

# BIRD NOOZ

*There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before.*

~Robert Lynd, *The Blue Lion and Other Essays*



## Table of Contents

Issue 2016.02 -- February 2016

### Winter Visitors

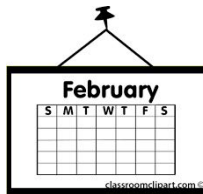
Lucky local residents may catch Baltimore Orioles at their feeders now. How do we identify them?



### February Events

1. February Birding Calendar.
2. BWD Birding Trip

Page 2



### Jays, Magpies, and Crows, Oh My!

Know your corvids? Try this quiz to test yourself. If you get them all correct, you can "crow" about it!

Page 3

### Baltimore Orioles

Cool Facts; Range; Migration, and more.

Page 4



### FeederWatch

Citizen-science is an exciting and significant contribution to environmental research and species protection.

Page 5

### Area Sightings

Jack Colcolough of HHI Audubon reports in *Ecobon*.

Page 6

### Club Info.

Club officers, Club-supported activities, and newsletter info.

Page 7

## Winter Visitors

Lucky local residents are catching these beautiful birds -- females, immature males, and gorgeous adult males at their feeders right now.

The rich, whistling song of the Baltimore Oriole, echoing from treetops near homes and parks, is a sweet herald of spring in eastern North America. And some of these colorful birds are visiting our backyard feeders right now! Fond of fruit and nectar as well as insects, Baltimore Orioles are easily lured to backyard feeders with oranges and grape jelly.

### Immature Baltimore Oriole



Photo by Club Board Member John Burrack

### Keys to Identification

**Size & Shape:** Smaller and more slender than an American Robin. Look for their thick neck, long legs, and long, thick-based, pointed bills: a hallmark of their blackbird family.

**Color Pattern:** Adult males are flame-orange and black, with a solid black head and one white bar on their wings.

**Behavior:** Often heard more than seen as they search high branches for fruit, insects and flowers.

**Habitat:** Look for Baltimore Orioles high in leafy deciduous trees, but not in deep forests: they're found in open woodland, forest edge, orchards, and stands of trees along rivers, in parks, and in backyards.

[continued on page 4]



## Our Club Meets Feb. 3

**Day/Date:** Wednesday, February 3

**Time:** 4 PM

**Place:** Hidden Cypress Ballroom

**“Wandering Wood Warblers,”**  
CAROL CLEMENS & FRAN BAER.

Fran & Carol will help us identify local warblers, sharing photos of these colorful songbirds. They will give us tips to sort out the confusing common warblers that migrate through our area. They may teach us some techniques that could help with identification.

Carol Clemens has been involved in birding and photography since she retired in 2005. She is a Lowcountry Master Naturalist, active in Audubon, and a Coastal Discovery Museum docent. Fran Baer became interested in photographing nature, especially birds, in 1975. She is involved HHI Audubon as well as the Camera Club of HHI.

#####

**Day/Date:** Thursday, February 11

**Time:** 3 PM

**Place:** Honey Horn Museum

**“Monthly Meeting of Hilton Head Island Audubon” (Program TBD)**

## February 24. Exciting Event at Magnolia Hall

Join noted author Deborah Cramer on February 24! She will take us all on the near-miraculous 19,000 mile journey the red knots face on their annual migration.

*This little bird's life depends on its epic journey to meet an ancient crab.*

Deborah Cramer lives with her family at the edge of a salt marsh in Gloucester, MA, where each year she awaits the arrival of horseshoe crabs and alewives in tidal creeks, and the passage of migrating sandpipers and herons. She writes about science, nature, and the environment, and is a visiting scholar at MIT. She has written three books, as well as many articles in prestigious publications. Her books are *Great Waters: an Atlantic Passage*; *Smithsonian Ocean: Our Water Our World*, and *The Narrow Edge: A Tiny Bird, an Ancient Crab, and an Epic Journey*.

*Pre-registration is required.*

*For tickets, contact Sun City Bird Club at [magnolia2.24.2016@gmail.com](mailto:magnolia2.24.2016@gmail.com)*

### Event Co-Sponsors

*HHI Audubon Society; Fripp Audubon Club; Coastal Discovery Museum; Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuge; LowCountry Master Naturalist; The LowCountry Institute; Coastal Conservation League; the Sun City Hilton Head Bird Club; and many other individuals and groups.*

## Reader Rendezvous: Go Birding with BWD in Delaware

Join the BWD (*Bird Watcher's Digest*) team for a wonderful weekend of birding along the shore of **Delaware Bay in mid-May!** Their focus species will be the red knot. These birds travel mind-blowing distances each year, timing their migration to take advantage of the bounty of food in the form of horseshoe crab eggs along the Delaware Bay. Together with their friends from the American Birding Association, they have an excellent staff of top-notch guides ready to show you a lot of spectacular birds -- red knot, black skimmer, ruddy turnstone, least bittern, and so many more.

What: Red Knot Rendezvous

Place: Milford, DE

Dates: May 19 - 22, 2016

Registration: [birdwatchersdigest.com](http://birdwatchersdigest.com)







BLUE JAY  
PHOTO BY CEPHAS  
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## Blue Jays, and Magpies, and Crows, Oh My! A Quick Quiz for You

by Kyle Carlsen, Assistant Editor, Bird Watcher's Digest

Corvids—jays, crows, ravens, magpies, and their relatives—include the most intelligent of all animals. Research has shown that these birds can make and use tools, solve problems, and even recognize human faces. Their brain power has helped many corvid species to adapt to man-made habitats, with crows and jays living among us, even in urban environments. But how much do you really know about these highly intelligent, highly adaptable birds? (Quiz answers are on page 5.)



B. BOUTON / WIKIMEDIA

**1. The yellow-billed magpie is endemic to which U.S. state?**

- a) Alaska
- b) Texas
- c) Illinois
- d) California



A. WILSON / WIKIMEDIA

**2. Which is NOT the name of a North American jay species?**

- a) Green jay
- b) Brown jay
- c) Gray jay
- d) Red jay



DILIF / WIKIMEDIA

**3. The English word CORVID is derived from the Latin word *corvus*, meaning:**

- a) Dark-colored bird
- b) Intelligence
- c) Raven
- d) Hunter



R. SCHOLTEN

**4. True or False?**

Blue jay and Steller's jay are the only North American jays with crests.



D. DANIELS / WIKIMEDIA

**5. True or False?**

Crows get most of their diet from roadkill.



S. PAVLOV / WIKIMEDIA

**6. Which of these birds IS a corvid?**

- a) Common grackle
- b) Northern mockingbird
- c) Clark's nutcracker
- d) All of above

## Habitat

Open  
Woodland

## Food



## Insects

## Nesting



## Tree

## Behavior

Foliage  
Gleaner

## Conservation

Least  
Concern

## Cool Facts

Baltimore Orioles got their name from their bold orange-and-black plumage: they sport the same colors as the heraldic crest of England's Baltimore family (who also gave their name to Maryland's largest city).

2. Unlike robins and many other fruit-eating birds, Baltimore Orioles seem to prefer only ripe, dark-colored fruit. Orioles seek out the darkest mulberries, the reddest cherries, and the deepest-purple grapes, and will ignore green grapes and yellow cherries even if they are ripe.

3. The Baltimore Oriole hybridizes extensively with the Bullock's Oriole where their ranges overlap in the Great Plains. The two species were considered the same for a while and called the Northern Oriole, but in the 1990s, after genetic studies, they were separated again.

4. Young male Baltimore Orioles do not molt into bright-orange adult plumage until the fall of their second year. Still, a few first-year males in drab, female-like plumage succeed in attracting a mate and raising young. Females become deeper orange with every molt; some older females are almost as bright orange as males.

5. Baltimore Orioles sometimes use their slender beaks to feed in an unusual way, called "gaping": they

stab the closed bill into soft fruits, then open their mouths to cut a juicy swath from which they drink with their brushy-tipped tongues.

6. The orioles of the Americas were named after similar-looking birds in the Old World, but the two groups are not closely related. Orioles of the Old World are in the family *Oriolidae*, whereas American orioles are in the same family as blackbirds and meadowlarks. Both New and Old World orioles are brightly colored with red, yellow, and black; have long tails and long pointed bills; build hanging, woven nests; and prefer tall trees around open areas.



Adult Male Baltimore Oriole

7. The oldest recorded Baltimore Oriole was over 12 years old when it was caught and killed by a raptor in Minnesota.



Adult Female Baltimore Oriole

## Range

**I** Baltimore Oriole  
*Icterus galbula*



## Migration

Medium- to long-distance migrant. Baltimore Orioles spend summer and winter in entirely different ranges.

From early April to late May, flocks arrive in eastern and central North America to breed from Louisiana through central Canada.

They start to leave as early as July for wintering grounds in Florida, the Caribbean, Central America, and the northern tip of South America.

Planting bright fruits and nectar-bearing flowers, such as raspberries, crab apples, and trumpet vines, can attract Orioles year after year. Find out more about feeding them by using TheCornellLab of Ornithology's All About Birds website, Project FeederWatch [Common Feeder Birds](#) bird list.



# Project Feeder Watch

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Charles Rose, Southaven, MS, in Project FeederWatch eNews, January 20, 2016

## Watch Your Feeders for Science!



Citizen-science is a great way for you to participate in birding's natural next step....Project **FeederWatch**, which could use your help in counting the birds to help them survive and thrive. We have featured FeederWatch in previous issues of *Bird Nooz*.

Of course, you must be registered for the current **FeederWatch** season, by going to [feederwatch.org](http://feederwatch.org) or The Cornell Lab's Citizen Science Blog. There is still time to sign up for the 2015-2016 season, which runs through April 8. If you sign up, you'll get an ID number needed for data entry. It's



printed on the letter that comes in the Free Kit that is mailed to all first-time participants. (The kit takes about three weeks to arrive, even for renewing participants.) But you can start counting your birds immediately, follow their online instructions, and enter your data after the kit arrives. More fun with birds!

### Answers to Page 4's Quiz:

1. D -- California
2. D -- Red Jay
3. C -- Raven
4. True
5. False
6. C -- Clark's Nutcracker



### NestWatch: Where Birds Come to Life

**NestWatch** is a nationwide monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. This is already being done here in Sun City by our SCHH Bird Club's Bluebird Trail volunteers.

### Become a certified **NestWatcher!**

Receive helpful tips on finding nests.

Visit the nest every 3 - 4 days and record what you see.

Report the information on website.

Visit [nestwatch.org](http://nestwatch.org) for information.



### Club Members' Field Trip to Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (SNWR) --

Jim Cubie, our Club's Co-Field Trip Organizer, gestures direction to fellow birders as they enjoy a gorgeous January 11 outing at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge. Most of our Winter songbirds, shorebirds and ducks have arrived in our area and have been sighted, as well as some rare and many unusual species. That's great news for birders.

## RECENT AREA BIRD SIGHTINGS

by Jack Colcolough, HHI Audubon, *Ecobon* for January 2016

What a terrific and very active start to our Winter birding! Over 130 reports of bird sightings were received during the last month. Most of our Winter songbirds, shorebirds and ducks have arrived in our area and have been sighted.

Rare species reported during the month were:

Yellow-headed Blackbird, Virginia Rail and Western Kingbird at Hutchinson Island, Ross's Goose at Savannah NWR and Savannah, Snow Goose in Savannah and Skidaway Island, Tundra Swan, King Rail and Grasshopper Sparrow at Savannah NWR, Short-tailed Hawk in Beaufort, Purple Sandpiper on Tybee Island, Brown Creeper at Skidaway Island, Clay-colored Sparrow at Savannah Spoils Site, Common Ground Dove at Harbor Island and White-crowned Sparrow on Hilton Head Island.



**Ross' Goose**

Many, many Uncommon species were reported during the month including:

Canvasback, Redhead, Ruddy Duck, American Black and Mottled Ducks, Northern Pintail, Glossy Ibis, Peregrine Falcon, endangered Piping Plover, Red-throated Loon, irruptive Pine Siskin, Dark-eyed Junco, Baltimore Oriole, Merlin, American Kestrel, Rusty Blackbird, American Pipit, American Bittern, Blue-headed Vireo, Winter, Sedge and House Wrens, American Avocet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Saltmarsh, Seaside, Field and Vesper Sparrows, Wilson's Plover, Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Greater Scaup, Long-billed Dowitcher, Whimbrel, American White Pelican, Loggerhead Shrike, Eurasian-collared Dove, Stilt Sandpiper, White-breasted Nuthatch, Hairy and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Orange-crowned Warbler, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Franklin's Gull.

Out-of-Season species reported were: Painted Bunting, Chuck-will's-widow, Wilson's and Prairie Warblers, Ovenbird and a number of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Maybe, a few of these birds will overwinter in our area!

Arriving Winter and "FOTS" birds as well as "good finds" reported were: Cedar Waxwing, Bufflehead, Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, Horned Grebe, Northern Flicker, Lesser Scaup, American Robin, Black & White Warbler, White-throated and Song



**Yellow-headed Blackbird**

Sparrows, Northern Gannet, Marbled Godwit, many Bald Eagles and too many Yellow-rumped Warblers plus others.

Many thanks to all reporting their sightings: Robert Rommel, Kathy / Grant Greider, Diana Churchill, Carol Clemens, Natalie Hefter, Fran / Danny Baer, Cindy / Ken Groff, Nan Lloyd, Joanne McMemamin, Dottie Bass, Jane / Abie Hester, Jim Grove, Mark Hymer, Carlos Chacon, Doreen Cubie, Steve Calver, Russ Wigh, Jeff Kidd, Dick Phillips, Annette Hausman, Gail Borruso, Mary Ann Lueckel, Mary Alice Cruise and a number of 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 finds" e-mail: [BirdingFriends@yahoo.com](mailto:BirdingFriends@yahoo.com) or call 843-432-2661. Please state your full name, the bird species sighted, date and location of your sighting and any other pertinent information.

Although it is Winter and colder it is a great time of year to find many unusual birds in our area. Please continue reporting your "good finds".

## 2016 Bird Club Board

Noah Rosenstein President

843.707.7122

518.496.7301

[nbrosenstein@gmail.com](mailto:nbrosenstein@gmail.com)

Dave Davis, Vice President &  
Program Chair

843.707.7909

517.290.3853

[svdd1331@aol.com](mailto:svdd1331@aol.com)

Patty Marshall, Secretary

843.705.0992

[marshallpb@earthlink.net](mailto:marshallpb@earthlink.net)

Ed Raney, Treasurer

843.707.7085

[raney42@gmail.com](mailto:raney42@gmail.com)

Susan Farnham, At Large

843.705.3210

[farnsc07@aol.com](mailto:farnsc07@aol.com)

John Burrack, At Large

843.705.3576

[johnburrack@yahoo.com](mailto:johnburrack@yahoo.com)

Mary Helen Rosenstein,

Past President

843.707.7122

[maryred46@gmail.com](mailto:maryred46@gmail.com)

### Field Trip Organizers:

Doreen & Jim Cubie

843.991.1059

[doreencubie@gmail.com](mailto:doreencubie@gmail.com)



# Happy Groundhog Day

## February 2

### *Varied Club Activities Appeal to Many Folks*

- Monitoring our more than 100 Bluebird Trail 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 to **Bird Nooz** 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.

#### *Bird Nooz Staff:*

Editor: Kathleen Leopard

Club President: Noah Rosenstein

Vice President/Program Chair: Dave Davis

*Questions? Send inquiries to:* [kathleen.leopard@gmail.com](mailto:kathleen.leopard@gmail.com)