

ECOBON



Newsletter of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society
Audubon Refuge Keepers

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Natalie Hefter

I hope that all of our members had a pleasant summer and had a chance to get out to do some traveling and visiting with friends and family. All of us on the board are looking forward to another great year of programs, field trips, Christmas Bird Count, bird seed sale and lots of other chapter activities.

During the summer, I was contacted by Pete Richards from the Fripp Audubon Society about an exciting announcement from Beaufort County. This year's annual calendar will be dedicated to 'Birds and Habitats of Beaufort County.' The deadline for submission is 5 PM on September 4. Photographs of birds may be taken anywhere in Beaufort county, but habitat photos need to be from those areas that are recognized as Beaufort County Rural or Critical Lands sites. Maps, rules, waivers and other contest details may be found by clicking on the "photo contest" graphic slider on the home page of the County website: www.bcgov.net. You may also call (843) 575-5196 for more information. The County has also offered to our Audubon chapter, Fripp Audubon and the Sun City Bird Club the opportunity to sell the calendars to raise funds for our organizations. I will let you know when I hear more about those details.

Our first meeting of the year is on Thursday, September 13th at the Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn. Rick Riebesell, Vice President and programming chair, will have another great lineup of programs this year. Be sure to look for the announcements.

We are still seeking a few volunteers to serve as Committee Chairperson. If you are interested in helping, please let me know.

Historian (keeping track of news paper announcements and chapter news)

Legislation (keeping up to date on local, state and federal legislative issues and reporting to the Chapter)

Field Trips (We have a couple of members who might be interested in serving in a co-chair role to organize field trips. Let me know if you are interested.)

MAY PROGRAM by Rick Riebesell

Thursday, September 12, 2012 -

3:00 p.m. in the Sea Island Room at Honey

"Bird Stories:

The Golden Keys of Timing & Location"

"Bird Stories: The Golden Keys of Timing and Location" will be presented by Robert Rommel at the September 13 meeting of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society at Honey Horn in the Sea



Dunlin

Island Room at 3:00 pm. He will be discussing how the seasons, time of day, weather and locations can change birds, bird behavior and the experience of watching birds. Photographs, stories, and examples will mostly concentrate on the low country. The meeting is open to the public and is without charge.

Robert Rommel received his Bachelors degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Princeton University and attended the University of Michigan for graduate education in Ecology. Education about nature has been a part of his life since early childhood and to this day, he still spends time studying the wildlife and ecosystems he photographs.

He employs his comprehensive knowledge of biology as a tool in understanding his subjects, determining their locations and habits, and predicting behavior. Robert Rommel has taught at various levels, including community groups, children, undergraduate and graduate-level classes. He conducts nature photography workshops and has a website at <http://www.robertrommel.com>.



Reddish Egret



Least Tern



Blue Winged Warbler

Photographs by Robert Rommel

HHI Audubon

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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.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT *by Charlotte White*

- The annual Christmas Bird Count will take place on December 14. Team Captains and most of all volunteer counters are needed in all areas.
- If you want to participate contact Charlotte White by email at docwhite@hargray.com or Barry Lowes at barlowe59@hotmail.com

• More details will be available on the website and *Ecobon* in October.

Information about Audubon Adventures "Sharing Our Earth"

2012-2013 Classroom Kits

By Mary Jane Major

• This is a message received from National Audubon

- We warmly invite your chapter to participate in "Audubon Adventures" 29th season. This acclaimed classroom kit helps 3rd through 6th graders form positive attitudes about nature. Audubon Adventures supports teachers and helps your chapter gain visibility and new members because every teacher enrolled by your chapter becomes a member of Audubon.

- We are busy putting the finishing touches on our newest edition: "Sharing Our Earth" which we believe is one of our best yet! In response to chapter and teacher suggestions we are thrilled to be introducing some new features to the program. This year, each set of nature newspapers will have its own stand-alone Educator's Guide, full of hands-on material, reproducible pages and background information to support educators in their quest to provide their students with the highest quality environmental education. Plus an instructional guide with additional information for teacher's.

- The Student Magazine will thrill and inspire students with vibrant photos and lively illustrations that bring the natural world to life right in the classroom. This year's topics are: • Share Our Shores • Caring For Our Planet-Be a Friend to Birds • The World of the Forest • Grasslands: A Prairies Tale

- Audubon Adventures continues to follow the guidelines for excellence in environmental education as established by the North American Association for Environmental Education, as well as state and national standards for language arts, math, and science and social studies standards. They also include student assessment material for teachers to use.

- Audubon Adventures provides personal service to our volunteers and teachers when you need it. Bonnie Godfrey is at our help desk at the Sharon Audubon Center in Connecticut. Please feel free to contact Bonnie at 800-813-5037, or by e-mail bgodfrey@audubon.org

HELP WANTED

We need presenters for the Great Backyard Bird Count program in local middle schools.

- No experience required! We provide the Barry Lowes 30 bird photos on a CD and training.
- YOU BRING: the HUTZPAH--well, maybe just some confidence, your oratory ability, your Audubon level of bird knowledge, and the WIZARDS OF OZ TRAINERS will pump you up with useful tidbits.

Can you hear desperation?

Call Mary Jane Major, Education Chair at 342-584

NOTES FROM THE NEWHALL PRESERVE

by Jack Greenshields

The Audubon Newhall Preserve has made it through another hot dry summer without experiencing a fire, although this remains a concern of the committee and the neighbors in Sea Pines which border the property. Many volunteer hours have been expended by Audubon and Master Naturalist members augmented by Marriot and others to clear trails and remove vegetation which would be fuel for fires. Special appreciation goes out to Jim and Marianne Currie for their maintenance leadership and Jim's special ability to unload our money post which is filled with donations plus other wildlife that are attracted to its dark confines. During the summer, several trees fell and the Curries were always available with their chainsaw. Thanks also goes out to one of our newest volunteers, Roy Havens who has been providing assistance in the maintenance of the Preserve. During September, the Newhall Committee and Maintenance leadership team will formalize a comprehensive plan for maintaining the Preserve.

Volunteers have come forward to serve as trail monitors for the remainder of the year. Master Naturalist Sandy Hunter stepped forward again for duty during the hot and buggy months of July and August. Master Naturalist Bill Jordan will be our September trail monitor.

One of the purposes of the Newhall Preserve is education. Under consideration is a standing weekly guided walk program covering the plants and wildlife of the Preserve plus its unique history. This would be a 1-2 hour program lead by a trained Audubon volunteer during the months of October, November, and January through May. A training program for those interested in leading guided walks will be held at 10am on September 19 and 26 at the Newhall Preserve. Anyone interested in leading guided walks at the Preserve should e-mail me at jackg308@gmail.com or call 651-491-1851.



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MARRIOTT VACATION CLUB INTERNS VOLUNTEER AT NEWHALL PRESERVE

By Natalie Hefter

The Audubon Newhall Preserve was selected by the Marriott Vacation Club International to be the site for their volunteer project this summer. On July 26th, over 30 interns from all of the Island's Marriott Vacation Club properties were ready to jump in and share their time – and their strength! These young volunteers jumped right in and started hauling landscape debris, pruning dead palm fronds, and clearing pathways.

We also appreciate Marriott's donation of two new "Please Don't Feed the Alligators" signs that were installed near the pond. These handsome additions were installed during the volunteer morning as well....with some supervision....the resident gators kept a close eye on all the activity around the pathways!



Thank you to Laurie Hammonds (Front Office Manager of the Marriott Grand Ocean) and Justi Schmeichel (Director of Operations at the Barony Beach Club) for organizing this great morning. They explained to the group that the Marriott Vacation Club International likes to be a good corporate citizen and that events like these are their way to give back to their communities. We salute and thank all the volunteers for their efforts. Thanks to Marianne and Jim Currie for being there to help direct the volunteers and to Jack Greenshields for coordinating with the Marriott Vacation Club.

Place your ad here!

Call Bill Nicol
for more information
671-4721

ENEMYS OF THE BACKYARD BIRD FEEDER PUBLIC ENEMY #2

by Clem Dietze

We all know that public enemy #1 is the ubiquitous squirrel that devises ingenious ways of bypassing your blocks and baffles. However, if you place a multipurpose feeding station at least 10 feet from a tree or shrub and baffle the pole you are out of their reach unless you have "flying squirrels" which are fortunately rather rare in residential communities.

So we come to #2, the adorably cute Raccoon. Unfortunately, for bird watchers these critters are not only cute but also very agile and clever. You can put a long cylinder baffle on your pole, you can hang your feeders high, and you can grease your pole, baffle, and think you have solved the problem. Sorry, but especially if you live adjacent to a marsh, or swamp where they are plentiful these darlings will find a way to outwit you.

Living adjacent to a marsh and Henri's Pond in Moss Creek I see more than my share of Coons and seeing a mother with babies trailing behind is a most enjoyable sight I often witness after dawn and at twilight. I am puzzled by the disappearance of suet feeders and even an occasional tube feeder not just empty on the ground from my multi hooked feeding station in view from the porch.

Raccoons are primarily nocturnal feeders. I have a penchant for sipping coffee and meditating on my screen porch well before dawn on many a morning.

One pitch-black morning I got an answer. A racket ensued from the direction of the feeding station and I grabbed my torch light and aimed. If I had a telephoto camera with infrared capabilities with me, I would have won a prize from any birders magazine. I was watching a group of acrobatic cheerleaders.

There were four of them. One had spread itself flat out on the ground. One climbed on his back, a second climbed on that one's back and a third one was on the top of the pyramid pulling down seed and suet feeders. I was in total awe. Startled by the light they jumped off and headed into the marsh.

After dawn, I walked out to find one tube feeder empty on the ground, two suet feeders gone, and one tube feeder gone. They had come back after I went inside and dragged their prizes off into the depths of the marsh reeds. I found the tube feeder but the suet feeders were long gone. I wonder how much money I have lost on missing suet feeders in a year. BIRD FEEDER BEWARE!



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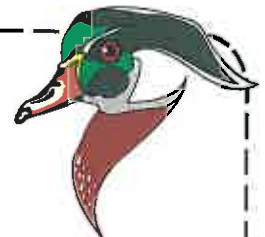
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RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

Our birding summer has been a good one although hot and very dry until recently. We can look forward to our fall migration that is just starting. We hope it will be as successful as our last fall migration when we tallied a "best ever" 34 warbler species and 29 other migrant species. That record will be difficult to top!

We are off to a great early start on our Fall migration having already sighted nine warblers species including: Louisiana and Northern Waterthrushes, American Redstart and Prairie, Yellow, Prothonotary and Black & White Warblers. Some Winter shorebirds are showing up on our beaches like our endangered Piping and Semipalmated Plovers, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Lesser Black-backed Gull and several sandpiper species.

Two very significant "accidental" sightings this Summer were: Black Phoebe on HHI (first ever in the state) and a Limpkin at Savannah NWR (a Florida bird apparently blown in by storm).

Rare birds sighted during the Summer and late Spring were: Roseate Spoonbills (A banner season with 8 reported sightings), Red Crossbill, Pomarine Jaeger (Injured offshore bird), Gray Kingbird, Black-billed Cuckoo, Scarlet Tanager, Purple Sandpiper, Bachman's Sparrow, Solitary Sandpiper, King Rail, White-winged Dove and Swainson's, Blackpoll and Hooded Warblers plus Yellow-breasted Chat (Warblers hold-overs from our Spring migration because the Ecobon is not published after May).

Uncommon species found included: Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites, Purple Gallinule, American and Least Bitterns, Black-necked Stilt, Red-cockaded and Hairy Woodpeckers, Baltimore Oriole, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Greater Black-backed Gull, Least Tern, Loggerhead Shrike, Mottled Duck, Glossy Ibis, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Yellow-billed Cuckoo as well as Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo and Ovenbird (Spring migrant hold-overs).

Other good finds and FOTY sightings reported were: Bobolink, Orchard Oriole, Red Knot, Wood Stork, Gull-billed Tern, Summer Tanager, Bald Eagle, Wilson's Snipe, Common Yellowthroat, Aca-dian Flycatcher and Red-headed Woodpecker.

Many thanks to all reporting their sightings: Natalie Hefter, Carol Clemens, Robert Rommel, Wendy Hansen, Jane Hester, Rita/ Joe Kernan, Diane Rand, Diana Churchill, Dorothy Mosior, Fran/ Denny Baer, Mary Jane Rosenstein, Kathy Greider, Clem Dietze, Ally McNair, Dianne/John Faucette, Shelia/Roger Johnson, Betsy McPherson, Jim Grove, Susan Taylor, Annette Hausman, Bill Nicol, Mary Alice Cruise and Joanne McMemamin.

To report a bird sighting for a rare, out-of-season, uncommon, First-Of-The-Year, First-Of-The-Season species, e-mail: Birding-Friends@yahoo.com or call 843-432-2661 (Must dial the 843) or 290-9469. Please state your name, bird sighted, date/location of your sighting and other pertinent information.

Plan to get outdoors birding during our best birding time of the year and enjoy seeing our wonderful Fall migrants and early arriving Winter birds! Please share your findings with our group.

WWW.eBIRD.ORG

Let's Get Excited!

by Nan Lloyd

Last spring I completed a revision of our website www.hiltonheadaudubon.org. During my summer travels and "surfing" the web I became more acquainted with "ebirding". I have decided our efforts to alert resident and visiting birders through our chapter website heading "Sightings" has become obsolete before it has gotten off the ground. We need to join with the 1000's of "ebirders" around the country/the world in sharing our bird alerts and records.

eBird is a real-time, online, data bank managed by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Their goal is to "maximize the utility and accessibility of the vast numbers of bird observations made daily by recreational and professional bird watchers". An example: pick a bird & see where one has been reported most recently or what's in our area or any other place - now. The charts, graphs & maps are fabulous.

I would like us to put together a group of birders who would like to support this remarkable project in any way, i.e submitting their own checklists, helping others learn the process, reviewing sighting, finding areas to monitor etc, etc.

Hilton Head area birders have collected a wealth of information over the years. Other than the Christmas Bird Counts, the Great Back Yard Counts and specific IBA applications and I don't think any of this is available to science. Last year when I updated our Bird Guide and checklist, I had no actual data to support the conclusions. I relied on the collective memories of our long time birders. We have the enthusiastic and experienced birders, a wonderful location, environment and bird population to make a real contribution to this data bank!

Further, I would like to see our records stored. Loss of habitat and global warming are creating shifts. I remember when I could delight at the Bobwhites scurrying over our dunes. There is not one on the island now! Yet we now having sightings of spoonbills, Limpkins and Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in our greater area.

I encourage everyone to take a look at this website and let's get excited about it! Your own feeder watch can be a contribution! Let me hear from you.

Nan Lloyd nan@nanhiltonhead.com

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SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2012 Calendar

SEPTEMBER

- Thurs. Sept. 6 **Board Meeting** 1:30 pm
 at the Jarvis Room, Old Coastal Discovery Museum
- Thurs. Sept. 13 **Monthly Meeting** 3:00 pm
 at Honey Horn

OCTOBER

- Thurs. Oct. 4 **Board Meeting** 1:30 pm
 at the Jarvis Room, Old Coastal Discovery Museum
- Thurs. Oct. 11 **Monthly Meeting** 3:00 pm
 at Honey Horn

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, at the Sea Island Room at Honey Horn. 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.