



# Ecobon

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

## DECEMBER PROGRAM *by: Kathy Greider, Program Director*

Wednesday, December 10, 2014 Time: 7:00 pm Social, 7:30 pm Presentation

Where: First Presbyterian Church, 540 William Hilton Parkway (Hwy 278, next to the Bargain Box).

### ***Robert Rommel presents "Christmas Birds"***

Robert Rommel is a Wildlife Photographer and our Chapter Vice President. He will review some of the birds we are likely to see on Count Day and share valuable tips for identification.

We'll gather for refreshments at 7:00 pm, then begin the presentation at 7:30 pm. Coffee will be provided, and we invite our generous members to bring cookies, cakes and other goodies!

This meeting is free and open to the public. Bring your friends! We'll have a membership table if you would like to join or renew your membership in the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society.

Donations for this event are optional, but welcome, to help pay for our use of the wonderful space at the church.

Please enter through the doors between the church and the office area of the complex. We'll be meeting in Fellowship Hall. We look forward to seeing you there!



### The Count is Monday, December 15, for the Hilton Head area.

Captains of our 18 areas are putting their teams together for our CBC on Monday, December 15. We always welcome more participants, so if you have interest in being a part of this international effort, please let us know and we will have a Captain contact you! You do not have to be an accomplished birder. Start out as the recorder or as the photographer in a more experienced group! It is a fun day, even if sometimes the weather does not cooperate.

Here are Some Tips - Things We Learned from Barry Lowes (*Barry led our CBC for the past 30 years!*)

- Dress in layers. It can get cold out there on the golf course/open water/beach/marsh!
- Bring a camera. Even a point and shoot camera is useful. If not a very clear photo, it can still help to narrow down the habitat, shape and size of an unusual bird.
- Practice birding etiquette. Move quietly and don't point and shout if you see a bird. Quietly indicate where you see it.
- Use Binoculars. Keep looking at the bird as you raise the binoculars to your eyes. You'll find him faster that way!
- Bring a snack.
- Scout your area in advance. Birds are creatures of habit. Find out where they are hanging around and go to those spots. • Stand or sit quietly on your path and let the birds come to you.
- Brush up on the birds you might see. Attend the Christmas Bird show on December 10! Practice using your field guide or birding app.

Most of all, enjoy exploring our beautiful habitat and sharing the wonder of finding our feathered friends with your neighbors and fellow birding enthusiasts.

For more information and forms, visit the website at:

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

Note for our SUN CITY - Okatie members: The count for the Sun City - Okatie circle is Sunday, December 14. If you are interested in participating there, please contact Jim Cubie, 843-991-1059 or at [jimcubie@gmail.com](mailto:jimcubie@gmail.com).

# HHI Audubon

## Board of Directors:

### President

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### Vice President

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Susan & Kelly Murphy 686-3733

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Joan Wilson 837-2874

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### Emeritus

Barry Lowes 837-3537

## Standing Committee Chairs:

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Jack Greenshields 715-0340

Bob Clemens 689-2903

### 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

### Membership

Carol Clemens 689-2903

Fran Baer 686-6348

### Programs

Kathy Greider 404-313-8208

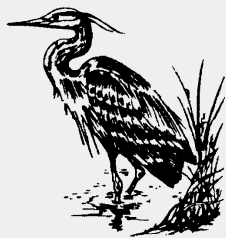
Dorie Cubie 843-991-1054

### Publicity

Natalie Hefter 304-9789

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 29938 or call one of the above officers or chairpersons.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Rick Riebesell*

### Projects

We are now well into our fiscal year. Most members do not realize the scale of activity necessary to sustain the regular activities of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society (HHIAS). Our meeting minutes are being recorded and distributed by our Secretary, Marianne Currie. Our finances are being tracked by our Treasurer, Pauline Jones assisted by John Faucette. Our database is current with about 200 dues-paying members due to the diligent efforts of Membership chairs, Fran Baer and Carol Clemens. Grant Greider as chairman of the Education Committee has just completed a very successful introduction to birding course with over 40 registrants. The Conservation committee chaired by Robert Rommel and Bill Nicol with active support from Susan and Kelly Murphy is monitoring town planning and has negotiated important concessions from the developer at Shelter Cove. Field trips are being held thanks to Cindy and Ken Groff, Field Trip chairs. Kathy Greider and Doreen Cubie, Program chairs, have arranged programs for this year's regular meetings. Jack Greenshields and Bob Clemens have managed the Newhall Preserve featuring weekly guided tours Thursdays at 10:00 am. Joan Wilson gets the Ecobon newsletter out each month. Natalie Hefter has been serving as publicity chair (internet matters) and advising us as past president. The Christmas Bird Count, under the leadership of Kelly and Susan Murphy, will start with an evening presentation by Robert Rommel on the birds likely to be seen on the Christmas bird count (First Presbyterian Church, December 10). It is the effort from these people every month that keeps our regular chapter activities going. I thank and am personally indebted to all these fine people for their hard work.

We are accomplishing our chapter duties. Should we do more, and with what resources? Members' dues, Audubon chapter payments, and other fund raising allow us to do our normal chapter activities. We keep as a reserve twice the annual expenditures of HHIAS and thereby insure our ability to continue to provide chapter services. When we have embarked on special projects, we have sought separate funding, including grants, for those projects. When we have received grants for certain projects, we have regarded these activities apart from the regular activities of the chapter.

One example is the Hilton Head Island Birding Trail. Several years ago HHIAS received the amount of \$5,000 in accommodations tax funding from the town of Hilton Head Island. We used these funds to improve our website and to publish and distribute our Birding Guide. After spending roughly \$2,000 of that amount, it became apparent that visitors to Hilton Head Island were not using our website or our guide. Most of the reasons have to do with the way visitors and even local people now get information – over the web, and, for birders and nature lovers, from the birding trail websites. We spent the rest of the \$3,000 to develop a plan for the software infrastructure of a birding website for Hilton Head Island. This fall we made an accommodations tax grant application to the Town of Hilton Head Island for the funds to create and establish the Hilton Head Island Birding Trail website and smart phone application. The goal is not only to provide information to and attract those who wish to visit natural areas around Hilton Head Island, but to foster and stimulate a dialogue about the value of those natural areas to the community by inviting business sponsorship of the birding trail operation. Audubon members recognize the aesthetic value of natural areas, but it helps to have the business community value those areas as well. This validation begins with a recognition of the economic value of those areas. The birding trail software and operation will verify to business sponsors the economic value birders and nature lovers bring when they visit natural areas. Both aesthetic and economic reasons will justify the preservation and restoration of natural areas.

We know that birds are in trouble. We know the habitat is shrinking. We have backyards and communities that are becoming less bird friendly. There are a variety of sources for funding. We need our membership to recommend projects to the Board and be willing to be involved. Think about a project HHIAS should do to enhance the bird and natural environment on Hilton Head Island. Bring that project to the Board. Be prepared to work and recruit others to work on the project with us. Let us together develop a plan, seek funding, and work on special projects to help the birds.

## Widgeon Point Field Trip: November 1

On a cold, windy, rainy day, nine Audubon members attended the Field Trip to Widgeon Point under the leadership of Jack Greenshields. The group spotted about 18 species of birds. The highlights were a Roseate Spoonbill hidden among the ibis and egrets, about a dozen Black-Crowned Night Herons perched on a leafless tree, and a pied-bill Grebe. Many sparrows and other common birds were spotted despite the weather. Thanks to Jack for organizing and leading this trip. We hope to make a return visit in the spring when the weather is better.



## Membership Report

Please welcome the following new members who have joined since the November Ecobon was published. Many of our new members have joined after taking the October – November Birding 101 class led by Kathy and Grant Greider. We are glad you joined!

Connie Crooktall  
Gerri and John Findra  
Nancy Huntington  
Jim Kovach

Janice Lindstrom  
Marley Maiers  
Nancy Male

Mary Monaghan  
Philip Nelson  
Marcia Reilley

Betty Saunders  
Connie Swett  
Mary Alice Tartler

Have questions about membership? Need to update your email or other contact info? Please contact Carol Clemens: [cclemens318@roadrunner.com](mailto:cclemens318@roadrunner.com) or Fran Baer: [seatwo@roadrunner.com](mailto:seatwo@roadrunner.com)

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**

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## NOTES FROM THE NEWHALL PRESERVE

by Jack Greenshields

Fall is one of the best times to visit the Newhall Preserve with cooler weather, fewer insects, and some additional color from the red maples and sassafras trees. As I write this, thousands of obedient plants that surround the pond are in bloom. Since September, every Thursday morning at 10am, Audubon volunteers have led group walks through the Preserve pointing out native plants and wildlife while providing some excellent bird identification. These volunteers included Kay Grinnell, Karen Marts, Marie McClune, Pauline Jones, Mary Alice Walker, Grant Greider, Don Grubba, Rita Kernan, and myself. Our Guided Walk Program will take the winter off and resume in March.

The bicycle rack installed this summer is being used often. The Town Council agreed to modify the Capital Improvement Plan to fund the installation of a pedestrian/bicycle crosswalk across Palmetto Bay Road to the Preserve with a target completion date in April 2015.

Our large resident alligator, which we think is a male, has routinely departed the Newhall Preserve pond for amorous pursuits in late March and returns in the Fall. He has returned on schedule looking like a very well fed and healthy 8 foot reptile. Like any good sunbather, he moves around the pond during the day to enjoy the best sunshine.

Sea Pines CSA has completed the annual cutting in the Fuel Break as required by the South Carolina Forestry Commission. Sea Pines has agreed to fund this effort. Audubon volunteers are maintaining the Fuel Break portion adjacent to the entrance and parking lot.

Trail Monitors are volunteers who check the Preserve weekly for damage or issues requiring maintenance. Bill Jordan did this in October, Sherm Barker in November, and Karen Marts in December.

Should anyone have any questions or a desire to volunteer at the Newhall Preserve, please contact me at [jackg308@gmail.com](mailto:jackg308@gmail.com).



White Crowned Sparrow

## RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

A very active birding month ended with a very successful Fall migration in our area. Many of Winter shorebirds, ducks and songbirds have arrived and continue to do so. Most of our remaining Summer birds have departed for areas southward.

Twenty-five warbler species were sighted during our very successful Fall migration including eight rare species and eight uncommon species. Also, six other migrant species were reported. A detailed reported of all warblers and migrants sighted was sent from the Birding Friend's address below under Subject, "2014 Fall Migration". Those migrant birds sighted during the past month are shown below.

Rare species sightings reported in our area during the last month were: Nashville, Tennessee and Bay-breasted Warblers, Brown Creeper and Scarlet Tanager - all on HHI, Lincoln, Grasshopper and White-crowned Sparrows at Savannah NWR and Barn Owl in Okatie.

Uncommon species found included: Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill, endangered Piping Plover, Merlin, Canada Goose, Northern Waterthrush, Blackpoll and Yellow Warblers, Field Sparrow, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Indigo Bunting, White-breasted Nuthatch and House Wren.

FOTS arrivals reported were: Marbled Godwit, Dunlin, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, many Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Sora, American Robin, American Coot, Song, Savannah, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows, Hermit Thrush, Northern Harrier, Double-crested Cormorant, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck and many Bald Eagles.

"Good Finds" reported this month included: Black-Throated Blue and Pine Warblers, Northern Parula, many Common Yellowthroats, Red-headed Woodpecker, Painted Bunting, Wood Stork, Cattle Egret and American Oystercatcher.

Many thanks to all reporting their sightings: Jane/Adie Hester, Dottie Bass, Carol Clemens, Fran/Denny Baer, Joanne McMenamin, Cindy/Ken Groff, Paul Weatherhead, Dorothy Mosier, Susan Taylor, Susan/Kelly Murphy, Kathy/Grant Greiger, Rita/Joe Kernan, Karen Marts, Don Colcolough, Dawn Brut, Doreen Cubie, Deb Beam, Mary Alice Cruise 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](mailto: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.

Looking ahead to our annual Christmas Bird Count ... Now is good time to do some "pre-CBC birding" so that you will know where to find the birds in your CBC birding area on Count Day on December 15th.

## Town of Hilton Head Island Meetings

by Fran Baer, Conservation Committee

Would you like to be notified of Town of Hilton Head Council and Committee meetings? This is a great way to find out about new projects and detailed plans. By subscribing to the items of your choice, you will receive an e-mail from the Town with a link to the meeting agenda and the complete agenda package. Go to the link below and click on E-Subscription Service at the top of the home page.

<http://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov>

Many of the meetings provide for public questions or comments, and this is an important way to make sure that your voice is actually heard by Town officials and staff. Letters to the Editor can be effective also, but please consider attending some meetings and expressing your thoughts face-to-face.

## TRUE COLOR DECODING BIRD PLUMAGE

The striking colors of birds aren't just for our viewing pleasure. Every hue, stripe and spot serves a vital purpose. There are two main reasons for their colorful bird feathers and markings. First, birds use their colors to attract mates and intimidate competition. And second, they use them to provide protection from predators.

When we look at birds, the colors we see aren't always what they see. Bird plumage colors are a result of either pigment or from the light reflecting off feathers. For example, bluebirds, indigo buntings and blue jays are not really blue. The color we see is the light reflecting off their brown feathers. Fortunate for the birds, some predators do not see the same bright-blue reflections as we do. So they remain protected. This is the same reason why a bluebird in heavy shade will not look blue.



*From Birds and Bloom*

## PROJECT FEEDER WATCH

by Jack Colcolough

If you have feeders and enjoy watching the birds in your yard from the warm confines of your home, you may want to join Project Feeder Watch (PFW) and count/report your findings weekly to The Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



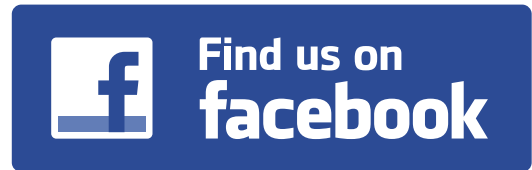
The season starts in November and lasts into early April each year. You can spend just a few minutes or hours on each of two days/week observing and counting your yard birds.

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 28th 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 \$18/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 at: 607-254-2427 and get more information about the project.

PFW is a lot of fun as some of our Audubon members will attest to! We have a small HHI group who exchanges data weekly to see what birds others are finding in their yards on PFW. Come join us this year!



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# Audubon

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ECOBON

P. O. Box 6185

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29938

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P.O. Box 6185

Hilton Head, South Carolina 29938

Issue #: 350

## DECEMBER 2014 ~ JANUARY 2015 Calendar

- Thurs. Dec. 6 Field Trip at Fish Haul ..... am
- Thurs. Dec. 6 Newhall Walk ..... 10:00 am
- Weds. Dec. 10 Christmas Bird Count Program ..... 7:00 pm  
at the First Presbyterian Church
- Mon. Dec. 15 **Christmas Bird Count** ..... All Day



- Sat. Jan. 3 Field Trip Savannah Wildlife Refuge ..... 10:00 am
- Thurs. Jan. 8 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. 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 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.