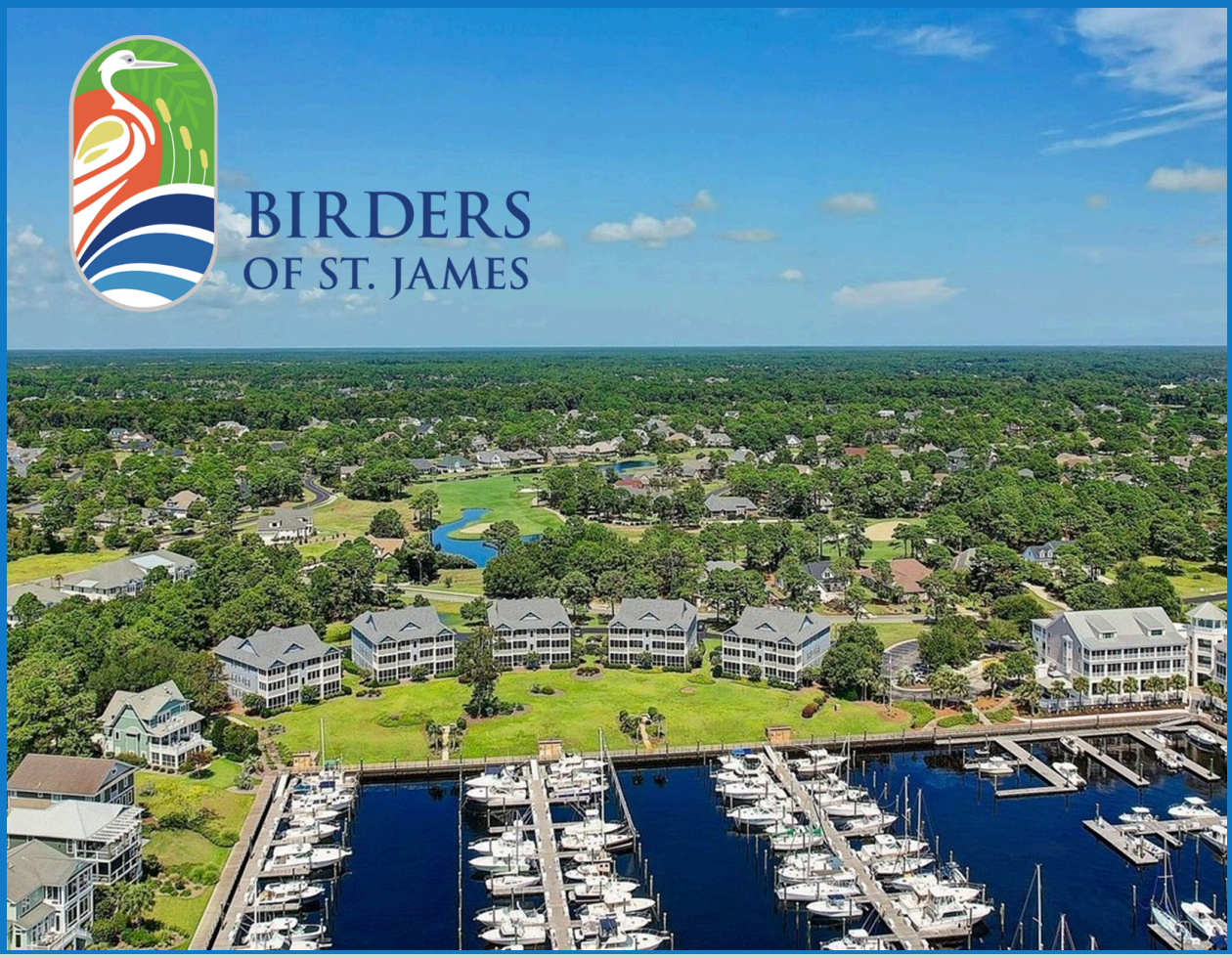


A New Season Begins!

As we begin our new season of programs, we'll start out with a new focus on attracting birds to your property and then identifying them.

How do I get started?

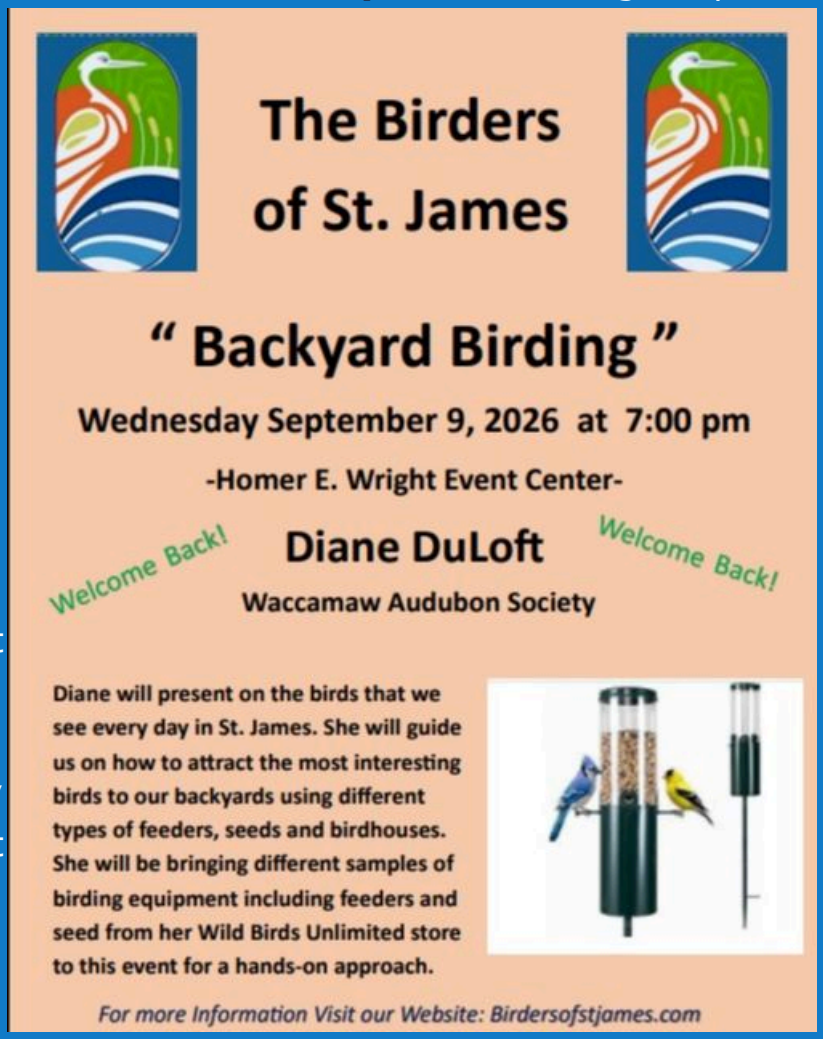
It's easy as…

1. Attend our September 9th program
2. Use the helpful materials/resources on our website
3. Use this Fall season to landscape for a bird-friendly habitat

Birding Journey - September 2026

We are coming up on the beginning of our second year with our speaker series for the Birders of St. James.

Diane DuLoft of Waccamaw Audubon Society will be coming to speak to us again on **Wednesday Sept 9** at the Wright Center. She will be discussing back yard birding and will be bringing along seeds and feeders and knowledge about what you can do to attract the birds that you love to your back yard.



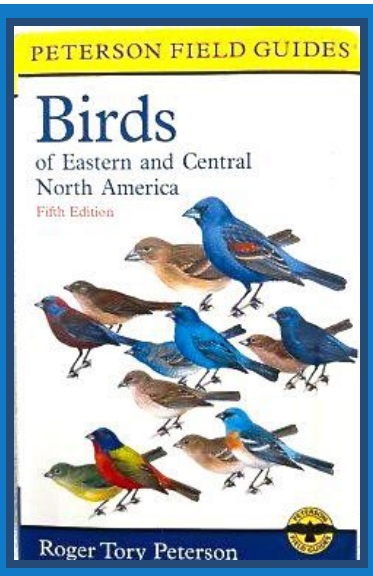
As many of you know, I am relatively new to birding yet my knowledge of the local birds here in St. James is expanding. I can identify by name most of the birds that visit my yard and I can usually spot an outlier or rare bird. "*Somethin's not right with that one*" and I'll head for my phone-camera. I'll try first to get a picture before it flies away. I find it easier to use a good picture and zoom in on the bird and then use a book (I have **Roger Peterson's Field Guide Birds of Eastern and Central North America)** to identify the bird.

Then there is always the **Merlin App**, a wonderful identifier tool. I use it more for "listening" to birds in the backyard and love to see five species pop up on the screen.

I hope you have enjoyed your summer, our birding journey continues, and we hope to see you at the meeting.



Trish Greene
President - Birders of St. James





Do you know the "bird-friendly status" of your property?

Compare these **5 quick checks** against your personal landscape practices. And get ready for migrating birds to make a pitstop.

1. Native plants are required to support balanced insect communities
•Native shrubs, trees, and vines support diverse insect life, which in turn feeds the vast majority of our local songbirds. Fall: the best planting time.
•A healthy, diverse insect population can reduce mosquito dominance by supporting predators like dragonflies, spiders, and other insects, as well as lizards—all consumers of mosquitos.
•Our **website** has over 35 documents related to native plants for Coastal North Carolina. Planting this fall allows roots to establish before summer.

2. Avoiding pesticides protects birds, salamanders, turtles, frogs, and beneficial insects. Let's not destroy this basic food chain during fall migration. The birds must find insects, nuts & berries to maintain energy.
•We strongly warn against chemicals, noting they kill millions of birds annually by poisoning their food chain.
•Reducing pesticides also protects natural mosquito predators and prevents ecological imbalance. Pesticides create a ripple effect of poison.
•Flush out bird baths every 4 days to break any mosquito reproductive cycle with standing water. And consider our "**Bucket Challenge**".

3. Leaf litter and brush piles create habitat for ground dwelling insects

•These microhabitats support beetles, spiders, and other insects that birds rely on. Consider the forest floor that supports birds over winter.
•Remember - just about all newly hatched songbirds are fed exclusively insects. This is because their digestive system is still forming and cannot process nut, seeds or berries. Their initial diet is all insects.
•Even a small brush pile, hidden under a bush will support food for songbirds. Hide a small brush pile under shrubbery.

4. Keeping cats indoors protects birds that help regulate insect populations.
•Outdoor cats kill hundreds of millions of birds each year.
•There is also a real risk of creating a feral cat population in your community. If you are feeding feral cats, you are part of the problem.
•Fewer birds = fewer natural insect consumers. **Additional reading.**

5. Reducing window strikes preserves local bird populations
•If you are experiencing bird strikes at your residence, consider moving feeders further from the house and applying specially designed window clings that are not so visible to humans but very visible to birds.
•More birds surviving means more insect eating species remain active in the ecosystem all spring and summer. **New studies.**

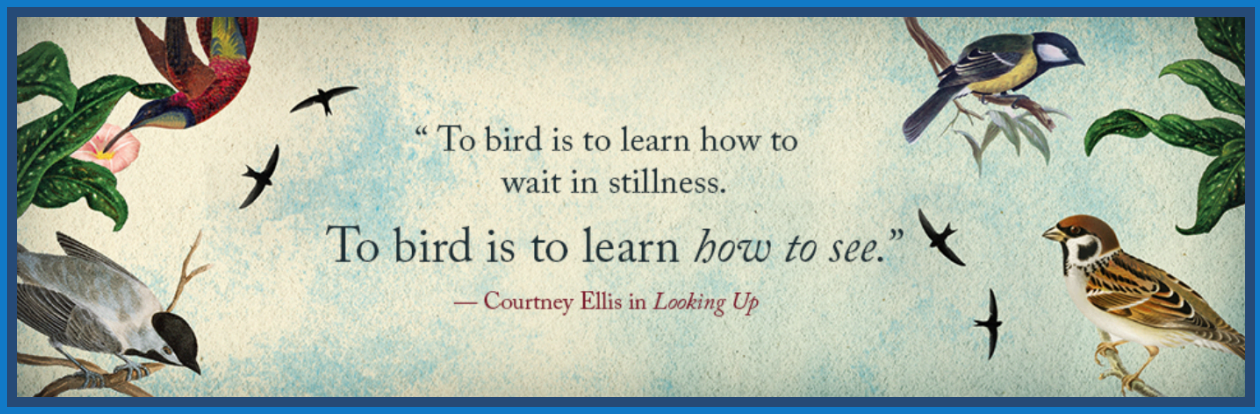
And don't forget: Keep fresh food and and water available daily!

Bottom Line:
Restore native habitat, avoid chemicals, and protect the bird's food chain. Healthy, biodiverse yards produce more insect predators and attract more insect eating birds, resulting in fewer mosquito friendly conditions.
But wait! There's more! Check out the Birders of St. James webpage on landscaping to attract birds. What you do, or don't do in your landscape has a direct effect on our songbirds far beyond your property line. Our website offers important and useful information - **here** and more **here.**

Think you know something about residential wildlife habitats? Take this basic online quiz from the National Wildlife Federation and test your knowledge: *Certified Wildlife Habitat Quiz*: **Start Here**

Let's make sure that your property is part of the solution, not part of the problem. Providing healthy habitat on our own property benefits wildlife

beyond your property line. St. James is both an Audubon Bird Sanctuary and a Community Wildlife Habitat, certified by the National Wildlife Federation. Let's be good stewards with what we have.



Highlights from Hugh

Fellow Birders, it has been a difficult summer for our feathered friends. The drought has destroyed many of the plants that provide natural food for birds. So I hope everyone has been putting bird seed in their feeders and has been filling their bird baths with water every day.

There is good news! The Osprey family at the top of the communications tower near our Community Center have fledged at least one baby Osprey which has been seen flying in the area. We will continue watching the tower to see if the Osprey family continues to use this nest and for any more young flying in the area. Also, I am sure you have noticed that lately the Wild Turkeys have not been active in our area. At the end of July and during August there have been several sightings of Hen Turkeys with their recent hatchlings in the vicinity of Players Club holes #6 and #7 and along the fairways of holes number 11, 12 and 13.

I am sure many of you have noticed that the ponds at St. James have been filling up slowly due to the recent rains. Over the summer most of the herons, egrets, and other wading birds sought other sources of food in the tidal areas and other larger ponds in the Cape Fear region. However, during a recent trip around St. James it was evident that Blue Herons, Great Whites, Little Blue Herons, White Ibises, and Pied-billed Grebes and Geese were slowly returning to our ponds.

We will restart our bird walk program in the latter part of September when the temperatures cool down and more birds have returned to their normal habitats at St. James Plantation. **If you wish to participate in a bird walk, you must register online at our website:**

Birding Hotspots in our coastal community | The Birders of St. James

A heads up for everyone! Please renew your memberships. We have new speakers and several key activities/projects on our agenda and we need your membership support to enhance birding populations.

Also, we will continue to support Audubon and Cornell University by participating again in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count at the end of December 2026 and the Great Backyard Bird Count in February 2027. You will receive more detailed information on these important bird counts events at our December meeting.

Thank you,
Hugh



Notable Dates during September 2026

All month long - a great time for birding as migration begins. Is your yard bird friendly? Our website is full of great resources on our **"Discover Birding"** section.

- First Week in Sept: Seed Week | Exploring Nature with Children
- Tuesday, Sept. 1 - International Primate Day
- Thursday, Sept. 3 - Copperheads peak birthing period.
- Friday, Sept. 4 - National Wildlife Day (*Check the Town's digital sign*)
- Monday, Sept. 7 - Coastal plains peak with Metalmark Butterflies
- **Wednesday, Sept. 9 - "Backyard Birding" Homer Wright Center**
- Wednesday, Sept 16 - International Day for the preservation of the Ozone Layer.
- Friday, Sept. 18 - World Water Monitoring Day
- Sunday, Sept. 20 - World Clean up Day
- Monday, Sept. 21 - Zero Emissions Day
- Saturday, Sept. 26 - World Environmental Health Day
- Sunday, Sept. 27 - World Rivers Day



Join / Renew Today

It's time to renew

Membership remains $25 a year for the entire household. Funds support our mission and efforts to enhance the joy of birding, and maintain our quality programs. We do this while working with all residents to safeguard the exceptional elements that birds and other wildlife need in order to thrive here in the midst of rapid growth and habitat loss.

We encourage you to be part of the solution which is St. James' commitment to finding balance between growth and quality of life - *for all life*.

Use the link on the left to express your passion for the natural world.

Secure Payment options through:

Venmo by searching for **The Birders of St. Jam**es (@thebirdersofstjames)
PayPal - use the account: **thebirdersofstjames@gmail.com**
You may also make payment during our September event.

September is a key time in the life of birds. For many, the molting of worn feathers continues, Gold Finches are just now wrapping up their nesting season as are some Bluebirds who can have up to three nesting cycles over the season. Fall Migration begins with Warblers and Flycatchers and soon, the night sky becomes busy as we are in the Atlantic Flyway. Birds enter a state called **Hyperphagia** - a biological urge to gorge on food, building their body fat reserves. This is another reason to include fall producing berry plants in your landscape. Keep that on your fall "to-do" list. We have those plants listed in folder #6 on our "**Resources**" page.

Two important ways you can help during fall migration:

- Turn off outdoor lights. They can cause nocturnal migrating birds to become disoriented, and throw off their navigation.
- Keep feeders and birdbaths clean and full. Birds to our north will be passing through and may choose to rest and refuel in your yard.

If your yard is bird friendly, you are in for some great birding!

"All the months are crude experiments, out of which the perfect September is made"
- Virginia Woolf



The leadership team of Birders of St. James is seeking volunteers to support our website, newsletter and social media. If you have a talent for writing, an eye for design, or want to learn something new,

please join our media team. Become a bird nerd! You know you want to!



Contacts us for details

BIRDERS OF ST. JAMES

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