



Ecobon

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

APRIL PROGRAM *by: Kathy Greider, Program Director*

Thursday, April 9, 2015 , 3:00 pm

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

How Many Bird Species Has Chuck Seen and The Fun He's Had on the Way!!

Price: FREE. Open to the public without registration. SNOWBIRDS WELCOME!

April 9th meeting will be at the regular afternoon time and location: 3 pm at the Coastal Discovery Museum. Our speaker will be Chuck Hocevar, a Hilton Head local who has birded the WORLD and will tell us all about his birding travels and his BIG YEAR.

Chuck has traveled the world in search of birds. He has visited all 7 continents, 52 countries and all the 50 states (each one many times).

You may find it interesting that one of the characters in the book and movie **The Big Year** was based on Chuck when he was actually doing his own big year. Chuck will give us some insight into how/why birders want to do a Big Year.

Chuck was not always interested in birds; in fact he was raised in the "inner city" and didn't even notice birds. In the sixties, he moved to the country and started to notice all these birds flying around! Well, Chuck (not being one who could ever "go small") purchased some bird books and started to learn everything he could. He would study the birds at his feeders and in the area for hours.

Then Chuck became a LISTER and serious birders understand where lists can lead you. The rest as they say, is history. Chuck was a banker by trade but his avocation became birding and still is today. Again, Chuck used his love of learning and birding and soon became the editor of **Birding Magazine** and **American Bird**.

Join us on April 12th to find out - **How Many Bird Species Has Chuck Seen and The Fun He Has Had on the Way!!**

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FIELD TRIP ~ Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, April 11th from 9:00 until 11:00 am

Leader: Carol Clemens

Participation limited - No Restrooms available - Requirements: Closed toe comfortable walking shoes

This field trip will involve a leisurely 2 mile walk and will be geared toward beginners and those who do not regularly visit the refuge. We should see not only birds, but observe other interesting things in nature. Bring binoculars. There is no water available so please be prepared.

A little about our leader: Carol Clemens, is a birder and docent who does Pinckney programs for the Coastal Discovery on a regular basis and knows this little refuge very well.

HHI Audubon

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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.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Rick Riebesell*

Bird-Friendly Community

A visit to the National Audubon Society website and attending an evening meeting of the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society made me think of how we do have a bird-friendly community on Hilton Head Island and how important it is to strive to keep it that way.

On March 25, the HHIAS held an evening meeting for the first time in recent years. Kathy Greider, our Programs Chair, organized the meeting. Grant Greider gave a Meet A Bird on Piping Plovers, which was quite appropriate given that the topic of the presentation given by Scott Liggett, Director of Public Projects and Facilities/Chief Engineer of the Town of Hilton Head Island, was beach restoration. He made a very complicated topic interesting and provided a great deal of objective information. It was reassuring to hear how careful the planning is regarding the environmental aspects of beach restoration. Beach restoration is not often thought of as a bird-friendly activity, but active consideration is given to environmental concerns in the planning of the town's beach restoration projects.

Kathy has organized another evening program for April 22, which will feature a presentation about Eastern Bluebirds with George Banino, statistician, and Jerry Griffin, photographer. Because of the survey we did last year we know there are many members who want to attend evening meetings. Please inform those members you know about this upcoming evening meeting. Be sure to visit the HHIAS website and Facebook pages for information on upcoming programs and field trips.

While you are visiting the HHIAS links, you also should visit the National Audubon Society website. I visited www.audubon.org recently and looked under the "Conservation" tab to read the article under "Bird-Friendly Communities." (Also worth reading is a recent opinion article in the March 11, 2015 New York Times, "The Chickadee's Guide to Gardening.")

The bird-friendly community theme is important to keep in mind. We are fortunate to live in a community surrounded by attractive natural areas. The town and local business interests constantly need to be reminded that growth and development based on our natural areas and features also can threaten the well being of those natural areas. As HHIAS members viewing nature for pleasure, we are often the first to perceive the threats. To maintain the bird-friendly nature of our community, we can increase bird habitat in the areas we control around our homes and be vigilant about threats to bird habitat. As the article on the National Audubon Society web site states, "where birds thrive, people prosper."



RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough

Many of our Summer arrivals and Spring migrants are showing up in our area now. We have had a super month with the many, many reported sightings of Rare and Uncommon birds in our area.

Among early arrivals recently reported were: Northern Parula, Louisiana and Northern Waterthrushes, Nashville Warbler, Ovenbird, Purple Martin, Great-crested Flycatcher, American Robin, Swallow-tailed Kite, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Whimbrel and many more to come soon.

Many Uncommon Pine Siskins have moved through our area and the South this Winter. This irruptive species that rarely comes to our coastal areas has done so because of the very cold and snowy Winter and lack of bird food up North ... And we are happy about that!

Rare bird species reported during the last month were: Western Tanager on Skidaway Island, Tundra Swan on Fripp Island, Snow Goose on Pinckney Island NWR, Fox Sparrow and Virginia Rail at Savannah NWR, Bachman's Sparrow at Nemours Plantation, Brown Creeper on HHI, Rufous Hummingbird in Beaufort, Western Kingbird on Hutchinson Island, Grasshopper Sparrow and Long-billed Curlew in Chatham County, GA, Purple Sandpiper on Tybee Island and Roseate Spoonbill on Bray Island.

Over wintering Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Painted Buntings continue to be reported at several locations as "Out-Of-Season" birds while new Summer arrivals from these species have already being sighted.

Many, many Uncommon species were reported including: Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, American Kestrel, Loggerhead Shrike, American Woodcock, Purple Finch, Vesper, Saltmarsh, Seaside and House Sparrows, Dark-eyed Junco, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Avocet, American Bittern, American Black and Mottled Ducks, Redhead, Northern Pintail, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Gold-crowned Kinglet, Blue-headed Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, American White Pelican, Hairy Woodpecker, Greater Scaup, Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Winter and House Wrens, Wilson's Plover, Pectoral and Stilt Sandpipers, Red-throated Loon, Glossy Ibis, White-winged Scoter, Eurasian-collared and Common Ground Doves, Rusty Blackbird and Caspian Tern.

Many thanks to all reporting your bird sightings: Rick/Pam Riebesell, Pauline Jones, Jane/Abe Hester, Dottie Bass, Carol Clemens, Fran/Denny Baer, Joanne McMenamin, Cindy/Ken Groff, Shelia/Roger Johnson, Mark Hymer, Bob White, Dorothy Mosior, Jim Grove, Kathy/Grant Greiger, Rita/Joe Kernan, Steve Calver, Ellen Lebeouf, Russ Wigh, Buddy Campbell, Chris Marsh, Mary Alice Tartler, Karen Marts, Doreen Cubie, Mary Jane Cruise, Dick Phillips and the visitors who reported their sightings.

To report a bird sighting that is Accidental, Rare, Out-Of-Season, Uncommon, 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.

Spring is one of the best times of the year to get outside and bird your favorite spots as our weather warms and our Summer birds arrive, our Spring migrants move through our area and many of our Winter birds are still here before leaving northward soon.

NOTES FROM THE NEWHALL PRESERVE

by Jack Greenshields

- 1) There was an organized workday at the Newhall Preserve on February 28. We have been gradually cleaning up and pruning the preserve and need to continue with this approach. Tom Hennessey, could you please arrange for Sea Pines maintenance to remove piles of debris in the parking lot and around the pond.
- 2) Stained the backside of the deck. Our contractor was spooked last year by the snakes...
- 3) Pond water level is much higher than in previous years. While this is generally good, we have lost a number of plants installed during the past several years.
- 4) With weather warming, the pond aeration system needs to be running. The Lake Doctors, Inc has our vacuum pump and compressor for evaluation. It probably needs a new impellor and capacitor. We use this firm to maintain the lagoon and lake aeration systems in Palmetto Dunes.
- 5) Thursday guided walks are being held weekly. Attendance is good as is the donation level.
- 6) The HHI Senior Center and USCB OLLI have requested programs at Newhall.
- 7) The Audubon website has been updated to include information regarding the Preserve.
- 8) The Bicycle Access Project design to the Newhall Preserve has been completed and permits have been issued. The town engineer received prices from several contractors and all have come in over \$25,000. Town code requires that purchases exceeding this amount must be put out for bid and the Town will bundle this project with two others, advertise it next month, and go to construction in May. Completion is expected no later than July.



Evening Meeting

April 22nd at 6:00 p.m.

Second evening meeting ~ The meeting will be at the Palmetto Electric Co-operative building on 111 Mathews Drive.

George Banino and Jerry Griffin will present a program sharing the great success story of Eastern Bluebirds on Hilton Head Island and in particular their story of Palmetto Hall Plantation. Jerry is an outstanding photographer detailing every aspect of the bluebirds' life and George loves statistics. Together they have a great story to tell.



Unwanted Books

We have received inquiries from several Chapter members asking if they could donate unwanted birding or nature books to us. We do not, of course, have a Chapter office.

However, the Hilton Head Island Public Library at 11 Beach City Road suggested that books may be donated to the library and any books they do not want to keep will be sent to the Friends of the Library who will sell the books for the benefit of their organization. This means that the books you kindly give will have the opportunity to be enjoyed by nature-lovers of all ages. Our member Miho Kinnas is leading the project for us. If you have books to donate, please contact Miho at 843-341-9430 or by email at miho.kinnas@gmail.com .

BARN SWALLOWS ACROSS CANADA

Barn swallows are a common sight across much of North America - so common that a regional decline may sometimes go unnoticed.

For example, many bird watchers are surprised to learn that this species' population has declined in Canada by 80% since 1970. Barn swallow populations have decreased most profoundly in the maritimes, with a loss of 97% in New Brunswick and 92% in Nova Scotia. In Ontario, the cumulative loss amounts to 66%. Because of these trends, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada designated the barn swallow as



Threatened in 2011.

Changes in temperature, precipitation, insect numbers and habitat are considered to be among the most probable causes. Indeed, artificial nesting substrates (i.e. actual wooden barns) are also harder to come by these days.

From Bird Watcher's Digest

Grants made by the Chapter

by Pauline Jones

The Chapter has a modest budget for grants. You may be interested to know what donations we have made during this financial year:

We participated in the Coastal Discovery Museum's outstanding efforts to protect the endangered sea turtles by "adopting a nest" in 2014 and 2015. Cost: \$50

We supported Experience Green, which helps build sustainable communities for today and future generations. Cost: \$100

The Coastal Discovery Museum provides meeting space for our afternoon public meetings and we are pleased to give this terrific organization a contribution. Cost: \$1,000

The Coastal Conservation League undertakes ambitious and diverse initiatives to protect the Low Country - "Nature and Community in Balance" - and we once again provided an annual grant. Cost: \$250

We have contributed to the plans to build an enclosed, four-season classroom building at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge. There are no federal funds for the "Kingfisher Pond Discovery Center" project so all funds must be raised privately. Cost: \$125

HOW HUMMINGBIRDS TASTE SWEETS

Most vertebrates, including us, have three tasting genes: TIR1, TIR2, and TIR3. TIR2 is necessary to taste sweets. But the genomes of birds lack TIR2. So, how can hummingbirds, feeding on flowering nectar and at sweetened hummer feeders, taste these sweet liquids?

Researchers particularly focused on Anna's hummingbirds and reasoned that if hummingbirds had no TIR2, perhaps the other two genes, normally attuned to other "savory" flavors, had combined, or "repurposed" to pick up the slack and detect sucrose, glucose, and fructose.

They were right. Indeed, the TIR1-TIR3 receptors in hummingbirds produced an exceptional response to sugars. In fact, scientists are already pursuing the question with other nectar-loving birds - from honeyeaters to orioles - to see if they, too, have repurposed their tasting genes to favor sweetness.

From Bird Watcher's Digest



Seabird and Shorebird Program web site now online

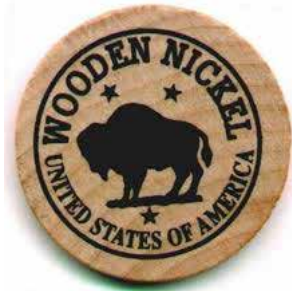
from Janet Thibault, SCDNR

The website for the Seabird and Shorebird Program that our staff has been working on is now available.

<http://dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/species/coastalbirds/index.html>

It can be located from the SCDNR homepage <http://dnr.sc.gov/> by clicking on the Wildlife Tab->Wildlife Species->Coastal Birds.

This webpage has some background information on seabird and shorebird ecology of South Carolina as well as what SCDNR is doing for these species (Management, Research, Conservation). We also have provided resource materials, brochures, and publications. I am hoping it is a good resource for the public to learn about the South Carolina's coastal birds and our efforts to protect them. Please pass this on to anyone who may be interested.



The Outside Foundation helps sponsor its retail store's "Wooden Nickel" initiative. The Hilton Head Island Audubon Society is one of three local non-profits chosen for donations for a six-month period. Each customer who declines a paper sack with

purchase at the Outside Hilton Head store is offered a "wooden nickel" token. The customer may choose among the three non-profits for a donation. At the end of the six-month period a check is presented in the amount of nickels donated and Outside Hilton Head matches the amount to double the check. A big Thank You to the Outside Foundation for this initiative.

 **Find us on
facebook**

Members and their guests are cordially invited to the HHIAS Annual Picnic
Waddell Mariculture Center
May 7th 5:30 pm



Al Stokes, Manager of Waddell, will be our expert guide to what they do at Waddell and why they do it. Lots of beautiful scenery and good company.

Audubon will provide water, plates, cups, napkins etc. along with the fried chicken

Members can sign up to bring either a dessert, vegetable dish or a salad of their choice along with an adult beverage of their choosing.

Bring lawn chairs and insect repellent (strongly recommended)

R.S.V.P. Information will be supplied in the near future.

New Members:

A warm welcome to our new members who have joined since the last Ecobon was published! Two family memberships were from the Audubon Day at Wild Birds Unlimited.

- Thomas C. and Genevieve Arnold
- Keith and Heidi Calvin
- Peter Johnson
- Vic Orr
- Susan Probst
- Phoebe Stevens
- Cindy Wilson and Rick Ulrich




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



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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 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

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APRIL ~ MAY 2015 Calendar

April Newhall Walks on Thursdays at 10:00 am

- Thurs. Apr. 2 Board Meeting at CCHH 2:00 pm
- Thurs. Apr. 9 Monthly Meeting 3:00 pm
at Honey Horn
- Sat. Apr. 11 Field Trip - Pinckney Island..... 8:45 am
- Weds. Apr. 22 Evening Program at Palmetto Electric Co-op ... 6:00 pm

May Newhall Walks on Thursdays at 10:00 am

- Sat. May 2 Field Trip 8:45 am
- Thurs. May 7 Board Meeting at CCHH 10:00 am
- Thurs. May 7 Annual Picnic 5:30 pm
at Wassell Mariculture Center

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.