



September 2013
No. 338

Audubon

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Rick Riebesell*

Paying Attention

Mirroring the habit of many island residents of slowing down (or leaving) during the heat of the summer, the Hilton Head Audubon Society has meetings September through May, and takes June, July, and August off. As the September meeting date approaches, the Ecobon newsletter comes out, and our active period begins.

During the summer, the Board has spent time reviewing and revising a strategic plan, creating budgets, and beginning the work for the various activities we will accomplish during the year. These activities include: selling bluebird houses, arranging for programs to be presented at each monthly meeting, organizing an introductory birding course to be held at the Coastal Discovery Museum (CDM), the annual birdseed sale and membership drive, managing the Newhall Preserve, conducting the Christmas Bird Count, organizing field trips, and holding the annual picnic.

So why do we do this? If you are reading this, chances are you are a member, so maybe you have an answer that works for you. If so, I am glad you do, and am pleased you have joined us. For me, the reason the Hilton Head Audubon Society makes sense is that it helps me continue to pay attention.

When presented with a spectacular wonder of nature, there are few people who cannot appreciate it. It is easy to appreciate nature when standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, but it is more difficult to perceive the wonder of nature while contemplating pigeons in a dirty city park. Although at all times we are surrounded by wonders of nature, many people do not pay attention. Their inattention makes it easy to compute the delicate equations involving nature and our use of it. These easily solved equations "pave paradise and put up a parking lot." I am not against development, but when humans change the natural environment, I want to have paid attention and pay attention. I want to see the complexity of the issues. As I pay attention, I realize that many of the things we are doing to this planet do not make sense.

Nature activities, especially birding, involve two difficult tasks: listening and watching. The uninitiated will find these activities boring. When mastered, these tasks are no longer boring but a source of enlightenment. As you master and improve your ability to listen and watch, you will become more aware of what life has to offer. Some of the aids to paying attention are identification, making lists, and accruing knowledge. Audubon is full of people who are getting better at and mastering the art of paying attention, and they are willing to teach and share. That is really something, and as President of the Hilton Head Audubon Society my biggest concern is that I do not adversely alter our course.

Natalie Hefter was President last year. I aspire to come close to her performance. She is a great multi-tasker, a talented people person, and possesses tremendous common sense. I will need more help than she did to keep this ship upright and cruising. Please become more active in Audubon this year. Your participation will enable us to do a better job in meeting the goals of our strategic plan, it will help me and the other officers and members, but mostly it will help you pay attention. The more people we have paying attention, the better off we will be.

Field Trip Leaders and Sites for 2013-14

Interested in visiting a particular birding site with fellow Audubon members?

Have a trip in mind that you've always wanted to do?

We are looking for ideas for field trip locations, dates and tour leaders for this year's trips.

Please contact Carlos Chacon at cchacon@coastaldiscovery.org or
290-0804 to discuss any ideas that you have.



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.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

Presented by: Fran Baer and Carol Clemens...with additional comments by Jack Colcolough
Thursday, September 12, 2013, 3:00 p.m. at Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn in the Sea Island Room.

“Wandering Wood Warblers”

Fran Baer and Carol Clemens will provide an overview of local warblers and share their photos of these colorful songbirds. General tips will be provided to help you identify the most common warblers that migrate through our area. Learn some cute expressions that might help you with identification.

Our resident warbler expert, Jack Colcolough will be on hand to add his comments, too!

Carol Clemens has been involved in birding and photographing nature as a hobby since she retired as a Spanish teacher in 2005. She is a South Carolina Master Naturalist and volunteers regularly as a docent for the Coastal Discovery Museum.



Fran Baer became interested in photographing nature - and especially birds - when a co-worker (and Audubon member) in Atlanta suggested Hilton Head Island as a vacation getaway 38 years ago. Many HHI vacations later, she and husband Denny retired here in 2003 and became involved in HHI Audubon as well as the Camera Club of HHI activities. Membership in both organizations have helped her to expand her skills in and knowledge of birds, birding, and photography...with so much still to learn!

Bird Boxes by Jim Reeves

In the Spring of 2008, the Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn launched a bluebird monitoring program that has now completed its 6th year. This project was first organized by Carlos Chacon, Manager of Natural History, and coordinated by yours truly, Jim Reeves. I have had a wonderful group of “monitors” to assist me during this period: John and Dianne Faucette, Marianne Currie, and Betty Zurla.



There are 28 numbered bird boxes scattered throughout the 68 acres of Honey Horn property and each Spring, sometime in March, the monitoring begins when the bluebirds and chickadees first start their nesting activity. Generally, the incubation of the eggs takes about 2 weeks and the fledging takes another 2 weeks. Changes happen quickly and we try to check the boxes at least once a week.

For this 2013 nesting season, which ended around August 10th, there were nests in 20 of the 28 bird boxes. Bluebirds occupied 16 of the boxes and chickadees were in the other 4 boxes. Since bluebirds (usually) and chickadees (sometimes) have 2 broods a year, there were actually 32 nests altogether. From these numbers, we estimate that 67 blue birds and 16 chickadees actually fledged. It was a very good year!

Of course, opening the lids of the bird boxes to check the contents is not without surprises. It’s like Forrest Gump said about the box of chocolates, “You never know what you’re gonna get?” Sometimes the box might be filled with cockroaches, red ants, locusts, or even a snake. But these are the exceptions and not the rule.

Between now and next March, we will repair and/or replace any broken boxes and decide if some of the boxes need to be relocated. During this “off season”, if you think you would like to become involved with our Bluebird Monitoring Program, you may contact me at 843-836-3355 or email me at jkreeves9060@hotmail.com. We would be happy to have you join our team.

NOTES FROM THE NEWHALL PRESERVE

by Jack Greenshields

After taking the summer off, our team of trained volunteers will again start conducting guided walks of the Audubon Newhall Preserve. These walks will be offered Thursdays at 10am (weather permitting) starting September 5 and will end November 21. No reservations are required and the walks are free to the public. However, donations are appreciated as they are an important source of income to offset maintenance expenses.

The plants which were installed around the observation deck by the pond are doing well due to our steamy summer. Two new volunteers who are Master Gardeners have been caring for our plants. Thanks to Marcia Sullivan and Steve Rupprecht for lending their expertise.

Trail Monitors are volunteers who check the Preserve weekly for damage or issues requiring maintenance. Joanne McMenamin did this in June and Sandy Hunter in July and August. Bill Jordan also assisted in August. Tom Hennessey has volunteered for September. It seems that we have had an unusual number of trees and limbs falling this spring and summer. Roy Havens has assisted in tree removal and I am thankful that my chainsaw still starts.

With the cooler weather, we will again need volunteers to perform group maintenance of the Audubon Newhall Preserve. Our first workday of the season is scheduled for September 14 at 9:30 am.

Everyone is welcome!

The property survey of the Newhall Preserve boundaries has been completed. Special markers identifying the Preserve property line were installed at intervals along the perimeter which abuts Sea Pines residences. The signage is neutral but obvious and should discourage any encroachment by individual Sea Pines property owners. The surveyors also marked by flags a vegetation buffer and a potential fuel break. Audubon member and Sea Pines Taskforce chair Tom Hennessey and I walked the perimeter with another Sea Pines Board member and a representative of Sea Pines CSA and the project was presented to Sea Pines residents and town fire chief. Tom is collecting comments from residents, none of which to date have voiced serious objections to the potential project. If all parties agree, we will submit a grant request to the South Carolina Forestry Commission.

RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

We are entering into the best birding season of our year! Hopefully, it will be as successful as our 2012 Fall migration when we sighted 27 warbler species and 22 other migrant species in our area as well as a record of 79 consecutive days of finding migrating warblers at Crystal Lake in Indigo Run. Since our summer has been a cooler and wetter than normal, maybe our current Fall season can approach the success of last Fall ... And that will be tough to do!

We have only had two early FOTS reports of American Redstarts so far for our Fall warbler migration. However, many of our Winter shorebirds are already showing up on our beaches including the endangered Piping Plover, Marbled Godwit, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Spotted Sandpiper, Dowitcher, Least Sandpiper, Sanderling, etc. as well as an early arriving FOTS Eastern Kingbird.

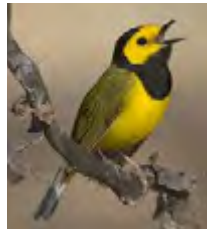
Note: Sightings in this issue covers the period from mid April through mid August since NO Ecobons were issued during the Summer.

One accidental sighting was reported: Red-necked Phalarope on Tybee Island late last Spring.

Rare species sighted were:

This Summer: Roseate Spoonbills on HHI, Skidaway Island and Savannah NWR and Gray Kingbird on Tybee Island

Late Last Spring: Gray-cheeked Thrush, Virginia Rail and Hooded Warbler at Savannah NWR, Short-tailed Hawk at Tybee Island, Solitary Sandpiper on HHI and Savannah NWR and Scarlet Tanager and White-winged Dove at Moss Creek.



Hooded Warbler

Uncommon species reported the period were: Reddish Egret, Piping Plover, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Whimbrel, American White Pelican, Least Tern, Black-necked Stilt, Mottled Duck, Least Bittern, Glossy Ibis, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bobolink, Yellow Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Veery, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-throated Vireo, Pine Siskin and Purple Gallinule.

Other good finds reported included:

Summer Tanager, OOS American Goldfinch, OOS American Coot, Painted Bunting, Wood Stork, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Black-throated Blue and Prothonotary Warblers, Orchard Oriole, Purple Martin, Common Nighthawk, Bonaparte's Gull and a number of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and other common species.

Many thanks to all reporting your sightings: Barry Lowes, Natalie Hefter, Carol Clemens, Fran/Denny Baer, Diane Rand, Charlotte White, Jane Hester, Dianne Faucette, Annette Hausman, Dick Phillips, Kathy/Grant Greider, Kay Hodnett, Jim Grove, Shelia/Roger Johnson, George Panini, Joanne McMemamin, Diana Churchill, Karen Mart, Russ Wigh, John Crawshaw and several visitors.

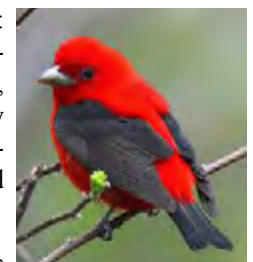
To report a bird sighting that is Accidental, Rare, Out-Of-Season (OOS), Uncommon, First-Of-The-Year (FOTY) or First-Of-The-Season (FOTS) e-mail: BirdingFriends@yahoo.com or call 290-9469. Please state your name, the bird species sighted, date and location of your sighting and any other pertinent information.

You should plan to do some birding during our great Fall season and enjoy finding some of our arriving Fall migrants and Winter birds. Please report your sightings to us.

Good Birding!



Red necked Phalarope



Scarlet Tanager

Report on Banded Wood Storks from DNR News

Photos courtesy of SCDNR

During 2013, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) banded over 50 wood storks with field-readable bands. The bands used in South Carolina are orange with black numbers. Several other color combinations are being used for other projects. Researchers throughout the southeast are banding storks as part of a collaborative project to learn more about their movements, demography, and longevity.

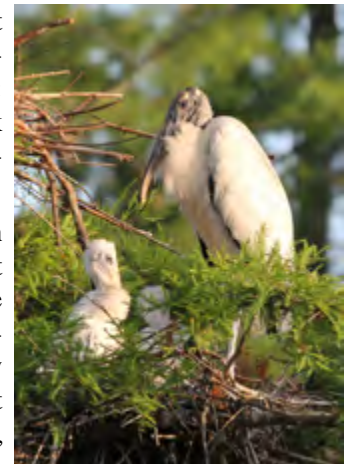
If you see wood storks, you can check to see if they have bands by looking at their upper legs. Some storks have multiple bands, but typically only one of the bands has a code made up of numbers and/or letters. If you see a banded stork, you can contribute to this project by recording the following information: 1) color of band, 2) color of engraved code, 3) code, 4) location of band on stork – which leg, 5) color and location of any additional bands or transmitter on stork, 6) location where stork is located.

Please report any sightings of banded wading birds to DNR at wadingbirds@dnr.sc.gov and also to the Bird Banding Lab at www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/bblretrv/index.cfm? or 1-800-327-BAND. We often can provide you with information about where the bird was banded.

Satellite transmitters are also being used by researchers to answer a variety of management questions about wood storks. Nine wood storks were outfitted with transmitters at the Washo Reserve in South Carolina last year. You can learn about their travels on the Wildlife Tracking website: www.wildlifetracking.org/index.shtml?project_id=159 and on the Washo Wood Storks Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pages/Washo-Wood-Storks/114701865336534.



In addition to the storks that nest in South Carolina, many storks that nest in other states visit South Carolina during the fall to feed. Storks are regularly seen throughout the Lowcountry, sometimes in large groups. Storks are also occasionally seen farther inland. For more information about storks and other wading birds in South Carolina, please see the DNR Wading Bird website at www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/species/wadingbirds/index.html.



Please detach and mail or bring to the next meeting.

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

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 Field Trips Conservation Education Christmas Bird Count Publicity/Programs other _____

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

Audubon CBC is December 14, 2013

In May, just before many of us dispersed in various directions for the summer, Barry Lowes and Charlotte White met with 17 leaders in the Christmas Bird Count. The most important news given at the meeting is that the next Christmas Bird Count is on December 14, 2013!

But here is a summary of things addressed at the meeting:

- Barry thanked the group again, saying that 2012 was a banner year with regards to the review from the regional administrators in the CBC!
- The next CBC will be on December 14, 2013, a Saturday.
- Barry reviewed ways to recruit new counters or get old counters to return each year.
- The group reviewed ways to start in the early fall to publicize the CBC in each gated community or neighborhood.
- Consider some bird walks in your neighborhood through the year. Know your hot spots and brush up on sparrows.
- Considerable time was given to strengths and weaknesses in protocol. Some good questions were raised.

So as you Audubon members consider the Christmas Bird Count, we ask you to start early in helping us to recruit new members to participate. We also ask you to help your community to “brush up” on identifying sparrows and on knowing your “hot spots” for good counting. Contact your neighborhood CBC leader offer help. More news will be forthcoming this fall about details of the CBC!

~ by Charlotte White

½ MILLION PURPLE MARTINS!

By John Faucette

On July 16, Fran & Denny Baer and Dianne & John Faucette traveled to Lake Murray, just north of Columbia, to join 80 other bird watchers to see from 300,000 to 700,000 Purple Martins landing to roost for the evening on Bomb Island. Our host was the South Carolina Wildlife Federation and we boarded the Southern Patriot double-decker cruise ship at 7:00PM for the annual excursion.

We arrived at Bomb Island about sunset to see an amazing spectacle—the sky was black with a multitude of North America’s largest swallow. The Martins roost on this island every night from June to August, just prior to their annual migration to South America. Each morning during this time, parents and fledglings leave the island *en masse* (can even be seen on Doppler radar), to forage, flying up to 100 miles to their nesting site. They leave the nesting site in time to arrive back at Lake Murray by sunset and repeat the same process all over again the next day. The Lake Murray site is the largest roosting area for Purple Martins in North America. The island affords these birds a safe place to spend the night free of predators.

We enjoyed a buffet picnic aboard the ship and listened to a very interesting Purple Martin lecture given by SCWF naturalist Josh Arrants. We returned to the dock at 10:00PM after a fun evening, The South Carolina Wildlife Federation sponsors this trip every year and is available to all SCWF members for a reasonable price. The trip is announced in March and books up quickly.





Festival Centre at Indigo Park
45 Pembroke Dr., Suite 130
Hilton Head Island, SC 29926
843-681-4461

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Want to share your love of birding?

Consider joining the Education Committee to help pass along the joys of birding to our younger residents. Please contact Mary Jane Major to get involved in these rewarding programs and outings, 342-5804.



Founded in 1974, the Hilton Head 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 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

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P.O. Box 6185
Hilton Head, South Carolina 29938
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SEPTEMBER ~ OCTOBER 2013 Calendar

SEPTEMBER

Thurs. Sept. 5 **Board Meeting** 10:00 am
at the Country Club of Hilton Head
Thurs. Sept. 12 **Monthly Meeting** at Honey Horn 3:00 pm

OCTOBER

Thurs. Oct. 3 **Board Meeting** 10:00 am
at the Country Club of Hilton Head
Thurs. Oct. 10 **Monthly Meeting** at Honey Horn 3:00 pm

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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 Honey Horn. Members and guests welcome!



BEQUESTS

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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.