



Ecobon

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Rick Riebesell*

PICTURES OF BIRDS

When I first worked with Barry Lowes, I was the program director for the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society and Barry was making a presentation on the birds most likely to be seen on the Christmas Bird Count. I put together what I thought was a pretty good press release, adding some interesting information about Barry I found on the Internet. I sent him a copy of the press release and promptly received back an edited response removing most of the material about him.

When I talked to him later he told me, "They don't care anything about me – it is the birds that matter." I am sure he believes that to be the case, but I know he is wrong.

Barry's annual presentation on the birds most likely to be seen on the Christmas Bird Count consists of a review of 135 pictures of birds. The pictures of the birds have been taken by Barry. Originally it was done from slides. The slides then went on a DVD. For the last two years, the presentation has been by PowerPoint. I helped Barry put the PowerPoint presentation together and have advanced the slides for him in the presentation. I had the idea of putting a picture of the bird without a caption and then with a caption. I don't think Barry liked that idea all that much. He never said anything directly to me about it, but what he instructed me was: "Just leave the slide without the name up for a few seconds, the people who know it will know right away and for everyone else give them the slide with the name." He did not want to make anyone feel uncomfortable.

Barry draws over 100 people each time he gives the presentation, and I am pretty sure it is not because of the Christmas Bird Count or just the pictures of the birds (although they are really good pictures).

I enjoyed the last presentation so much, I spent some time trying to figure out why the presentation was so good. With every picture Barry shared the enjoyment he derived from knowing about the bird, going to where it lived, and taking its picture. You could see how fulfilling birding was for Barry. A bit of that had to rub off. Also, what comes through from Barry's presentation is the essence of the gentleman that he is. He actually cares if you derive the same enjoyment he does from birding. The show is not about what Barry knows, but what he hopes you will discover for yourself. This is the essence of effective pedagogy.

On March 6 we are honoring Barry along with Charlotte White and Nan Lloyd. All have been stalwart in their work for HHIAS and especially for the Christmas Bird Count. All three are worthy of recognition. Many of the attendees will be thinking back to times spent looking at pictures of birds with a kind, humble man, who with the skill of a talented teacher, shared his joy in paying attention to nature.

*Don't miss the Buffet Supper to Honor Retiring Leaders!
More information on page 5*

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Marianne Currie 681-8525

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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.

MARCH PROGRAM *by: Kathy Greider, Program Director*

Thursday, March 13, 2014 at 3:00 pm

Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn, 70 Honey Horn Drive, Sea Island Room



The Story of Whimbrels and their Extremely Long Annual Migration

Tim Keyes's presentation is entitled "The Story of Whimbrels and Their Extremely Long Annual Migration". Tim received his Bachelor of Arts in Physical Geography from Middlebury College in Vermont and his Masters of Arts in Physical Geography from University of Georgia. Tim began his

career as the Director of Nature Study Program for Children in Maine then on to Massachusetts working for the Manomet Bird Observatory. Tim has held other interesting positions before his move to the GA DNR where he has been employed since 2000. First Tim worked for DNR at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center, Mansfield, GA as a researcher and Outreach Coordinator to both adults and children. While at CEWC Tim also wrote Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas. Since 2005, Tim has worked as a Wildlife Biologist in Forsyth, GA and now in Brunswick. In these last 14 years Tim worked to help protect the Wood Stork, Swallow-tailed Kite, Painting Buntings, and other shorebirds/seabirds. Tim has also played a big part in the promotion of bird education through International Migratory Bird Day and other bird education initiatives.

He has volunteered as a board member for the Atlanta Audubon Society, as Field Trip Coordinator and with the Georgia Bird a Thon. Currently Time is teaching with the AAS's Master Birder course. His most interesting sounding volunteer position was at Rocha Bird Observatory in Algarve, Portugal, where Tim served as the Volunteer Warden assisted in their migratory bird banding project, raptor/shorebird counts, and beach surveys.

Tim has authored or co-authored nine technical articles that have been published in various scientific journals. His career goal has been to champion the long-term protection and conservation of wildlife through natural history research.

An addition segment to this program is featured on Page 4

New Members

Welcome to our new HHI Audubon Society members who have joined between Jan. 20 and Feb. 22. We look forward to their participation in our activities.

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Karen Anderson | Marion Moore |
| Mary Anne Bastek | Tom Morse |
| Jane and Robert Hester | Patt Rapp |
| Lois Johnson | Pam and Dave Schofield |
| Margie and Jake Kriney | Lois Waster |
| | C. Paul and N. Kathryn Weatherhead |

Four of these new members joined at the February 22nd "Audubon Day" at Wild Birds Unlimited. Thanks to Virginia Culter for supporting this activity and also our birdseed sale.

Thanks to all who have renewed their dues upon receipt of the email dues reminder. Remember, even if you pay National dues, our local chapter gets nothing from those dues after the first year. Our local dues allow us to continue to provide a meeting place, speakers, field trips etc. Not getting the *Ecobon* emailed to you? It means either your dues are in arrears by 6 months or we do not have your correct email. Questions? Not sure if it is time to renew? Need to update your contact info? Just email Carol at cclemens318@roadrunner.com

NOTES FROM THE NEWHALL PRESERVE

by Jack Greenshields

The fuelbreak construction was completed without incident on January 30. The neighboring owners in Sea Pines now believe that their property is better protected from fire without deteriorating the security or view. Because of the proximity of the neighboring properties near the Preserve entrance, a portion of the fuelbreak was created by the entrance, parking area, and main Newhall trail. This section needs some maintenance/cleanup work and some understory plantings will be allowed to recover and additional plant specimens may be installed. Newhall committee member Tom Hennessey was instrumental in handling the effective communications with Sea Pines.

Audubon will again be conducting guided walks in the Preserve Thursday mornings at 10 am in March, April, and May. The walks are free to the public but donations are appreciated. Volunteers leading the guided walks in March include Marie McClune, Kay Grinnell, Joanne McMenamin, and Mary Alice Walker. Everyone is welcome to join in the walks!

Bob Clemens is in the process of the development of an open space policy plan. Bob and his dog Dixie also have been the Newhall Preserve trail monitors for the month of February.

The Town of Hilton Head Public Safety Committee is considering the installation of a bicycle/pedestrian crossing from the opposite side of Palmetto Bay Road to the Preserve entrance. This will make access to the Newhall Preserve safer for those traveling by bicycle or on foot. When this is approved, a bicycle rack will be installed at the Preserve at modest cost.

Should anyone have any questions or has some time to volunteer at the Newhall Preserve, please call 651-491-1851 or e-mail at jackg308@gmail.com.

Thank You!

Many thanks go to the volunteers that met the folks coming into Wild Birds in response to the ads in the Packet. We gave out 20 2-pound bags of Deluxe bird seed furnished by Virginia. The "Audubon Local Recruiting team" had an interesting and productive day, with much appreciation to: Marianne Currie, Joan Wilson, Pauline Jones, Mary Jane Major, Jack Greenshields, Bill Nicol, and Kathy Grieder. Way to GO!

~ Ed Nash

RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

It has been a very good birding month in our area despite our cold weather. A significant number of rare and uncommon birds have been reported. Some members have participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count and Project Feeder Watch and reported their sightings.

Rare species reported this month were: Long-tailed Duck at Savannah NWR and Fort Pulaski, Western Tanager at Sun City, Snowy Owl, Glaucous Gull and Purple Sandpiper on Tybee Island, Brown Creeper at Fort Pulaski, Western Kingbird on Hutchinson Island, an injured Brown Booby in Savannah, Fox Sparrow at Savannah NWR and Scarlet Tanager on Hilton Head Island.

Out-Of-Season and over-wintering birds sighted: Painted Bunting in Bluffton and Beaufort and Ruby-throated Hummingbird on HHI.

Uncommon species found include: Baltimore Oriole (male and female), Loggerhead Shrike, Piping Plover, White-winged Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy and Mottled Ducks, Redhead, Saltmarsh, Nelson's and Seaside Sparrows, American Kestrel, Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Red-throated Loon.



Other good finds reported included: Bald Eagle in its nest, Wilson's Snipe, Northern Gannet, Eastern Meadowlark, Red Knot, Red-breasted Merganser, Horned Grebe, Hermit Thrush, Surf and Black Scoters and Gadwall as well as many, many American Goldfinches, Cedar Waxwings and Hooded Mergansers.

Thanks to those who took the time to report their sightings: Barry Lowes, Pam/Rick Riebesell, Robert Rommel, Kathy/Grant Greider, Karen Marts, Diane Rand, Diane Churchill, Carol Clemens, Fran/Danny Baer, Dottie Bass, Miriam Waterhouse, Cindy/Ken Groff, Joanne McMemamin, Jim Grove, Jane Hester, Deb Beamer, Dick Phillips, Wendy Hansen, Karen Pettersen, Lori/Carmine Sesa, Tom Moxley, Russ Wigh, Myra Stinnett, Sandy Jaffe and several visitors.

To report a bird sighting that is Accidental, Rare, Uncommon, Out-Of-Season, First-Of-The-Year (FOTY) or First-Of-The-Season (FOTS) or a species that you consider to be a "good find" e-mail: BirdingFriends@yahoo.com or call 843-432-2661 (MUST dial the 843). Please state your full name, the bird species sighted, date and location of your sighting and other pertinent information about your sighting.

Spring is upon us! it's a good time to go birding in the great outdoors and look for early Summer arrivals and Spring migrants at your favorite spots. Please report your unusual and FOTY birds!

MARCH PROGRAM *by: Kathy Greider, Program Director*

Thursday, March 13, 2014 at 3:00 pm

Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn, 70 Honey Horn Drive, Sea Island Room

On December 15, 2013 participants of all ages and ability levels set out to search all Hilton Head Island, Pinckney Island NWR, Palmetto Bluffs, and Bluffton. They tramped the woods, fields, marshes, beaches, and surrounding waterways. They found a total of 28,148 birds and 133 species of birds. This information goes to the national Audubon Society computers that record count results from more than 2,000 areas, including that area surveyed by the Hilton Head Audubon Society.

Some birds of note for the 2013 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) are: -Canvasback (3) - Summer Tanager (1)
-White Pelicans (87) - Bald Eagles (25) -Nelson's Sparrows (11) - Seaside Sparrows (9)

Our number of observers is growing and this year we had 72 new participants, for a total of 206. We put more effort into observations by boat, as reflected in our Party Hours and Distance. We also had a significant increase in miles covered by golf cart.

This is a leadership transition year for our count. Longtime leader Barry Lowes is stepping back from his role as Chairperson. His Co-Chair Charlotte White and our Compiler Nan Lloyd are also retiring from administration of the program.

Nan Lloyd, a long-time birder, moved here from Delaware in the early 1990s. She soon became active in the local Audubon Society, first as the Field Trip Chairperson and then as President from 2003 to 2005. Each December she served as a team captain in the local Christmas Bird Count and as the compiler of data collected by the participants in the count.

Barry Lowes, an expert amateur ornithologist, is from Toronto and winters on Hilton Head Island. He is a talented photographer who has exhibited in a variety of regional photography shows. His works have been published in brochures, magazines, and calendars. Lowes' photos are in private collections in the United States, Canada, and The United Kingdom. Since the early 1980s, Lowes has headed the local Christmas Bird Count. His annual pre-count bird identification slide show always attracts a large crowd.

Charlotte White grew up in what is now Democratic Republic of the Congo, the daughter of missionaries. She eventually moved to the United States and became a nurse, currently volunteering at Volunteers in Medicine. White served as Program Chair for the HHI Audubon Society from 2006 to 2010. Most recently, 2010-2014, she co-chaired with Lowes the Christmas Bird Count for the Society.

For the 2014 CBC, the Chairpersons of this event will be Kelly and Susan Murphy, long-time leaders in the Hilton Head Island Audubon count. Lowes believes "our CBC will continue to grow and prosper with the Murphys as our new leaders."

The Christmas Bird Count is an annual event and in 2014 it will be held Mid -December 2014. It is open to all interested persons who wish to participate.

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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

U'all Come! Buffet Supper to Honor Retiring Leaders

Our HHI Audubon chapter has been most fortunate to have had many dedicated, brilliant, and forward-looking leaders. Under their long years of leadership, HHI Audubon members have experienced citizen science at its best, by providing educational materials for local school children, enlightening all levels of governmental institutions, (i.e. Fish Haul Creek Park's "keep the mud flats vs a sandy beach"), as well as leading the charge to inform and educate local citizens on the importance of bird habitats and numbers (i.e. Piping Plover Count and Christmas Bird Count). On March 6th, we will honor three retiring board members: Barry Lowes, Nan Lloyd, and Charlotte White. Honored two years ago for her ten years of service as chair of the Newhall Preserve, Joan Shulman will speak on the remarkable contributions made by the three retiring board members. Please come and pay tribute these leaders at a Buffet supper on Thursday March 6th, at 5:30.

Place: The Discovery Museum at Honey Horn

Reservations: required for the cold Greek Chicken Pasta Salad will be your \$6.00 per person check, payable to Mary Jane Major, 73 Skull Creek Drive, B112, HHI, SC 29926; phone # for questions: 342-5804.

Deadline for Reservations: Thursday February 27th

The Details: Bring your own alcoholic beverage and mix; put your name on container. We will provide plates, utensils, napkins, and glasses.

For the greeting and cocktail hour, it would be so very generous if we could have offers to bring finger food appetizers to serve about 20. Call a friend or two, and share the cost and fun of honoring our members with a beautifully presented appetizer. Having fewer appetizer selections is so much more agreeable to our digestive systems for we older folks! Don't you think?? Do call me with your kind offer! Looking forward to seeing you all!
Mary Jane Major

THE SNIFF TEST

In the 1820's John James Audubon set out to prove that turkey vultures use their superior eyesight, rather than their nostrils, to find carrion. He stuffed a deerskin with grass and added clay eyes, sewed up the imposter, and placed it in a meadow with its legs in the air. He watched as a vulture swooped down on it. The duped bird ripped out the eyes and tore apart stitches, flying off after failing to find any meat. Audubon later placed a dead hog, its carcass reeking of decay in the July heat, in a ravine and covered it with brush. This time vultures circled but didn't descend. The results were "fully conclusive," he wrote. Vultures did not scavenge by smell.



Audubon's ego would have taken a hit had he lived to see Kenneth Stager put his findings to the test. In 1960 Stager, an ornithologist at the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, showed that turkey vultures prefer fresher carcasses - typically no more than four days old - to putrid ones that Audubon hid. Stager also identified the specific scent that drew vultures to carrion, with the help of natural gas engineers who told him they followed the birds to ruptured pipelines. Decomposing carcasses, it turns out, give off ethyl mercaptan, the same sulfurous compound added to natural gas so humans sniff out a leak (and which gives asparagus eaters' urine that distinctive rotten-egg odor.) Stager had shattered Audubon's theory. Hardly anyone noticed.

European starlings can detect and distinguish scents in aromatic herbs. Males weave these plants into their nests to attract females during breeding season, like a man applying cologne.

A New Zealand bird, the kakapo, uses its keen sense of smell to find food during its nighttime outings. It also emits a strong, sweet odor that may play a role in mate selection. The wandering albatross, another feathered bloodhound, follows its nose to meals miles away.

(from Nancy Averett in January-February Audubon)

BIRDS SAVE ENERGY IN V FORMATION

Flying birds often arrange themselves into a crisp, perfect V, so why not an S? What's wrong with M or B and the other letters?

Now the first extreme close-up of birds flying in a V formation is providing some answers. Scientists have found that birds position themselves and time their wing beats so perfectly that, according to aerodynamic theory, they minimize their energy use. It's a task that requires each bird to monitor subtle changes in its wing mates' flight and alter its own path and stroke accordingly.



The new results “once again remind us that animals are much more complicated...than we often give them credit for,” says Kenny Breuer, a professor of engineering and ecology at Brown University who was not involved with the study. “They’re reacting in very sophisticated ways to maintain these V formations.”

Traci Watson - USA TODAY

SOARING NUMBERS

“Most people know more birds than they give themselves credit for,” says the Great Backyard Bird Count’s Pat Leonard. Since 1998 the count has been asking birdwatchers to record which ones they see over four days every February, just before birds begin migrating north again. The value comes over the long term - marking a drop in the population of American crows from year to year, for example.

Having citizens, not scientists, contributing data has a big upside: They can cover a massive area. It also comes with reliability challenges. Organizers - which include Cornell’s Lab of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society, and Bird Studies Canada - flag and review reports that contain birds not known to be in the area or an unusually large number of species. Adds Leonard, “We also tell people, ‘If you just can’t ID a bird for sure, don’t report it’”.



Most Widespread - House sparrow, 43 countries.

Largest Flock - Red-winged blackbird, 5 million in a single sighting!

Biggest Increase 2012-2013 - Red-breasted nuthatch.

Reported in every US state - Mallard, Canada goose, and rock pigeon.



Joanna Rizzo, The National Geographic



FINAL REPORT FOR 2013 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

After submitting our Christmas Bird Count (CBC) report to the regional level and adjusting our count according to what was finalized with them, here are the final counts:

Total species – 133 Total birds – 28,148 Total participants – 206

In spite of a lighter migration and of rain on Count Day, we had a successful day. All thanks to the work of the captains and of you, who came out to help.

It has taken until late January to reach the final total of species. These extra weeks have been spent by the vetting committee and the work of Robert Rommel, whose training and skills have been like a magnifying glass in determining whether a rare or unusual bird has sufficient documentation to meet the standards at the regional level. A picture of the rare or unusual bird is a slam-dunk. But no picture then makes it very difficult to gain acceptance. Our vetting committee has the difficult and unpleasant task of having to say no - sometimes. This is not personal. Those are the national criteria. If we do not apply these standards locally, then the bird will most likely be challenged and turned down. These denials can take the luster off our total count picture.

Finally, note the number of participants – 206, which is up 75 from last year! This is a leap upward and gratifying to all who came out. Hilton Head's results and number of participants will continue to stand tall among the more than 1,200 groups throughout the Americas. Thank you for your help and dedication.

We hope that many of you will join some of our bird outings the rest of the year. Enjoy the outings, the fellowship, and an increase of knowledge. It is all free with membership.

Susan and Kelly Murphy will now take the reins and guide our annual CBC. They are now Co-chairs, who will give splendid leadership. You can help by giving them the same level of support, which we have enjoyed.

Good birding and a gratifying CBC in 2014! Barry Lowes and Charlotte White

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EVERGLADES SEES MODEST GAINS IN WADING-BIRD NESTING

The nesting of wading birds, a key indicator of the health of Florida's Everglades, has made modest gains, according to an annual report.

According to the report issued by the South Florida Water Management District, wood stork, white ibis and great egret nesting significantly improved in 2013.

The number of roseate spoonbill nest in Florida Bay also increased, though scientists caution that the total is still far below the historical average.

Other wading bird species that have shown steep declines in nesting in recent years did not show any improvement last year, however. Snowy egrets and tricolored and blue herons had significant declines, in particular.



Florida Today





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MARCH ~ APRIL 2014 Calendar

MARCH

Thurs. Mar. 6 Board Meeting 10:00 am
at the Country Club of Hilton Head

Thurs. Mar. 6 Buffet to honor retiring Board Members 5:30 pm
at Honey Horn

Thurs. Mar. 13 Monthly Meeting at Honey Horn 3:00 pm

APRIL

Thurs. Apr. 3 Board Meeting 10:00 am
at the Country Club of Hilton Head

Thurs. Apr. 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. 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 Ne-whall 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.