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## Birders of St. James - January 2026



All of us from your leadership team wish you  
a healthy, joyful, and birdy new year!

### *The Birding Journey*

With the holidays behind us now, we may feel the need to be more active, taking a walk and observing the birds can be a great

diversion during these winter months. On my birding journeys through the neighborhood, it seems that overnight all of those berries in the various holly bushes and trees have turned a bright fire engine red. There are some really tall and wide Nelly Stevens Holly specimens putting on a great show on St James Drive. I've read that it takes "two frosts" to get those berries to color up and make that great contrast with the dark green waxy leaves.

These bright red berries should be around for a while since the birds seem to feast on them later in the season when other food is less available. I've also been observing about 10 robins in a grouping of six dogwood trees over the past week. They are perched high and appear to be making their way through the trees eating some darker brown berries with fine precision.



On Sunday January 4<sup>th</sup> we encourage all to participate in the "Christmas Bird Count", a one-day event of bird observing in your neighborhood. You can count for an hour or two or the whole day! Check out the [website](#) for helpful bird checklists and reporting instructions for St James. And Hugh says not to worry about overcounting. (I'm not going to tell you where those 10 robins are...those are mine). And so, we hope you'll stuff your bird feeders that day and join the count for our "Bird Sanctuary" St James.

Trish Greene  
President  
Birders of St. James



**With two bird counts coming up, we asked our top birding specialist what we should expect to see.**

*"Winter has arrived in the upper mid-west and northern United States. Lots of snow and cold. This has prompted return to the St. James area of many birds which winter here. The earliest arrivals this year were the Buffleheads and the Hooded Mergansers. Mallard Duck numbers have greatly increased over the last month. I am sure many of you have noted the return of large numbers of Cowbirds at your feeders. There are many more Yellow-rumped Warblers throughout St. James now.*



*And one of our favorite species, the winter Robin, has returned for the winter months. The male Bluebirds are back looking for suitable nesting sites, and the females will arrive in January. You can expect to see increased numbers of Carolina Chickadees, Gold Finches, House Finches, Chipping Sparrows, White Throated Sparrows, Hairy Woodpeckers, Downey Woodpeckers and Brown Headed Nuthatches at your feeders over the next couple of weeks. On the beaches until early January, you may still find some migrating shore birds, such as Semipalmated Plovers and Ruddy Turnstones, and you will see large numbers of Brown Pelican formations headed south."*

**- Hugh Shaw**

**Note:** Are your hummingbird feeders still up? Both the Ruby Throat and the Rufous Hummingbirds have been spotted in St. James. They are either overwintering or stopping to refuel as they

continue their journey to warmer areas. (Sugar water does not freeze at 32 degrees. It has to get down to 28 or 29 degrees Celsius) Please keep them clean and fresh.

*Rufous Hummingbird:* 



During the months of January and February, the natural food source for many birds continues to decline. Foods like natural berries, seeds, fruits and nuts have been consumed during the past two months by birds and mammals and are becoming more scarce. Help our overwintering birds thrive by providing quality bird seed and suet, as well as fresh water. Try not to provide seed mixes that contain red millet which is often ignored by our songbirds.



### Notable Events for January, 2026

- **Sat/Sun Jan 3: Quadrantid Meteor Shower Peaks** Full moon interference
- **Sunday, Jan 4: St. James Christmas Bird Count**. What's in your yard?
- **Monday, Jan 5: National Bird Day**
- **Saturday, Jan 10: National Houseplant Appreciation Day**
- **Saturday, Jan 10: National Save the Eagles Day**. Never use rodent poisons.
- **Monday, Jan 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- **Tuesday, Jan 20: Penguin Awareness Day**. Report sightings to Birders of SJ.
- **Wednesday, Jan 21: Birders of St. James Community Program – 7PM**
- **Wednesday, Jan 21: National Squirrel Appreciation Day**. Like it or not.

- **Sunday, Jan 11:** National Milk Day
- **Wednesday, Jan 14:** National Dress up your Pet Day (but show some respect)
- **Thursday, Jan 15:** “Landscapes that Last” webinar. [Click to register](#) - FREE
- **Wednesday, Jan 21:** National Hugging Day. Do it!
- **Thursday, Jan 22:** National Celebration of Life Day. Reading this? You qualify!
- **Saturday, Jan 31:** National Hot Chocolate Day. Here's your excuse!

## **From a recent newsletter in Birds and Blooms**

([www.birdsandblooms.com](http://www.birdsandblooms.com)).... When asked how birds survive in the winter, the reply is from their experts Kenn and Kimberly. "Yes, birds living in cooler climates actually do have thicker plumage in winter.

It's typical for them to **molt** in fall, replacing all or most of their feathers so their outer coating of feathers is in good, fresh condition during the coldest time of year. Under that outer layer, many birds grow hundreds of small downy feathers that are close to the skin for the season. They may increase the total number of feathers by 25% or more—in effect, putting on a natural down vest to help them survive the winter chill."

This information definitely explains my backyard photo of this fat (and sassy) looking Bluebird!

*Article & photo from Trish Stewart, St. James.*



**Our next Speaker Series** event takes place on Wednesday, January 21 at the Homer Wright Community Center, 7PM. We have invited **Diane Dulong**, the president of the Waccamaw Audubon Society of Myrtle Beach. Dulong will present on the Eastern Bluebird and birding along the Carolina Coast.

A Minneapolis native, Dulong was raised in a family of birders and conservationists. She is the proud owner of a Wild Birds Unlimited franchise store in Myrtle Beach for ten years now. For



birders, these stores are loaded with beautiful backyard birding vessels and quality seed that is often not available from the big box stores. Put this store on your list of visits on your next shopping trip to Myrtle Beach. Dulong also partners with Huntington State Park and other area conservationists in hosting educational seminars on bird conservation and we look forward to seeing her in St. James.



*Article by Trish Greene*



BIRDERS OF ST. JAMES  
PRESENTS



# Bluebirds

with Diane Dulong  
President, Waccamaw Audubon

The Eastern Bluebird and the Carolina Coast

Wednesday, January 21, 7PM  
Homer Wright Community Center



**Plus:** Results of the Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> St. James  
Christmas Bird Count from Hugh Shaw

Have you joined our Facebook group?



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