

November 2012  
No. 331

# ECOBON

Newsletter of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society  
Audubon Refuge Keepers



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By *Natalie Hester*

The fall season is moving right along and we are all noticing the shorter days. As usual, many of our most active birders are seeing lots of migration activity and have reported a great variety of birds over a long period. At our September meeting, board member Nan Lloyd reminded us all to log on to Cornell University's 'e-bird' to document your sightings. As we continue to promote our region as a great birding destination, doing your own reports can help potential visitors determine if this is a good place to spend some time. Please do try to take some time to visit [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org) and share your sightings.

On Friday, October 12th, several members of the HHI Audubon attended a walk and talk presented by Chris Marsh of the Lowcountry Institute out at Widgeon Point. This property is preserved by Beaufort County and is open by appointment. Patty Kennedy, of the Beaufort County Open Land Trust, was our hostess and welcomed the Hilton Head and Fripp Audubon Societies and the Sun City Bird Club for this fun afternoon / evening. I think that all of our members who attended would agree that this would be a great spot for one of our field trips this year. Look for more information soon.

If you've not visited the Audubon Newhall Preserve lately, I hope that you'll take an opportunity to stop by soon. Kudos to Jack Greenshields, the entire Newhall Committee, trail monitors, extra volunteers and everyone else who have been helping take care of this island treasure!

Looking forward to seeing everyone at our November meeting.

## NOVEMBER PROGRAM *by Nan Lloyd*

Thursday, November 8, 2012, 3:00 p.m. at Honey Horn in Sea Island Room

### *Birding on the Bering Sea "Land Bridge"*

Nan Lloyd will be presenting an account of her June birding trip to Gambell on St Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea and Nome on the coast of northwestern Alaska at the November 8th meeting of the Hilton Head Audubon Society. Come and see her story of "birding among the Eskimos" at Honey Horn in the Sea Island Room at 3:00 pm. The meeting is open to the public and is without charge.

Nan has traveled abroad extensively over the "years". In more recent times she has taken eight American Birding Association Area birding trips with Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours. This last one was highlighted with Asian and North American rarities: White-tailed Eagle, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Siberian Chiffchaff / Willow Warbler, all four eiders etc.. Two of the sightings were reported in national publications. Nan's prize, however, was a Northern Wheatear - her 600th ABA lifer.

Upon graduation from Chestnut Hill College Nan relocated to Wilmington DE where since '69 she birded with the DELMARVA Ornithological Society. She retired as a patent agent from the DuPont Co. and in '92 moved permanently to her home in Sea Pines and joined Sea Pines Real Estate. She is a broker at the Harbour Town Cottage.

On arrival here the Hilton Head Audubon Society asked her to be the Field Trip Chairperson.

In 2003-05 she served as President and since that time has continued as a Board member, Christmas Bird Count captain and the Count's overall compiler. Most recently Nan extensively revised our "Birder's Guide to Hilton Head Island and the Low Country" and reorganized and updated our website [www.hiltonheadaudubon.org](http://www.hiltonheadaudubon.org) Her latest project is to encourage our members to participate in Cornell / Audubon [www.eBird.com](http://www.eBird.com).



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### Bird Walks/Field Trips

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### Bird House Construction

Jim Currie 681-8525

### Bird Seed Sale

Ed Nash 681-5725

### Christmas Bird Count

Charlotte White 837-4597

### Education

Mary Jane Major 342-5804

### Historian

Shelia Johnson 295-5562

### Hospitality

OPEN

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Clem Dietze 837-2612

### Membership

Carol Clemens 689-2903

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Sally Krebs H: 757-2973 O: 341-4690

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 29936 or call one of the above officers or chairpersons

# Don't Forget!

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Friday, December 14, 2012

# Bird Seed Sale Coming Soon!



## PROJECT FEEDER WATCH

by Jack Colcolough

If you have feeders and/or enjoy watching the birds in your yard, you may want to join Project Feeder Watch (PFW) and count/report your findings weekly to The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The season starts in November and lasts into early April each year. You can spend just a few minutes or hours on each of two days/week observing and counting your yard birds.



Your input will become an important part of the citizen science data that is used to determine important trends for North American bird populations over the years. This will be the 25th season for this very worthwhile project. You will also receive the latest bird news in Winter Bird Highlights and Birdscope. The cost to join is \$15/season to cover the extensive handling of data and the publications.



If you are interested in joining PFW, you can do so online at: [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) or call toll free at (800) 843-2473 and get more information about the project. PFW is a lot of fun to do as some of our Audubon members will attest to! Come join us!

## NOTES FROM THE NEWHALL PRESERVE

by Jack Greenshields

Maintaining and improving the Audubon Newhall Preserve is a significant challenge. Our next workday at the Preserve is scheduled for Saturday morning, November 10 and all members are invited. Of course there are some who volunteer their time more often and individuals helping out on their own schedule are always appreciated.

Local artist Mary Kelly has submitted Beany Newhall to the Rotary Club as a candidate for the Hall of Fame. Several current Audubon members assisted.

Notice has been provided to local publications regarding Audubon conducting guided walks at the Newhall Preserve at 10am on November 1, 18, and 15. They will resume again in mid January and continue until late May. A number of members of the Master Naturalists association have volunteered to lead walks,

Audubon member and Master Naturalist Rita Kernan has volunteered to assume the duties of plant identification and will be in charge of all plant signage. This has been done by Mary Alice Walker who is aided in the transition. Thanks to both Rita and Mary Alice!

A task force to study the possibility of a fuel break around the Preserve perimeter has been formed by adjacent Sea Pines property owners. Audubon member Tom Hennessey is chairing this effort and the first meeting was held in October. Joan Shulman attended and briefed the group on the history of the Preserve.

The Preserve Committee and Audubon Board have approved approximately \$6,100 in expenditures for the Newhall Preserve. A money post for donations has been ordered from Iron Rangers of Spokane Valley, WA. Gum Tree Nursery is removing the old rusted money post and installing the new one. Gum Tree will also work around the pond to remove swamp willow, wax myrtle, sweet gum and tallow as well as limbing up some trees to open the view and allow a regrowth of other native plants. The parking lot will also be regrated with stone added and the entrance is being modified so that there will be a pull out so two vehicles can safely pass as well as allowing small bus parking.

Thanks to Ron Howenstine for being our trail monitor for October.

Anyone interested in assisting or learning more about the Newhall Preserve should contact Jack Greenshields at jackg308@gmail.com or call 651-491-1851.

## RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

We are having a very fine Fall migration and one of our earliest that started in early August and isn't over yet. Some winter shorebirds, songbirds and even ducks are already showing up.

Our warbler count during migration is up to 26 species and counting including the rare Cape May, Black-throated Green and Blackburnian Warblers, the uncommon Orange-crowned Warbler and Ovenbird and early Yellow-rumps to add to last month's species. Non-warbler migrants have totaled nine species and included the rare Scarlet Tanager and Broad-winged Hawk as well as the Bobolink, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Swainson's Thrush to add to last month's species. Migrant warblers have been found at Crystal Lake in Indigo Run for 66 consecutive days and still counting that included 22 warbler species.

Other rare sightings reported were: Red-breasted Nuthatch, Roseate Spoonbill and Lincoln's Sparrow. Other uncommon finds were: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-bellied

whistling Duck, Blue-headed Vireo, Caspian Tern, Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Purple Gallinule, American Kestrel, White-breasted Nuthatch and Sharp-shinned Hawk. Other good sightings included: Early arriving Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-winged Teal, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier as well as Painted Bunting, Summer Tanager, Gray Catbird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird and common species.

Many thanks to all reporting their sightings: Natalie Heftner, Robert Rommel, Fran/Danny Baer, Jane Hester, Dottie Bass, Miriam Waterhouse, Nan Lloyd, Annette Hausman, Deb Beam, Karen Petterson, Diane Faucette, Carol Clemens, Diana Churchill, Kathy/Grant Greider, Buddy Campbell, Jim Grove, Joanne McMenamain, Nancy Hayes, Rita Kernan, Dorothy Mosior, Wendy Hansen, Mary Ann Lueckel and several visitors.

To report bird sighting that is rare, out-of-season, uncommon, First-Of-The-Year (FOTY) or First-Of-The-Season (FOTS), e-mail: [BirdingFriends@YahooGroups.com](mailto:BirdingFriends@YahooGroups.com) or call 290-9469. Please state your name, the bird sighted, date/location of your sighting and other pertinent information.

Enjoy our wonderful fall birding with the arrival of our winter shorebirds, songbirds and ducks as our migrating birds complete their passing through our area.



# TEN TIPS FOR A HAPPY & SUCCESSFUL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Ted Floyd [Reprinted with permission, from Ted's message to prospective Boulder Christmas Bird Count participants. Posted to Colorado birding list (CoBirds) on 12/2/2004. Birds in Colorado are a little different from those in North Carolina, but the principle's the same.] Editor of Birding American Birding Association - Boulder, Colorado

First, a word of preamble: The whole point of the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is to have fun. I think we actually lose sight of that point every now and then. I've been doing CBCs every year since I was fourteen; most years, I do more than one. The CBC for me is like Christmas morning and Super Bowl Sunday all rolled up into one. On Count Day, there's the thrill of discovery and the satisfaction of spending time with old (avian) friends. I can't fathom anything I'd rather do than count birds for the CBC. (Except spend time with my wife and daughter, in case they're reading this.) Another word of preamble: There is no One True Way to a happy and successful Christmas Bird Count. The formula I outline below works for me. But there are other legitimate approaches. I understand that some CBCers actually break for lunch, bird in groups, and don't go owling. Personally, I can't relate to such approaches. But, again, I acknowledge that such approaches can lead to happiness, and maybe even success.

And now for the ten tips:

1. Bird in small groups. The smaller the better. The best group size, N, is N=1. Consider that a CBC circle is 177 square miles. Even if you had 177 participants, each one of them covering exactly 1 square mile, there is no way you'd have thorough coverage of the count circle. A square mile is huge! You could spend two weeks exploring a single square mile of the foothills around Boulder. There's no question about it: The more party-hours, the more birds; and the more parties, the more party-hours.
2. Cover lots of ground. In the CBC calculus, maximizing party-hours is the most important thing to do. But maximizing party-miles runs a close second. You're going to see twice as many birds along a four-mile stretch as along a two-mile stretch. Note that, mile-for-mile, party-miles by foot are incomparably more valuable than party-miles by car. On foot, you can actually hear birds. And you're not limited just to views through your grimy windshield.
3. Scout your territory. Get out into your assigned sector a few days before Count Day. Figure out where that Wilson's Snipe is hunkered down for the winter. Figure out which residences have bird feeders. Work the hedgerows and determine where sparrows and finches are hanging out. Many of the best birds on the Boulder CBC (indeed, any CBC) are those scouted out in advance.
4. Have a plan. Given that your sector is going to be unmanageably huge (see #1), figure out your itinerary in advance. Many birds, e.g., ducks, raptors, gulls, exhibit regular and predictable patterns of movement during the day. Be sure to leave enough time to get to all of the major destinations on your itinerary, bearing in mind that it's dark before 5:00 p.m. on Count Day in Boulder.
5. Be flexible. Don't get too uptight about #4, above. If you're faced with high winds, get into a sheltered spot; the birds are going to be there, too. If there was a freeze-up the night before, try to figure out where the aquatic species may have relocated to. If you come across a large flock of passerines, spend a lot of time with them; there may well be a goodie mixed in with the commoners.
6. Stay out, stay long. The longer you're outdoors, the more you're going to see. I've had many of my best birds while munching a snack, while walking between points that I might otherwise have driven, and even, ahem, while watering the trees. Sitting in restaurants or driving cars is so boring. Sitting down next to a Canyon Wren or spooking a Merlin is totally cool. Make the most of Count Day, 'cause you're going to be back in your cube, back in the car, the next day.
7. Pay attention to "forms". It's an ungainly term: "Forms" refer to all of those interesting morphs, races, age-classes, etc. that don't actually boost the species total but that are very much worth noting, all the same. Examples: Dark-eyed Junco subspecies, Northern Flicker intergrades, Bald Eagle age-classes. National Audubon really does request this information from us, and paying attention to "forms" adds spice to winter birding. Note that certain taxa that do not count for your ABA life list nonetheless do count for the CBC. A good example in Boulder is Sharp-tailed Grouse (not yet "established" for ABA counting purposes, but valid for NAS reporting purposes).
8. Go owling. For my money, owling is the best part of the CBC. It's the mystique, the mystery, the serenity of a quiet winter's night in the woods. Plus, it's a great way to endear yourself to the CBC compiler. As a corollary, consider focusing in on other commonly overlooked taxa and guilds, e.g., Virginia Rails and other marsh denizens, Blue Grouse and Three-toed Woodpeckers in montane woodlands, even Horned Larks in the corn stubble. (Seriously, we've missed Horned Lark several years recently!)
9. Count Week birds count. There's a stigma, it seems, about birds observed "only in Count Week, not on Count Day". Honestly, I don't get it. For one thing, it's intrinsically interesting to know what's around, even if it's missed on count day. Moreover, National Audubon really does desire Count Week data. Look at it this way: By taking Count Week seriously, you get to septuple the fun!
10. Every bird counts! Yes, every Dark-eyed Junco, Ring-billed Gull, Brown-headed Cowbird. (Actually, Brown-headed Cowbird is a decent bird on the Boulder CBC, but you catch my drift.) Don't get me wrong: It's great fun to find a Harris's Sparrow in a flock of White-crowns, to find a Mew Gull in a flock of Ring-billeds. But it's just as fun to work through the big flocks of common species. I find that actually taking the time to count, say, Ring-billed Gulls (954, 955, 956...) is the best way to find a rarity (957... oh, wait, that's a Mew Gull!).



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Founded in 1974, the Hilton Head/Bluffton Audubon Society uses 100% of local membership dues for programs and activities in our own area. Your local dues provide support for the following:

- Monthly programs
- Field Trips
- Citizen Science projects such as the Christmas Bird Count
- Audubon Newhall Preserve
- Education Outreach programs such as Audubon Adventures in local schools
- Various learning opportunities

We need your help to continue these activities. All of the above are possible through our LOCAL DUES! We do NOT receive national funds for any of our local programs. Please join the Hilton Head Island/Bluffton chapter of the Audubon Society and support these local programs. Remember.....100% of the chapter dues stay LOCAL!

For membership information, contact: [enews@hiltonheadaudubon.org](mailto:enews@hiltonheadaudubon.org)

Please detach and mail or bring to the next meeting.

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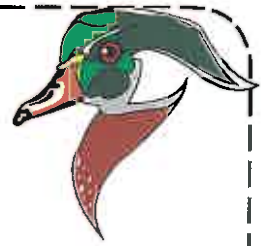
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## NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2012 Calendar

### NOVEMBER

- Thurs. Nov. 8 **Monthly Meeting**..... 3:00 pm  
at the Sea Island Room at Honey Horn
- Sat. Nov. 10 **Newhall Work Day**..... 8:00 am  
at the Newhall Preserve

### DECEMBER

- Weds. Dec. 5 **Monthly Meeting** at First Presbyterian Church .6:00 pm
- Thurs. Dec. 6 **Board Meeting** at the Seabrook ..... 1:30 pm  
at the Armstrong-Hack Conference Rm at Honey Horn
- Fri. Dec. 14 **Christmas Bird Count** ..... All Day

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, in 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.

*Due to computer/printer issues, there may be some errors. - We'll get the bugs worked out by December issue.  
I apologize for any problems - Julie at The Island Printer*