



September 2014

No. 347

Ecobon

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Rick Riebesell*

What the Survey Showed and the Board's Reaction

In late April and early May, Hilton Head Island Audubon Society members were asked by the Board of Directors to respond to a survey. We received 111 responses, which is over a 70% response rate. That response rate indicates that our members are interested and concerned about the Society. Nonetheless, about 9% of our responding members have yet to attend a Society event. The challenge for the Board is to keep the interest and support we have and attract additional participation from current and new members. The Board has reviewed the survey results and has taken action.

The survey stated the mission of the Society: "To promote the awareness and appreciation of nature, to preserve and protect wildlife and natural ecosystems, and to encourage responsible environmental stewardship." Responding members were in agreement with the mission of the Society. They were also overwhelmingly favorable about the Ecobon newsletter and the regular meeting programs. However, they were concerned about community involvement. Comments urged greater vigilance concerning environmental threats, more action from the Society in those areas, and more communication on these topics with the Society members. Responding members felt we were meeting the requirements of promoting awareness and appreciation of nature with the Ecobon and regular meeting programs, but not acting to preserve and protect wildlife and natural ecosystems and encouraging natural ecosystems.

What many of the responding members did not know is that we have an active Conservation Committee headed by Bill Nicol and Robert Rommel, which has been meeting with the Town of Hilton Head and with developers as appropriate. To improve communication about conservation issues, a new tab labeled "Conservation" has been placed on the Society's website, <http://www.hiltonheadaudubon.org>, to provide conservation information on a current basis. The philosophy of the Conservation Committee has been to be a responsible and knowledgeable voice for the interest of encouraging natural ecosystems so as to be involved as early as possible in the planning process of the Town. Members of the committee will be posting to the website.

Survey responses also showed that members want more local field trips. Ken and Cindy Groff have taken on the chair responsibilities for the Field Trip Committee and have planned local trips for the following dates: September 6, October 4, November 1, December 6, January 3, February 7, March 7, April 11, and May 2. There will be more information available as the dates approach.

Responses to the survey indicate that many of our members work, and the meeting times on Thursday afternoons and events scheduled on week days are difficult for people with business-hour obligations. This is a complex issue which the Board will address. It is clear that a majority of our members prefer an afternoon meeting time. That being said, we need to encourage the participation of younger members and those in the working community. The field trips have been set for Saturdays. The Board is currently receiving proposals concerning evening meetings at certain times. Any suggestions would be welcomed.

The purpose of a survey is communication. The survey process was successful in that a large percentage of our membership participated, the Board received and considered the information, and there has been an appropriate response. Thank you to those who participated. You have a responsive Board who wants to hear from you. You do not have to wait for the next survey.

HHI Audubon

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Robert Rommel 734-274-1796

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Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary

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Bird Walks/Field Trips

Cindy & Kenn Groff 682-3840

Conservation

Bill Nicol 671-4721

Robert Rommel 734-274-1796

Education

Grant Greider 404-313-8208

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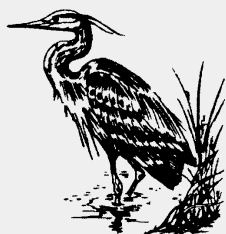
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Website: www.hiltonheadaudubon.org

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 *by: Kathy Greider, Program Director*
Thursday, September 11, 2014 at 3:00 pm
Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn, 70 Honey Horn Drive, Sea Island Room

"Migrating Monarchs"

Migrating Monarchs - This presentation, incorporating slides, specimens, and short videos, introduces you to the natural history of the Monarch butterfly and its spectacular migration to roosting sites in California and Mexico.

Vicky McMillan is currently a full-time resident of Hilton Head Island. She has her PhD in Biology from Syracuse University and was on faculty of Colgate University, Hamilton NY, for 25+ years. Ms. McMillan is a Behavioral Ecologist and has done research on the reproductive behavior in dragonflies. She will be presenting a program for The Coastal Discovery Museum on Dragonflies – September 3rd at 3:00 p.m. (you must call the museum and register for the 9/3 event). This is a great time of the year to learn more about both dragonflies and butterflies. Vicky has written a variety of professional and popular articles on insects and other natural history topics and she has given presentations to various groups in the island.



FREE. Open to the public without registration. SNOWBIRDS WELCOME!
Non-members are always encouraged to attend our meetings to learn more about Audubon. For More Information Contact: Coastal Discovery Museum at 843.689.6767
Website: <http://www.hiltonheadaudubon.org>



Christmas Bird Count

We are honored to be the Co-chairs for the 2014 Christmas Bird Count. This will be the 115th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. This is the longest running Citizen Science survey in the world, providing critical data on bird population trends. Data is collected from over 2,300 geographic circles. You can read more about the CBC on the National Audubon website:

<http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

The Hilton Head area count will be on Monday, December 15, 2014. We are pleased to have a great cadre of experienced area captains and as well as a few new volunteers! Captains will be contacting participants as the date draws near. If you are interested in participating and you are not yet on a team, please contact us and we will put you in touch with the Captain for your area!

More information will be coming on this exciting and important project!

Kelly and Susan Murphy
(843) 686-3733

murphy3733@roadrunner.com

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 4 and will continue through November 20. 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. We have three new volunteers leading walks this session: Pauline Jones, Grant Greider, and Don Grubba. While orienting this group to the Preserve, we met a father with three sons who were excited to tell us about the alligator they had spotted in the pond and the glass lizard that they photographed. They showed us the alligator which is very elusive and relatively small and young. We also saw our resident green heron which has been a regular at the pond for the past two years.

In late Spring, the observation deck and Pocosin walkway were power washed and stained with an antiskid additive. (we still need to stain the pond facing side of the observation deck as the contractor had several snake encounters there). Thanks to Steve Rupprecht and other volunteers, the plants installed by the observation deck are doing well. Rita Kernan added new identification signage. We had several dozen Gulf Fritillaries successfully emerge from our Passionflower vines which serve as the host plant for this species.

Trail Monitors are volunteers who check the Preserve weekly for damage or issues requiring maintenance. Steve Rupprecht did this in June and Sandy Hunter in July and August. Tom Hennessey has volunteered for September.

A bicycle rack has been installed and the Town is considering added a pedestrian/bicycle crossing across Palmetto Bay Road to the entrance of the Preserve.

With the cooler weather, we will again need volunteers to perform group maintenance of the Newhall Preserve. Our first workday of the season is scheduled for September 27 at 9:30 am. Please join us for all or part of that morning!



RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

Birding has been good in our HHI area since we last reported in early May. Late Spring migrants moved through our area while Summer birds arrived and some will stay until Fall. Some Winter arrivals and Fall migrants are beginning to show up in our area.

Rare bird species sighted during this long period were: Gray Kingbird at Tybee Island and Savannah, Gray-cheeked Thrush in Savannah, Warbling Vireo in Bluffton, Bachman's Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager and Kentucky Warbler at Webb WMA, BlackTern at Little Tybee Island, Grasshopper Sparrow at Savannah NWR, Roseate Spoonbill at HHI, Bluffton and Beaufort, Solitary Sandpiper at HHI and SNWR, Yellow-breasted Chat at Webb WMA and SNWR, Blue-winged and Hooded Warblers at SNWR and Worm-eating Warbler at SNWR and HHI.

Uncommon species reported included: Endangered Piping Plover, Reddish Egret, Red-cockaded and Hairy Woodpeckers, Whimbrel, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue-headed and Yellow-throated Vireos, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, American Bittern, Ovenbird, Louisiana and Northern Waterthrushes, Veery, Wood Thrush, Purple Gallinule, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Swainson's Thrush, Saltmarsh Sparrow, Glossy Ibis, Black-necked Stilt, Saltmarsh Sparrow, Least Tern, Chimney Swift, Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, House Wren, White-breasted Nuthatch and Prairie and Yellow Warblers.

During our 2014 Spring migration we reported finding twenty wood warbler species in our area including: Prothonotary, Black-throated Blue, Swainson's, Black & White, Pine and Yellow-throated Warblers, Northern Parula and American Redstart as well as the rare and uncommon species mentioned above. Also sighted were sixteen other Spring migrants ... most mentioned previously.

Other "good finds" reported included: Out-of-season Black Scoter, Summer Tanager, Bobolink, Red Knot, late Common Loon, Marbled Godwit, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Ruddy turnstone, Orchard Oriole, Eastern Meadowlark, Spotted Sandpiper, Painted Bunting, American Robin, Red- and White-eyed Vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Stork, Common Night Hawk and many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

Many thanks to all reporting their sightings: Robert Rommel, Kathy/Grant Greider, Natalie Hefter, Karen Marts, Diane Churchill, Carol Clemens, Fran/Danny Baer, Rita/Joe Kernan, Susan Thomas, Pauline Jones, Cindy/Ken Groff, Joanne McMemamin, Jane/Adie Hester, Annette Hausman, Ally McNair, Dianne Faucette, Deb Beam, Tom LeBoeuf, Lauren Merrill, Buddy Campbell, Mary Ann Lueckel, Mike McCarthy 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@yahoogroups.com or call [843-432-2661](tel: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.

We are entering the best birding season of our year now! Fall migrants are moving through our area and many of our winter birds are arriving. Many of Summer birds are still here. It's a great time to do some enjoyable birding!

CONSERVATION UPDATE *by Robert Rommel*

During the summer many residents leave HHI for cooler climates but the birds stick around and so did the Audubon Conservation Committee. Fran Baer, Susan Murphy, Kelly Murphy, Bill Nichols, and Robert Rommel were involved with several conservation projects that affect on our beloved island.

The town has a long-term plan to create a series of connected parks and paths that will run from Shelter Cove all the way to Collier Beach Park. The Folly is one of the areas that will be impacted by the Chaplin Linear Park project. The saltmarsh habitat at the Folly acts as nesting, feeding, and resting grounds for a variety of species throughout the year. The conservation committee established a regular bird survey that will help us understand how the habitat is used by species over the course of the year. The committee has been communicating with the town and local residents in order to insure that the park development will have minimal impact on the birds in the area and that we can help to share the nature visible at this fascinating location with our island visitors.

Development proceeds for the new Shelter Cove Towne Centre and the Town of Hilton Head is creating a waterfront park in the area. There is a small lagoon here where many birds come to roost, especially during the fall and winter months. The committee has been working with the town planners and developers so that construction will maintain the roosting site and include opportunities for the public to view the roosting birds.

HHI Airport is planning to enlarge the runways to accommodate more air traffic and possibly larger aircraft. We have recently been informed of these plans and potential impacts this might have on birds in the immediate airport area as well as Fish Haul Creek and Mitchelville Parks which lie on the takeoff and landing routes of aircraft. The committee has been communicating with parties to describe how these crucial areas might be affected by an enlargement.

The Conservation Committee is in search of more people who would like to get involved in protecting our natural treasures. We need more people to help with our monitoring bird surveys as well as to assist with communications to the public, town, and other involved parties. If you would like to help out please contact Robert (rommel@robertrommel.com / (734)274-1796). You can read further information about the conservation projects on the website at: <http://www.hiltonheadaudubon.org/conservation>.



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

Piping Plover *by Carol Clemens*

Environment Canada has begun a five-year research and banding program in collaboration with Canadian, U.S. and Caribbean partners to identify where Piping Plovers migrate and spend the winter. This banding study will help us determine what is affecting the survival of adult and juvenile Piping Plovers and when and where it is occurring.

This year Environment Canada staff banded 90 adults and 96 chicks (to date) in the Canadian Maritimes and the Magdalen Islands, Quebec. Black or gray flags with a unique two digit alpha numeric code were used, as well as a metal band above the joint on the other leg. (Note: A limited number of white flags were also used). There will be no bands below the joint (tarsus), so if you are looking for plovers banded in Eastern Canada, you must look above the joint (see photo below). A spotting scope helps to read the flag more clearly, or a photo may show the flag clearly.

If you observe a Piping Plover with a black, white or gray flag on its leg, please report it to:

Cheri Gratto-Trevor

Research Scientist

Environment Canada

email: Cheri.Gratto-Trevor@ec.gc.ca

Please note the following:

1. **Flag color, location on leg & alphanumeric code**
2. **Location of sighting**
3. **Date of sighting**
4. **If possible, please take a photo to include with your report**



Piping Plover with metal band and coded gray flag.
Photo: Ron D'Entremont

LOCAL FIELD TRIPS! *by Cindy & Kenneth Groff*

Below is a listed of scheduled field trips.

Sept 6th ~ No Leader

Oct. 4th ~ Robert Rommel@Fish Haul Creek

Nov. 1st ~ No Leader

Dec. 6th ~ Robert Rommel@Fish Haul Creek

Jan. 3rd ~ Paul Weatherhead @ SNWR

Feb. 7th ~ Paul Weatherhead @SNWR

March 7th ~ Kathy & Grant Greider @Fish Haul Creek

April 11th ~ Carol Clemens@Pinckney Island

May 2nd ~ No Leader



We are trying to get “Local” (Fish Haul, Pinckney, Jarvis Creek, Newhall, SNWR) Field trips going and scheduled same each month. The first Saturday of each month with the exception of Easter weekend, the times of the field trips are TBD.

We would like to reach out to our members and ask if anyone has an interest in leading our November or May trips, please email me directly at smilingcin@yahoo.com.

DNR asks public to report sightings of banded wood storks

During 2014, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) banded 100 wood stork chicks 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.

The banded chicks have fledged (learned to fly) and are dispersing as they search for food. Young storks are vulnerable to starvation as they are learning to feed efficiently, so it is particularly important not to disturb groups of wading birds that are feeding in impoundments during the fall. Please do not disturb birds to read band codes.

Please report any sightings of banded wading birds to the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (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. DNR often can provide information about where and when 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 (<http://www.wildlifetracking.org/>)

and on the Washo Wood Storks Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Washo-Wood-Storks/114701865336534>.

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.

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 <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/species/wadingbirds/>.



Interested in picking up some regional or international bird guides? Miriam Waterhouse has donated a number of bird books that will be offered in exchange for donations at the September meeting. There are a variety of books covering areas such as Texas, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, South America etc. There are some hummingbird books, general birding books, and even some Audubon T shirts, hat, and a bag. Books will be available starting 30 min. before the meeting on a first come basis. If you are interested in any of the items, please bring cash or your checkbook to donate to the HHIAS whatever the books are worth to you.

Hello, Fellow HHIAS Members -

I have been lucky to be chosen to be the new Education Chair for HHIAS and my first official act is to ask for volunteers - (well, really asking you is second) I ask Kathy to help first!

On October 18th and 19th the annual **BLUFFTON ART & SEAFOOD STREET FEST**

will be held in the Historic District of Bluffton and HHIAS is sponsoring a booth to promote awareness and appreciation of nature, to preserve and protect wildlife and natural ecosystems and to encourage responsible environmental stewardship. Of course, we will also be signing up anyone who would like to join HHIAS.

We need at least 2 possibly 3 people at the booth at all times. We have never attended this event but understand it is very busy so we hope to keep you busy.

Times are as follows:

Saturday 10/18

9:00 am - 11:00 am (includes helping with set up)
10:45 am - 1:00 pm
12:45 pm - 3:00 pm
2:45 pm - 5:00 pm (includes some tear down)

Sunday 10/19

9:00 am - 11:00 am (includes helping with set up)
10:45 am - 1:00 pm
12:45 pm - 3:00 pm
2:45 pm - 4:30 pm (includes tear down)

This festival usually has upwards of 20,000 attendees and we've heard it is lots of fun. Check out their web site to learn more about this fun event and what you can do at the festival before or after your shift. www.blufftonartsandseafoodfestival.com We look forward to hearing from you.

Please contact us at greider38@gmail.com or 404.313.8208 to sign up.

Thanks - Kathy Greider and Grant Greider

Birding 101

Introductory Course for Novice Birders

Open to the General Public and to HHIAS members who are new to birding. Families welcome.

We will meet on four consecutive Saturday mornings from 10 - 11:30 a.m. at The Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn.

The dates are as follows:

October 11th, 18th, 25rd & November 1st

1. Basics of birding - review of binoculars, feeding methods, birding books;

and best birding locations on the island.



2. Backyard Birds

(Blue Birds, Tufted Titmouse)

3. Island Birds

(Shore Birds and Birds of Prey)



4. Final week - Bird Walk on the grounds of Coastal Discovery Museum to see what you've learned.

There is a \$5 charge per week for a family or individual. Memberships will be available the first day of the course. The price for a membership

to HHIAS is \$25 per/family or \$15/individual -- No Cost to Audubon Members. Loaner binoculars and bird books will be available for use.

Please contact Grant Greider at 843.295.2113 to get more information or to register for the program. If you are not interested please pass this information on to someone who might be.



Wild Birds Unlimited

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



Audubon

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ECOBON

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Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29938

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SEPTEMBER ~ OCTOBER 2014 Calendar

Thurs. Sept. 4	Board Meeting	8:30 am
	at the Country Club of Hilton Head	
Thurs. Sept. 4	Newhall Walk	10:00 am
Sat. Sept. 6	Field Trip	
Thurs. Sept. 11	Newhall Walk	10:00 am
Thurs. Sept. 11	Monthly Meeting	3:00 pm
	at Honey Horn	
Thurs. Sept. 18	Newhall Walk	10:00 am
Thurs. Sept. 25	Newhall Walk	10:00 am
Thurs. Oct. 2	Board Meeting	10:00 am
	at the Country Club of Hilton Head	
Thurs. Oct. 2	Newhall Walk	10:00 am
Sat. Oct. 4	Field Trip	
Thurs. Oct. 9	Newhall Walk	10:00 am
Thurs. Oct. 16	Monthly Meeting	3:00 pm
	at Honey Horn (<i>Third Thurs of month</i>)	

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.

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!