly meetings of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society are regularly scheduled at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, September through May, in the Auditorium at the Seabrook, 300 Woodhaven 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.

You're in for a special treat, Saturday, April 24, 2010 from 8:30-12:00 noon. Russ Burns, the naturalist that led our "Fun" birding adventure at Musgrove Mill Golf course in September has invited us to come and look for neo-tropicals on their way north.

Foxbrier Farms is one of our favorite places in Laurens County. Russ and Judy Burns, both professional educators have hosted a variety of educational adventures for us. They are conservationists in word and deed. They have put a large portion of their farm in conservation easements. During my last visit to their farm, I got to ride gator with a team from NC. The Burns' were hosting a pleasure weekend for horse cart lovers. All I did was stand up on the back of the cart, and hop off one time to rebuckle a harness strap. All gates were open and the driver sure knew how to navigate the farm property. The forests, fields, and ponds were beautiful even from behind a fast moving horse cart. The Burns have 15 miles of trails cut 12 ft. wide. Their pleasure weekend was a fun to place to be. Their friends brought in all kinds of horses, 2 and 4 horse drawn carts, segway, moped, gators, convertible humvee, and all kinds of horse trailer motorcoaches.

Foxbrier Farms is the place where I saw my first yellow-billed cuckoo. Bring your life list of birds that you have identified. You may be able to add some new friends on April 24, 2010. We saw 24 different bird species in September when we had the opportunity to go birding at Musgrove Mill Golf course. We will have an early lunch catered in so that we can have time to tally all of our sightings and just enjoy visiting with each other in the beautiful outdoors. Pre-registration by April 10, 2010 is required. Space is limited. Cost for the adventure is \$20.

Participant's name(s) _____, _____, _____

Phone number _____ Total # of tickets _____ Total amount of check _____

Make check payable to: Forever Wild, PO Box 947, Clinton, SC 29325

If you have any questions call Laura Blind at 864-872-3408.