

BIRD NOOZ

Turkey Appreciation Month

Majestic Spring Displays Contrast with Casual Fall Visits to Our Yards



Wild turkeys are native to North America and are the heaviest members of the diverse *Galliformes*. Adult males are called *toms* or *gobblers*. Juvenile males are called *jakes* -- they have shorter *beards* (see below) and the middle of their tails have longer fan

feathers. When males are excited, the snood and other parts of the head and neck become engorged with blood. The males, with eye-catching iridescent feathers, are substantially larger than the females (called *hens*) which have duller coloration overall.

November 4 Meeting

Birders and gardeners alike get excited in fall: planting new shrubs, trees, and improving the soil for next spring's blossoms make us smile. Doing so with a serious commitment to our native plants and environment is a specialty of Andrew Baumann, who first brought his expertise to the SCHH Bird Club in 2011.

Native plants provide beauty, fruits, nuts, and host insects that feed your birds naturally.

Come join Andrew for a lively, interesting and compelling presentation that even your birds will want to attend:

When: Wednesday, Nov. 4

Where: Hidden Cypress Ballroom

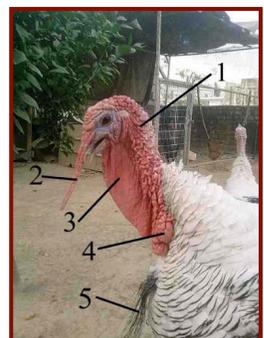
Time: 4 PM

DOMESTIC TURKEYS -- BIRDS OF A DIFFERENT FEATHER



A domesticated turkey is the same species of bird as our wild turkey, but it is mostly white. It was domesticated by the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica at least 2,000 years ago, with the evidence pointing to what are today the central regions of Mexico.

The anatomical structures on the head and neck of the domestic turkey are: 1. caruncles; 2. snood; 3. wattle (dewlap); 4. major caruncle; and 5. beard.





Always loved birds?
Got birds visiting your feeder, water feature?

ALL Sun City Residents Welcome!
Join in the fun.

2015 Christmas Bird Count and/or Backyard Bird Count



Sponsored by the Sun City Hilton Head Bird Club

Do your birds a big favor!
***Become involved in the longest-running
Citizen Science project in the world!***

Saturday, December 19

Christmas Bird Count

Residents visit SCHH birding sites by golf cart, recording bird species and numbers. Data will be used for local, national, and international evaluation of birds' numbers, viability. Email Paula Smith at pbsmith8558@aol.com to join up.

Backyard Bird Count

Spend 30 to 60 minutes looking out your favorite window and counting bird species/numbers. ***Get instructions and download Backyard Bird Count form from our website: www.suncitybirdclub.org***

Need a Bird I.D. Refresher Course?

Thursday, December 10, from 6 to 7:30 PM
Hidden Cypress Ballroom

Guest Expert: Diana Churchill, Ogeechee Audubon

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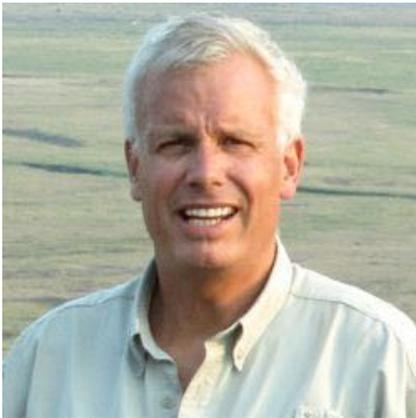
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NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ASSOCIATION SENDS IMPORTANT NEWS TO US



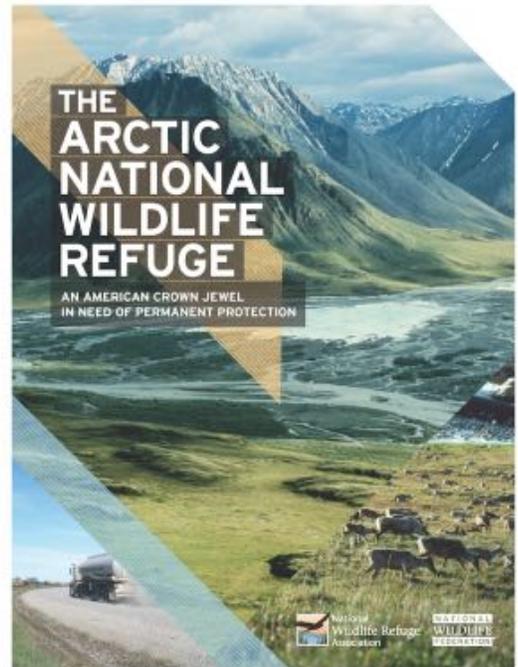
David Houghton, President, NWRRA

Dear Noah & Mary,

We've enjoyed celebrating *National Wildlife Refuge Week*. Part of our efforts to recognize this annual celebration included announcing a new partnership with National Wildlife Federation aimed at educating Americans about the importance of protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Read about why this area is under threat from the oil and gas industry in [The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: An American Crown Jewel in Need of Permanent Protection](#).

This report details how we can safeguard the area's unique wildlife, vital habitat and indigenous traditions.



ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE: A CROWN JEWEL NEEDING PROTECTION

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the largest intact ecosystems in the world. With its unique wildlife, unspoiled wilderness, cultural heritage that bespeaks its importance to Alaska Natives and diverse habitats for hundreds of species, it is the crown jewel of the National Wildlife Refuge System and one of the most important protected areas on Earth.

President Eisenhower established the Arctic Refuge in 1960 “for the purpose of preserving unique wildlife, wilderness, and recreational values.” However, this area—specifically created to protect the array of unique native species and the pristine ecosystem—is under threat. The oil and gas industry is intent on exploiting potential oil and gas resources in the Coastal Plain, the most important wildlife habitat in the entire arctic region. Development

would disturb and destroy wilderness where wildlife thrive, thus harming indigenous traditions and their way of life.

We cannot permit this to happen. The [Arctic Refuge is too special to drill](#) and must be left in its natural state.

“America’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the last places on earth that has been undisturbed by human development, and we owe it to our children and their children to permanently protect this invaluable resource,” said David Houghton, president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. “By permanently protecting the Arctic Refuge, we are safeguarding a unique and irreplaceable wildlife mecca while honoring the integrity of our shared conservation values in America.” Please read the report mentioned above.

FIVE THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT YOUR BINOCULARS

Dawn Hewitt, Managing Editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest (BWD)*, shared some great tips through *BirdWire*, an e-newsletter published by BWD.

Arguably the most important tool for a bird watcher, a good binocular is what allows us to see birds more closely and clearly, making it possible to watch and enjoy these feathered creatures from a distance. Chances are that you own a binocular or two or three, but how well do you know them?

There are five things you might not know about your binoculars, from the inner workings of the optics to the practical aspects of cleaning and focusing.

1. You're actually looking at a reflection of reality.

When you look through binoculars, you're not really looking straight *through* them, but at a reflection of a reflection... as many as six reflections! Each barrel of your binocular contains two or more convex lenses: the smaller eyepiece lens held near the eyes, and the larger objective lens, which is closest to the object being viewed. These lenses magnify objects, but when used to view objects at a distance, invert the image. If your binoculars were simply two magnifying lenses, you'd be looking straight through your binoculars, but seeing everything upside down! Inside your binoculars are two prisms that invert the reflections of objects that pass through them. Light from the object you are looking at bounces off the surfaces of the prisms before exiting the eyepiece: right-side up!



Dawn Hewitt of BWD

2. Focusing is a multi-step process.

The central focus wheel of your binoculars controls both barrels of your binocular simultaneously. It's how you focus on objects far and near. The diopter is a knob that controls the focus of just one barrel—usually the right.

The diopter is usually located near the eyepiece. If vision in your eyes is not identical—and it is a rare individual who has the same vision in both eyes—

you'll need to set up your binoculars for your unique eyes, a process you need to do only once (unless someone else uses them and adjusts them for their asymmetric vision).



3. Many binoculars have adjustable eyecups.

They can be made of hard plastic and twist to open or close, or flexible plastic that can be folded or open. If you wear glasses when you use binoculars, your binoculars will be most comfortable for you with the eyecups in the lowest position; if you don't wear glasses, you'll probably want to raise your eyecups, which allows you to rest the binocular against your eye socket without having your eyeball against the glass of the eyepiece!

4. You should not be seeing double.

Some people have eyes that are very close together; others have close-set eyes. Binoculars allow you to adjust for the distance between your pupils by pulling the barrels far apart for wide-set eyes, or pushing them close together for those with close-set eyes. When you look through your binoculars, you shouldn't see the familiar double circles so often used in movies and TV to indicate that the view is through binoculars, but rather, a single circle of light. As you look through your binoculars, if you see dark areas on the sides, your binocular is not adjusted properly for your inter-pupillary distance.

5. No need to live with neck pain.

Even though your binocular came with a neck strap, you can replace the strap with a harness. Most people find a binocular harness much more comfortable than a neck straps, since the weight of the binoculars is spread over the shoulders and back rather than pulling across the back of the neck. Binocular harnesses attach to the strap holders.



GREAT HORNED OWLS ON SKIDAWAY ISLAND: READY TO NEST?

Landings Bird Cam is recording a pair of Great Horned Owls on Skidaway Island (GA) as they investigate a huge nest -- it may be the same pair that gave many folks thrills last year while observing the owl family's life cycle, from egg laying through fledging. Check out landingsbirdcam.com frequently until eggs are laid. Then watch daily!

MARK YOUR BIRDING CALENDAR

Wednesday, November 4

4 PM, Hidden Cypress Ballroom
“Backyard Native Habitat that Birds Will Prefer”

Guest expert Andrew Baumann teaches us the way to attract a wider variety of birds using native plants.

VOTE ON NOVEMBER 4:
 Be sure to stay at the Nov. 4 Club Meeting for a moment afterwards to VOTE on the slate of 2016 Club officers. Support our leadership for the new year.

Wednesday, December 2

4 PM, Hidden Cypress Ballroom
“Annual Holiday Meeting and Social Event.”

Combine educational bird knowledge brain-teasers and challenges with some meet and greet activities to share this holiday time with old friends and new members.

Thursday, December 10

6 PM, Hidden Cypress Ballroom
“Bird I.D. Refresher for You”

Prepare yourself. Sharpen your Bird I.D. skills with help from expert birder, author, and fun-loving presenter Diana Churchill of the Ogeechee Audubon. Diana will share tips and tricks to help you be at the top of your birding game for the December 19 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and the Backyard Bird Count.



Saturday, December 19

Mid-Morning (Time TBA)
Christmas Bird Count (CBC)



All Daylight Hours
Backyard Bird Count

See information on page 2, Col. 1



The three photos (below) are of the Eastern Towhee, a strikingly marked, oversized sparrow of the East, feathered in bold black and warm reddish browns...if you can get a clear look at one as it rummages through tangled stems in bushes and undergrowth.



ENJOY THE EASTERN TOWHEE -- USE THESE KEYS TO IDENTIFICATION

Size & Shape

Towhees are a kind of large sparrow. Look for their thick, triangular, seed-cracking bill as a tip-off they're in the sparrow family. Also notice the chunky body and long, rounded tail.

Color Pattern

Males are striking: bold sooty black above and on the breast, with warm rufous sides and white on the belly. Females have the same pattern, but are rich brown where the males are black.

Behavior and Habitat

Eastern Towhees spend most of their time on the ground, scratching at leaves using both feet at the same time, in a kind of backwards hop. They spend lots of time concealed beneath thick underbrush. You may see this bird more often when it climbs into shrubs and low trees to sing.



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SCHH Bird Club Basics

Visit Our Bird Club website: www.suncitybirdclub.org



Our Purple Martin Trail still needs a wrangler -- call or email Noah Rosenstein (see upper left column) -- it's a rewarding role that's really fun.



Steven Schabel (Center for Birds of Prey) demonstrated 4 live lesser-known bird predators at the Club's October meeting. Most exciting!

MANY, VARIED CLUB ACTIVITIES APPEAL TO FOLKS

- Monitoring our more than 100 Bluebird nesting boxes
- Monitoring our 15 Purple Martin Condos
- Participating in Okatie-Sun City Christmas Bird Count
- Leading and/or Participating in Birding Trips, local and overnight, using our Club Birding Scope and walkie-talkies
- Participating in Seasonal "Birdfests"
- Conducting or participating in periodic Backyard Birding events

Bird Nooz is produced by SCHH Bird Club officers, volunteers, and other contributors, and is published online from September through June as an educational and informational newsletter. Your subscription is a benefit of your Club membership. It contains original Club articles, photos and information, as well as open-source material from other birding publications and sources.

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