

BIRD NOOZ

C O N T E N T S

<p>Migration Madness! <i>Which species are the noisy harbingers of spring we can't wait to see and hear?</i> Pages 2 - 3</p>	<p>Prevent Window Strikes <i>Check out 10 ways to prevent birds' striking your windows.</i> Pages 4 - 5</p>	<p>8 Actions to Help Birds, April 6 Meeting Info, Mayfest "Mark Your Calendar" Page 6</p>	<p>Bird Club Info <i>List of Board Members, Bird Nooz Publication Info, Bird Club Activities</i> Page 7</p>
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SPRING BRINGS OUR BIRDS BACK

April prepares her green traffic light and the world thinks "Go."

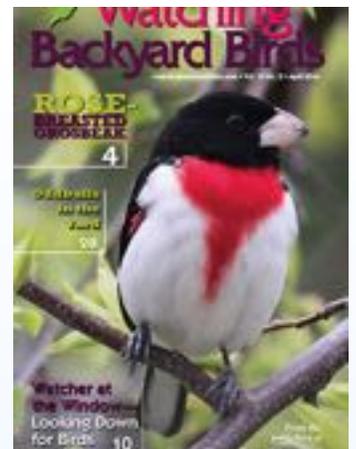
-- Christopher Morley

Early spring breezes are blowing in some of our favorite season's birds. The Swallow-tailed Kite (photo at left, another on p. 3) has been called "the coolest bird on the planet." Their migration here this year has been a cliff-hanger due to headwinds over the Gulf of Mexico holding them back -- aloft over the Gulf, circling, waiting for a break!

Several pairs of Purple Martins have been spotted doing spring cleaning in our Club's "condos," to prepare for nesting. But our Eastern Bluebirds are way ahead on nesting -- already on the Bluebird Trail and in backyards here in Sun City, incubating eggs.

Swallow-tailed Kites flying in off the Gulf of Mexico at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (Florida) on Saturday, March 12, 2016.

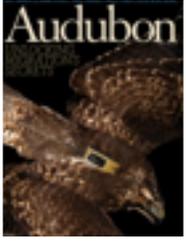
-- Photo by Adam Kent



Watching Backyard Birds birdwatchersdigest.com is an amazing website to visit for great birding information, armchair birding adventures and superb ideas for birding fun. Their Spring Migration subscription offers 44% savings when you subscribe to Bird Watcher's Digest/ Watching Backyard Birds combined! Check out their website for all the bargains.

AMAZING MIGRATIONS

Unlocking Migration's Secrets



New technologies are helping scientists understand how delicate birds can fly amazing distances in a short time, unlocking their secrets and uncovering environmental protection strategies that could bolster species' survival. The March-April 2012 issue of *Audubon Magazine* tells the story of a female whimbrel that took off from the treeless tundra of Southampton Island, which guards the iceberg-choked entrance to Hudson Bay in the Canadian subarctic, and set a course southeast.

Long-limbed and gray-brown, she was the size of a small duck, bearing the field marks that make this shorebird instantly identifiable -- dark stripes on the crown of her head, and a long, thin, drooping crescent of a bill. It gives the whimbrel its genus name: *Numenius*, Greek for "new moon." Read the Whimbrel's story:

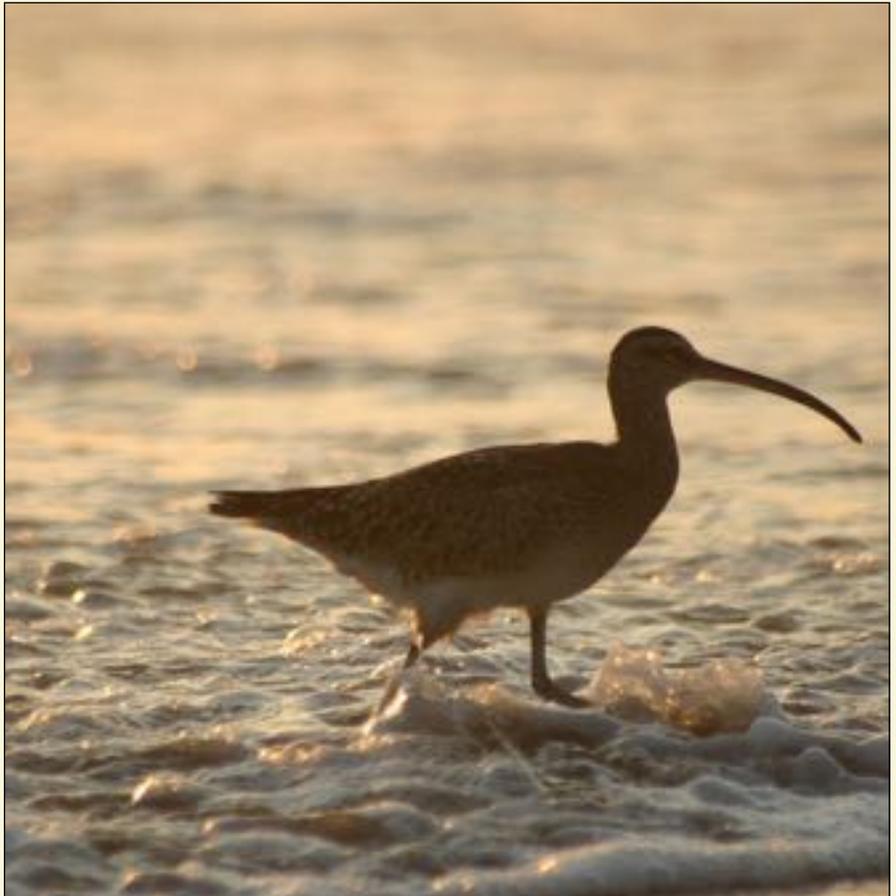
Southampton had merely been a way station for her; some weeks earlier she had arrived there from her breeding grounds on the Mackenzie River delta in the Northwest Territories, some 1,500 miles and 52 hours' flying time to the northwest. Now her bill was stained purple from weeks of gorging on the autumn tundra's bounty -- blueberries, crowberries, and cloudberry, all of which her body had converted to thick layers of fat, fuel for the incredible journey ahead.

Tapered wings pumping without pause or rest, she flew east across Hudson Bay, passing thereafter over the rugged Ungava Peninsula of northern Quebec, then above the trackless boreal forests and wild rivers of Labrador. After 1,500 miles of unbroken flight.... [link below]

Go to *Audubon Magazine's* online website,

audubon.org, and

finish this harrowing story by typing "Unlocking Migration's Secrets" in the magazine's search line.



A Whimbrel Searches for Supper in the Sand

Photo by Marek Slusarczyk, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8434755>

BIRD NEIGHBORS' MIGRATIONS

Swallow-tailed Kites' Travel

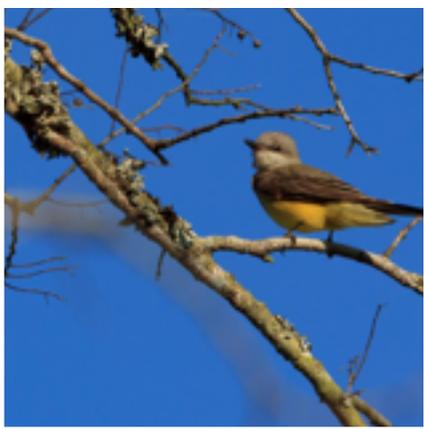
On March 12, 2016, rare Swallow-tailed Kites saw sea below and sky above, but they were able to see St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge -- land! Their spring journey took them north from deep in South America toward destinations over the Yucatan Peninsula, then out over Gulf of Mexico toward the U.S. Changing wind velocities and directions made their trips perilous and tiring. Satellite-tracking studies found many northbound Swallow-tailed Kites came to a virtual stand-still out over the Gulf, turning in circles awaiting a change in the winds that could help them reach shore. They can remain aloft over the water for 3 - 4 days. Most northbound kites will experience favorable winds in time and reach land. The rest will perish. Keep your eyes on the skies now, along the tree lines, morning and evening -- they are here!

Purple Martins' Lengthy Journey

Similar to the Swallow-tailed Kite (and many other birds) the Purple Martins head to South America in the fall, and return to South Carolina to breed in the spring. Their routes are similar to the kites. They are already at their condos and setting up housekeeping -- just in time to dine on neighborhood bugs and pests.



Soaring predator, a Swallow-tailed Kite. Purple Martin at the condo on Biltmore Drive/Bishop. Photos: Mary Helen Rosenstein



Western Kingbird doesn't "belong" in our area, but there he was!!

Great Birding Trip...Thanks to Cubies!

Jim and Doreen Cubie, our Club's Field Trip Organizers (and excellent birders), headed up an early-morning trip on March 15 to The Reserve at Hutchinson Island -- just a 30-minute drive from here. The Reserve is a failed housing development from 2008 whose environment has been reclaimed by field, grass and meadow habitat. When scouting the area, Doreen and Jim saw Western Kingbirds, Wilson's Snipe, Savannah and Vesper Sparrows and Eastern Meadowlarks sitting in trees.

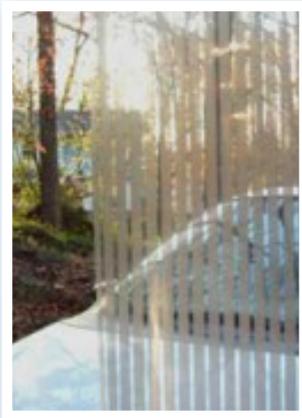
Club Board Member John Burrack photographed the Western Kingbird during the Club's field trip. John said that "According to Jim and Doreen, this bird is not supposed to be here...but it has been seen lately with some regularity in the Savannah area. It is a nice little bird." Another bird of interest seen was the Loggerhead Shrike; the one that looks a little like a mocking bird in the top of a tree with a black mask. Other species seen were those we see more regularly.

PREVENT BIRDS' WINDOW STRIKES



Prevent Bird Deaths

Screens, films, decals, and other easy-to-use products (as shown here) help to prevent birds from hitting the windows of your home.



Images courtesy of:
(1) Bird Screen Company; (2) Nixalite of America, Inc.; and (3) SunShield Pros

Top 10 Things To Prevent Birds Striking Windows

-- by Bill Thompson, III <https://www.readability.com/articles/hoxd0b3m> in *birdwatchersdigest.com*

Thump! It's that sickening sound that can only mean another bird has flown into one of your windows. Birds cannot see glass, especially if it is reflecting the nearby habitat or sky. These reflections do not register as such to a bird. This is why millions of birds die or are injured each year in collisions with glass windows in homes and office buildings.

Here are 10 suggestions for making your windows less deadly for birds.

10. Move your feeders. Many window-killed birds are familiar feeder birds that use our backyards every day. There are two parts to this suggestion. Move the feeders farther away from your windows or move them closer to your windows. The idea here is that you'll disrupt the birds' usual flight path to and from the feeders. Moving the feeders closer to the windows can sometimes help because birds startled off the feeders by a hawk don't build up enough speed to hurt themselves, and

being closer to the window, the birds might be able to see that it is not an effective escape route. Remember that moving the feeders will do nothing to prevent non-feeder birds, such as migrant thrushes and warblers, from hitting the glass. So here are some more general suggestions.

9. Branches. Breaking up the reflective ability of a large expanse of glass is key to making it less deadly. A natural way to do this is to suspend tree branches in front of the most-struck windows. Try to do this in a way that will give good coverage to the pane of glass but will not eliminate your view entirely.

8. Plastic food wrap. To break up the reflection of glass, stick large sheets of food wrap across the middle of your windows. Saran Wrap and its cousin products can serve this purpose. If you have trouble getting the wrap to stick, spray a light coating of vegetable oil or water on the window before laying down the wrap.

7. Spray-on fake snow/vegetable oil. If you can stand it, a light coating of either of these two products will "deaden" a window's reflective ability. (continue on page 5)

PREVENT BIRDS' STRIKES {CONT'D}

{continued from page 4}

6. Commercial stickers. There are a few products available commercially that are designed to reduce or prevent window strikes. One of these is a static-adhering sticker that looks like a spiderweb; others are various designs meant to scare birds away with predator faces or with bright metallic reflective surfaces.

5. Mylar balloon/Mylar tubes. If you are willing to shell out \$6.99 for a balloon at your local grocery store, make sure you get one of the long-lasting metallic-looking Mylar balloons (often featuring innocuous messages such as "It's A Boy!" or a well-known cartoon character). These shiny balloons will flap around in the breeze and spook birds from coming too close to your windows. A variation on the theme was published in *Bird Watcher's Digest's* November/December 1999 issue. The author suggested wrapping strips of bright Mylar around cardboard tubes (from paper towel rolls) and suspending these wrapped tubes from strings in front of your problem windows.

4. Hawk/owl/crow silhouettes. The black vinyl flying accipiter silhouettes were the conventional solution for window strikes in the 1970s and many are still in use today. I have also seen

owl and crow silhouettes used for the same purpose. The idea is that these shapes of "dangerous" birds are scary enough to prevent small birds from flying toward them, but their effectiveness is debatable. In certain situations they seem to work, at least for a time. The question is, do the birds get used to them and ignore them? If you can't find these at your local bird store, trace the outline of a hawk, crow, or owl from a picture, enlarge it on a copier, cut it out and trace it onto black paper or vinyl, and stick them onto your windows.

3. Plastic strips/pie pans/ Christmas decorations/ CDs. Another method of scaring birds away from windows is to use something unusual suspended in front of the glass. The item can be shiny and reflective such as the aforementioned Mylar balloon, an aluminum pie pan, tin foil, Christmas decorations, or old compact discs (CDs). Or it can be something that flutters in the wind, such as strips from a plastic garbage bag. The message to birds is "don't fly toward this scary, moving stuff."

2. Screens or netting on the outside. The old standby solution to window strikes is to stretch some mesh netting (also known as fruit netting or crop netting) across your problem windows.

This can take a bit of work, and it doesn't look great, but the benefit is that it is 100 percent effective in preventing birds from hitting your windows. Some bird watchers will tie short pieces of white flagging, rags, or yarn to the netting to alert birds to its presence. An alternative is to get some old window screens (old storm window screens or screen doors work well) and suspend them in front of the windows birds are hitting regularly.

1. Feather Guard. Perhaps my favorite reader tip of all time was featured as a "My Way" in the September/October 2001 issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest (BWD)*. The idea is called FeatherGuard. BWD reader Stiles Thomas of New Jersey created FeatherGuard. His creation consists of bird feathers strung about 8 inches apart on fishing line. These lines of feathers are then strung vertically across regularly struck windows. Birds see the feathers and do not continue to fly into the windows. Do the birds see the feathers as evidence of predation? Do the moving feathers frighten the birds? Nobody knows for sure, but I know from experience that FeatherGuard works! Buy yourself a FeatherGuard and see how it works for you.



BIRD-FRIENDLY NOOZ

8 Actions to Protect Birds Near You

1. Reduce or eliminate pesticide and herbicide use.
2. Plant native plants.
3. Identify the non-native invasive plants in your region, and work to remove them from your yard.
4. Attract hummingbirds with boiled sugar water that does not contain honey, artificial sweeteners or food coloring.
5. Make your windows visible to birds to prevent collisions. (See pages 4 - 5 of this issue.)
6. Let your yard get a little messy, leaving snags and brush piles for nesting areas.
7. Close your blinds at night. Turn off lights you aren't using.
8. Create or protect water sources in your yard.

Bird-Friendly Yards



MAYFEST 2016

Day/Date: **Wednesday, May 4**

Presentation: **Center for Birds of Prey**

Feathered "Guests": **Large Birds of Prey**

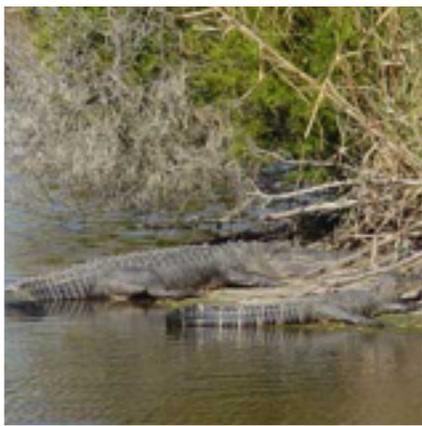
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Time/Place: **3 PM at Hidden Cypress**

Field Trips: **5:30 PM to 1 of 2 Rookeries**

See nesting birds up close!

April 6 Bird Club Meeting



Migratory Birds find the ACE Basin a superb habitat – but they haven't always been safe from predators of many sizes and species.

WINGED RESOURCE: How Americans Have Interacted with Migratory Birds Over the Past Two Centuries.

Presenter: Nick Wallover, SC Department of Natural Resources

Day/Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2016

Time: 4 PM

Place: Hidden Cypress Ballroom

Migratory birds have meant many things to many people over the past two hundred years, from table fare to high fashion, cultural icons to lost species. This program will look back on periods in our shared cultural evolution that saw many migratory species go from an inexhaustible resource, to near extinction, to part of our cultural identity which inspires 60 million birders. This presentation will include many fascinating photographs from eras when egrets were hats and yellowlegs were dinner, and citizens marched in the streets to end the feather trade.

Nick Wallover is a wildlife biologist in the ACE Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve. He works closely with SC DNR's coastal bird program on efforts in the ACE Basin, and is also involved with SC DNR's marine education program. He received an M.S. degree from College of Charleston, studying habitat use by shorebirds in Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge.

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Check out the Club's website for more news:

suncitybirdclub.org



Varied Club Activities Appeal to Bird Lovers

- 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.

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