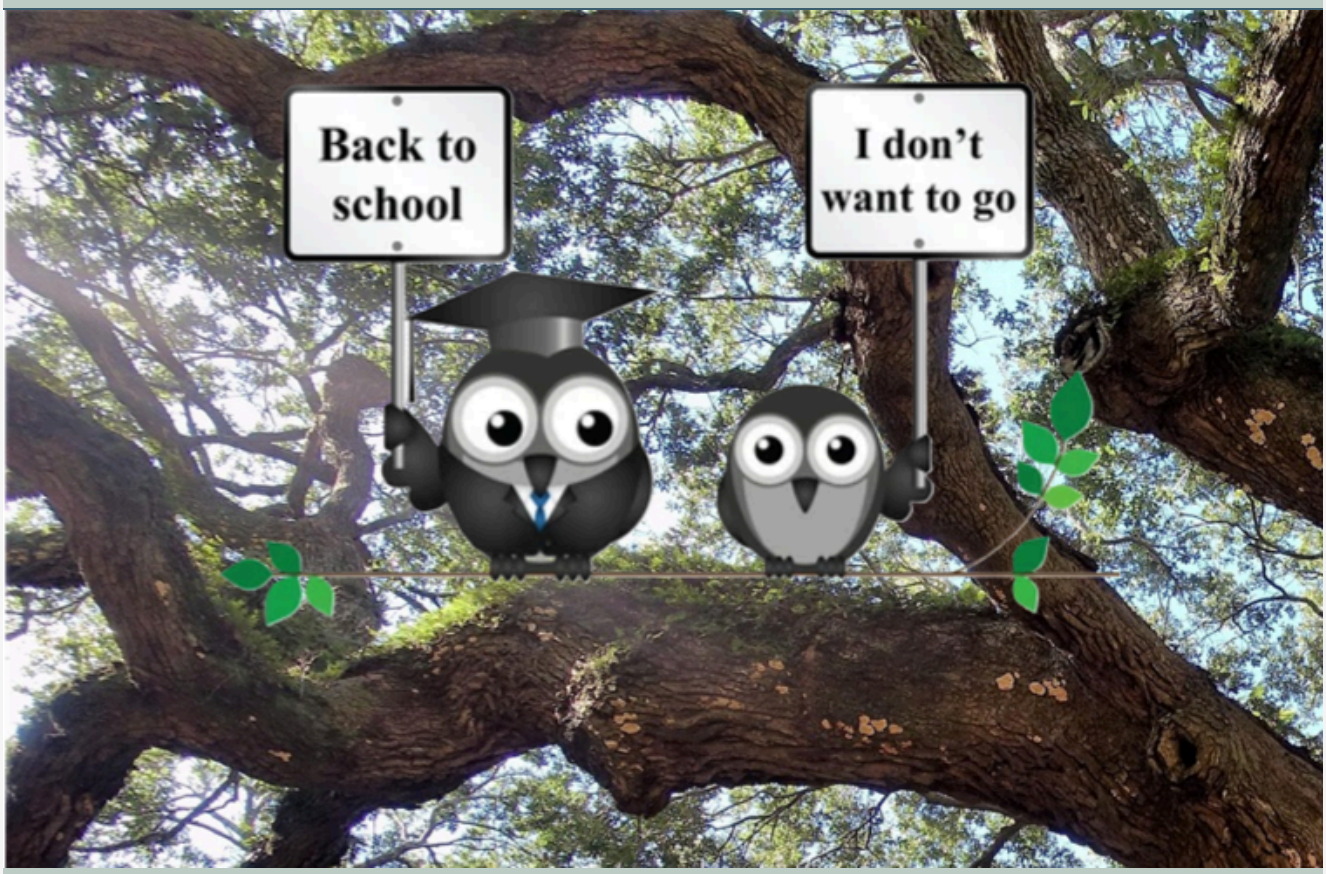
View this email in your browser

BIRDERS OF ST. JAMES

Back to Birds!

formally known as "Back to School"



So, what does August mean to the feathered residents of St. James?

Perhaps, it's "Back to Birds?" Keep reading for the answer.

Birding Journey - August 2026

I spent almost all of the month of July away from St James traveling up North and visiting friends and relatives. While there, I was frequently asked questions like: "Are you enjoying retirement? Are you keeping busy? How's North Carolina?"

My answer is always an enthusiastic YES to all three of these, but once in a while some questioner would delve deeper and ask: "Give me an example of a busy day." Oh boy… umm, "Well, did I tell you I'm a member of the Birders of St. James? Yeah, well I'm into birding now." And without further prompting the questioner will just start telling me about their own birding experiences.



Everyone has a bird story. Even people that don't like birds will tell you a bird story…usually about why they don't like birds. Talking about birds can be a great ice breaker when meeting new people, try it sometime.

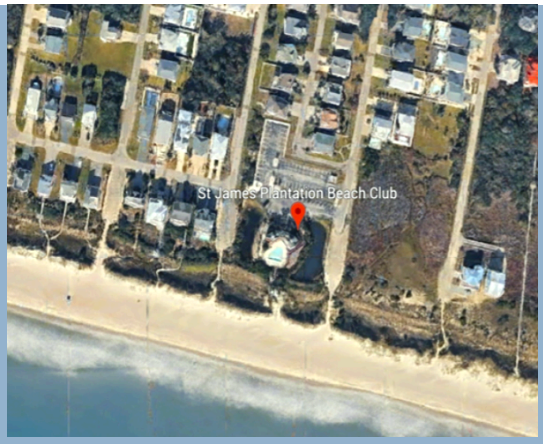
As we approach September and our new club season, we are heading up our speaker series with Waccamaw Audubon president Diane Dulong. She will be talking about backyard birding with identification, feeders, and bird baths. We are also looking forward to birding projects within St. James to promote bird conservation. Check in on our website birdersofstjames.com regularly to keep up with club news and we look forward to seeing you in September.

Trish Greene
President, Birders of St. James



Discovering Great Birdwatching Locations

Explore top birdwatching spots in and around St. James with our **Birders Hot Spots** guide. Each month, our newsletter highlights a public Hot Spot featuring expected bird sightings, maps photos, and a narrative. Check our website for additional Hot Spots.





August Hot Spot – Birding at the Beach

St. James Beach Club

100 SE 72nd St, Oak Island

The shore is one of the best places to spot shorebirds—and St. James Beach Club offers plenty to see. Look along the beach and in nearby areas, and you are likely to find birds almost everywhere. These coastal habitats provide important feeding and nesting areas for local marine wildlife during summer and fall migrations.

What you may see

Along the shoreline: Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones, Willets, Dunlins, Ring-billed Gulls, and Double-crested Cormorants.
Flying over the beach:
Forster's Terns, Royal Terns, and Brown Pelican

In the ponds on either side of the Beach Club: Various species of warblers and sparrows.
Wading along pond edges: Herons and egrets
In nearby shrubs: Cardinals and mockingbirds

CAUTION- THERE ARE ALLIGATORS IN THE PONDS AROUND THE BEACH CLUB

By Pam Miller & Hugh Shaw







Shore Birds & Field Guides Here

Our Board members took a tour of Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter's new facilities, 4620 Long Beach Road, Southport, NC.



Did you know:

- The shelter was founded by Mary Ellen Rogers in 2007 in her home and backyard.
- Since their move to Southport, multiple buildings include the main building for welcoming guests, intake and first-aid care primarily for birds that must be kept inside.
- The large barn facility has multiple enclosures for recovery with space for the birds to move around and re-acclimate to the outdoors and to rebuild strength.
- Another building houses a new X-ray machine for onsite diagnosis.
- The volunteer staff treats between 500 and 800 birds every year.
- Limited tours are available to the public by reservation. Take the grandchildren.

- Donations help to maintain ongoing treatment costs, specialized diet needs, and supplies to provide the best specialized treatment possible for quality rehabilitation of injured birds so they may be returned to the wild. A great group of volunteers here!

Website Link

SEA BISCUIT
WILDLIFE SHELTER
RESCUE, REHABILITATE, AND RELEASE

Interesting Sighting

A **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** was spotted in the Sunset Beach area, about 45 minutes south of us. They tend to like ponds on golf courses. Interesting fact: They feed nocturnally!
Duck details.



Notable Observances in August

- **Saturday, Aug. 1** - Milkweed are blooming and supporting Monarchs.
- **Tuesday, Aug. 4** - International Owl Awareness Day. Brunswick County has 4 species: Great Horned, Barred Owl, Eastern Screech Owl and the Barn Owl.
- **Wednesday, Aug.12-13 -** Perseid Meteor shower peaks. (best after midnight)
- **Thursday, Aug 13** - International Wolf Day. See Red Wolf in the Albemarle Peninsula
- **Saturday, Aug 15** - National Honey Bee Day. (Remember - no pesticides)
- **Sunday, Aug 16** - Migration for many shorebirds. Visit our August Hot Spot.
- **Thursday, Aug 20** - World Mosquito Day. (*Somebody please expain why?)*
- **Saturday, Aug. 22** - Peak hatching of Loggerhead Sea Turtles. Be respectful.
- **Tuesday, Aug 25** - National Park Service Birthday. Hug a ranger!

- **Sunday, Aug 30** - National Beach Day. So thankful for “St. James Beach Club”!
- **Monday, Aug 31** - Late summer wildflowers are in bloom. Asters, Blazing Star. As flowers go to seed, they are vital to migrating birds as an energy source.

Our community programs return beginning **Wednesday September 9th**. This program will cover *“Back Yard Birding”* by Diane Duloft - Waccamaw Audubon Society.



Bird Behavior in August - often referred to as the “**Great August Shuffle.”**

August is “Back to Birds” month here in St. James.

Notice your backyard's a little quieter lately? Well, that's **molting season**. Cardinals, Carolina Wrens, Blue Jays and many other birds are quietly swapping their worn, sun-faded feathers for fresh ones, and since missing flight feathers make for clumsy flying, they're lying low in the leafy cover rather than singing from the treetops — think of it as their version of a bad hair month. They never make their dating videos during this period.

The birds that *are* showing up have big appetites. Feeders and birdbaths are busy with adults and this year's fledglings packing on fat reserves. By late August, small woodland birds are wandering beyond their usual territories, so don't be surprised by a stranger at your feeder. And if its the same species as your regular visitors, it’s not a warm welcome.







Now down at the Beach Club, it's a different scene entirely. Starting this month, American Oystercatchers — residents and new arrivals from up north alike — slowly begin gathering into flocks at coastal hotspots. Sanderlings are trading bright breeding colors for sandy winter camouflage. And since shorebird nesting season runs through August, well-camouflaged babies are still tucked into the sand — good reason to give the dunes a wide berth.

Then there's the hummingbird traffic merge. Feeders that saw only occasional visitors in June and July should see a noticeable pickup — fledglings, moms, and early migrants from up north all funneling through at once, so keep those feeders clean and filled. There could be plenty of rubythroats that still have miles to go and could use your help. Keep in mind your feeder is supplemental to their normal preferred diet of pollen nectar, small insects and spiders. Another huge reason not to use chemicals. Please don’t poison their food chain.

To wrap it up: yard birds are lying low for a feather refresh, beach birds are flocking up ahead of their trip south, and hummingbirds are throwing one last food fest and feeder party before they head out. August can be the quiet “back to birding” period between summer and fall migration — worth a slow walk with your binoculars either way.

Is your property a bird friendly habitat? Take a look around to see where the birds are hanging out. You can enhance your property by planning to add some late native summer/early fall plantings that are sought out by migratory birds. Remember, St. James is on the **Atlantic Flyway** which brings thousands of birds to our region. August means enjoy but prepare.

Want to learn something new related to making your yard more bird friendly this fall? Check out the latest blog we just posted on the “Outreach” tab of our website. Here’s direct link:

Fueling the Flight

BIRDERS OF ST. JAMES

Copyright (C) 2026 Birders of St. James. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe