BIRDERS OF ST. JAMES

Birders of St. James - April 2026

Birders of St. James emphasizes protecting habitats, sustaining wildlife sanctuaries, and fostering ecological stewardship—directly aligned with Earth Day's global focus on environmental protection and restoration. Earth Day is Wednesday, Apri 22.



The Birding Journey- April 2026

Well, there is definitely some action at the Bluebird house that we put up in the backyard. It's strange though, some days I see Bluebirds fly in and out and sit on top of it. Other days I see Carolina Chickadees

doing the same thing. And of course, the ever-present Mockingbird perching regularly on top of the house and chasing all birds away. I'm not one to be nosy, I kind of want to leave nature to do its thing with minimal interruption from me. But, in preparation for writing this article, I had to look inside the house.

To do this, I get my phone ready. I walk loudly over to the box and tap on the back side. No birds in sight. I open the box and quickly put the phone above and take a picture. I then shut the box and walk away. The photo shows a nest, yet no eggs. Online searching shows that my nest is a Bluebird nest consisting of just pine straw. So, my birding journey continues here in St James, and we wait like expecting parents for the baby Bluebirds to arrive.



Illegal to Destroy a Nest?

When Diane Dulong presented to our Birders of St. James group in January 2026, she told us it was illegal to destroy a bird's nest. I never knew that. I looked up the information on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 for some additional information. It seems Congress enacted this law to protect the then massive slaughter of birds for the feather trade. It was high fashion at the time for the use of bird feathers in women's hats and other accessories. This law

makes it illegal to hunt, take, capture, kill or possess protected migratory birds (most all birds with few exceptions) including their parts, nests, or eggs without a US Fish and Wildlife Service permit.

Over the years, there have been lawsuits that have addressed "intentional" or "non-intentional" killing of birds. On April 11, 2025, the Department of Interior issued an opinion that the law does not apply to "incidental" killing of birds. Environmentalists say that this weakening of the law de-incentivizes utility and energy companies to protect migratory birds from their industry hazards. Knowing the history of the law helps us all understand where we came from, the near extinction of migratory birds, and can only lead us to nurture and protect the birds we see every day here in St James.

Trish Greene
President
Birders of St. James

Editor's note:
Bluebirds are nesting now and can have up to three broods through August. You can enjoy hosting a family now by ordering one of our NC made nestboxes, delivered to your front door within 24 hours during the month of April - while supplies last.
Details here.

Discover Great Birding Hot Spots

by Pam Miller & Hugh Shaw

Discover top birdwatching spots in and around St. James with our"Briders Hot Spots" guide. Each month we will feature a public "hot spot" location with a narrative, expected bird sightings, maps, and photos. Visit our website (*link below)* for the complete list, as our members continue to update us with these special viewing locations.

Hot Spot #3: Huntington State Park, South Carolina - A Birders Paradise









Located about 80 miles from St. James on Highway 17 through Myrtle Beach, Huntington State Park entrance is across from Brookgreen Gardens in Murrell's Inlet.

With diverse habitats—seashore, estuaries, marshlands accessible by a long walkway, and woodlands—the park offers **excellent birdwatching year-round**, especially during spring and fall migration. Species seen here are too numerous to list individually.

Broad categories include:
Roseate Spoonbills, Wood Storks, Teals, Yellow Legs, Dowitchers, Curlews, Plovers, Sandpipers, Herons, Egrets, Ibis, Ducks, Terns, and Gulls.

Park Details

More Hot Spots

A Seasonal Birding Update

by Hugh Shaw

Spring is here and the birding landscape has changed radically. Our winter visitors departed during the last week of February and the first week of March 2026. The ponds are no longer home to Bufflehead, Hooded Mergansers, Widgeons, Black Ducks and scores of Mallard Ducks. But some American Robins remain, however not the large flocks seen here during December through February. We are sure you noticed that large numbers of Brown-headed Cowbirds are no longer raiding our feeders. Flocks of Yellow-rumped Warblers are also diminishing, but Bluebirds are back in large numbers selecting their nesting sites.

So, we will now see our spring and summer species return upon which we will focus our bird walks in April, May and June. Red-headed Woodpeckers, Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, Purple Martins, and many warbler species in their colorful breeding plumages will be returning to St. James during April and May. Also during the spring, the populations of our shore birds will grow. Brown pelicans, White Ibis, Dowitchers, Dunlins, Ruddy Turnstones, Oyster Catchers, Black Skimmers and Sanderling will return to our beaches in ever increasing numbers.

There will be a couple of bird walks the first 10 days of April, then we will resume more frequent walks in the summer months.

Are you on our official bird walk list?

Send email to thebirdersofstjames.gmail.com and request to join our contact list for bird walks as they are scheduled. More ***here.***

April - a busy month:

- Friday, 4/1 -National Walking Day and do some birding on the way.
- Thursday, 4/2 – International Children's Book Day – Bird book?
- Friday, 4/3 – World Aquatic Animal Day
- Friday, 4/3 – World Rat Day - Enjoy!
- Sunday, 4/5 – Bluebirds have first batch of eggs. Got your nestbox yet?
- Monday, 4/6 – Fresh Tomato Day (with some bread and mayonnaise)
- Tuesday, 4/7 – World Health Day
- Tuesday, 4/7 – International Beaver Day (parade on Beaver Creek Dr)
- Wednesday, 4/8 – Draw a Picture of a Bird Day (it's true!)
- Wednesday, 4/8 – National Pygmy Hippo Day. We reserved the dog park for you.
- Thursday, 4/9 – Multiple species of Frogs are singing. Sit outside tonight and enjoy!
- Friday, 4/10 – National Hug your Dog Day
- Friday, 4/10 – Golfer's Day (otherwise known as everyday here).
- Monday, 4/13 – National Dolphin Day
- Monday, 4/13 – National Garden Day
- **Wednesday, 4/15** – Birders of St. James Community Program – 7pm
- Friday, 4/17 – International Bat Appreciation Day (mosquito eaters)
- Monday, 4/20 – Wild Turkeys are nesting
- Wednesday, 4/22 – Earth Day – Celebrated for 45 years!
- Friday, 4/24 – Firefly Day (a reminder to not use pesticides, and leave the leaves.)
- Saturday, 4/24 – Osprey have returned and are nesting. A truly amazing raptor.
- Saturday, 4/25 – Celebrate Trails Day (we could use some here)
- **Saturday, April 25** – National Birding Day
- **Sunday, April 26** – Audubon Day
- Monday, April 27 – Marine Mammal Rescue Day

Did you know….Our website "Resources" page now has over 155 documents about birding, wildlife habitats, conservation, bird books and more. Much more!

What do you want to read about?



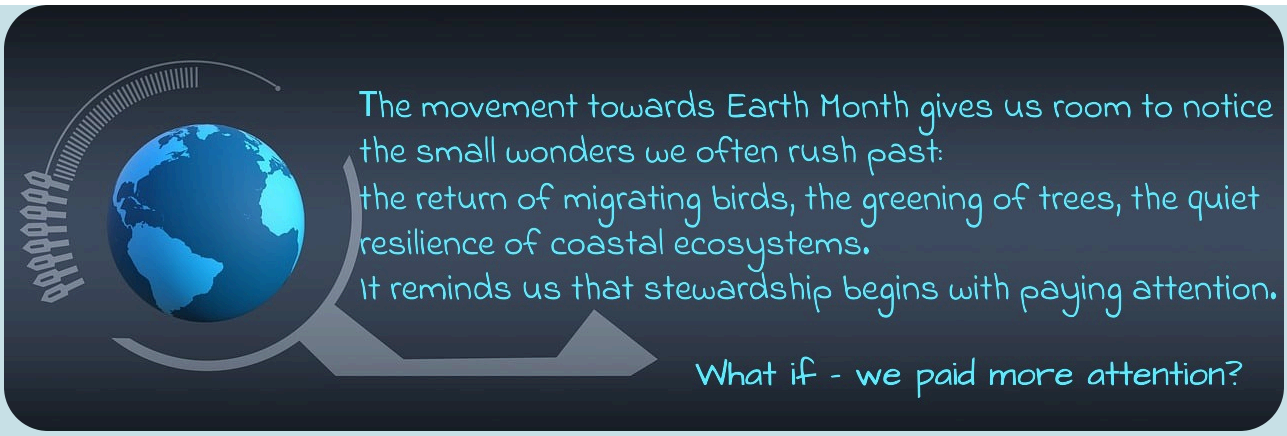


Make plans now to attend this special presentation on Hummingbirds:



Birders of St. James, the results of the 2026 **Great Backyard Bird Count** (GBBC) are in! Thanks to over 1.2 million Birders in 216 countries the GBBC was a record-breaking event in support of ornithology sciences.

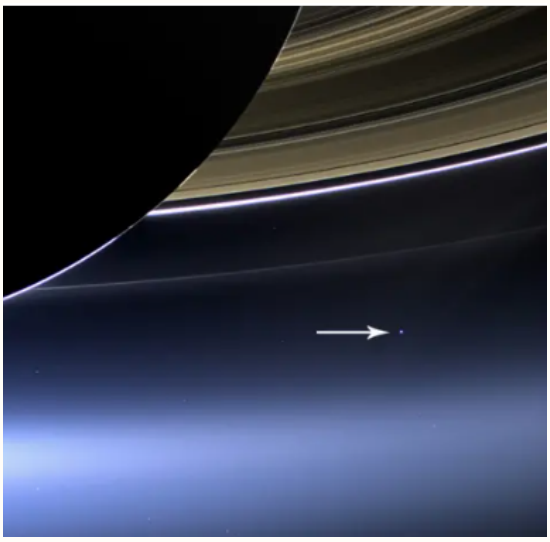
Birders world-wide, including our St. James participants, submitted 467,696 eBird checklists identifying 8257 species, both of which are new records. Also noteworthy was the fact that Merlin was used over 1.2 million times to identify species during this 4-day event. Mark your calendars for the 2027 GBBC which is scheduled for 12 to 15 February 2027. - Hugh Shaw



Because life is so rare, and because consciousness is rarer still, our existence carries weight. We are not just inhabitants of Earth; we are its caretakers. Our collective choices ripple outward, across ecosystems, across generations, and across the only world we know that can sustain us.

The photo here of Earth was taken by NASA's Cassini spacecraft on July 19, 2013, near Saturn, a distance of nearly 900 million miles away.

It's a picture of **you!**



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