



117 Laurens St. NW  
Aiken, SC 29801  
803-649-7999

## Birds & Butterflies

# NEWSLETTER

2008-2

Hummingbirds will be arriving soon, probably by the time you receive this newsletter, many migrating birds will begin to move through and into our area, nesting season will commence, and wildflowers are beginning to bloom. What a great time to enjoy the outdoors. Thanks for your continued support of Birds & Butterflies and have a great spring.

If you do not want to receive the newsletter please let us know by email at [birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com](mailto:birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com).

If you know anyone else who would like to receive the newsletter please give us their email address.

### Hummingbirds Arrive Soon



Photo by Martin Falmlen

If you want to follow the spring migration of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird go to [www.hummingbirds.net/maps](http://www.hummingbirds.net/maps) and you can see the northward migration in the eastern United States.

By mid-March hummingbirds may be seen in the Aiken area as they migrate northward. These first-comers will pass through followed by the summer residents that arrive soon thereafter.

The first ruby-throated hummingbird sited in the Aiken area in the spring of 2007 was March 13. The earliest record for the immediate area was March 3.

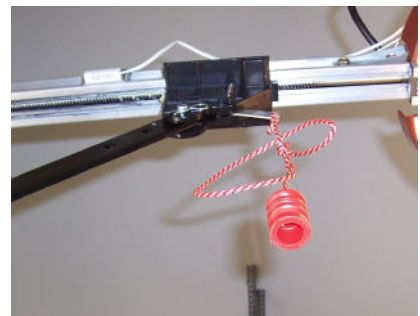
### WHAT TO DO IF A HUMMINGBIRD GETS TRAPPED IN YOUR GARAGE

The government insists that all garage doors have red emergency release handles. Unfortunately, to a hummingbird they look a lot like trumpet creeper flowers, one of their favorites, and they fly in to investigate. But hummers aren't particularly intelligent and don't have a natural concept of ceilings, and when they get scared their immediate reflex is to fly straight up, which only compounds the problem. In an hour, a trapped and exhausted hummingbird can starve to death. What to do?

First, keep pets and kids away so they won't make the bird more anxious, and try hanging your most popular feeder in the door opening and stand back. Sometimes this will bring a hungry bird to feed, and it may fly off in the correct direction when it's finished. But this doesn't always work, and you shouldn't waste too much time – the bird's clock is ticking. If the hummer isn't gone within 10 minutes or so, turn on the inside garage light, close the overhead door, and get a flashlight. When the hummer flies over a clear section of the floor, turn off the light. Hummingbirds have poor night vision and don't like to fly in the dark, and the bird will flutter gently to the floor. Turn on our flashlight, find the bird, and scoop it up gently in your cupped bare hands. Have an assistant open the door, and carry the hummer away from the garage. Offer the bird a drink by holding it close to the feeder, but don't try to force it. After it drinks, or refuses to drink, open your hands, and when the bird reorients itself, it will fly away –

probably straight up. It may lie still in your hand for several minutes, or it may leave immediately. Hummingbirds don't usually carry parasites, but was your hands afterward anyway.

To prevent a recurrence, keep your garage door closed when you don't actually need it open. You should also ignore the government and remove the temptation, by painting the release handle a dark color (black is good), or at least looping it up out of sight. Look for and hide any other attractive red items, such as paint can labels. Remind your neighbors, gently, of the trouble with red garage door release handles.



**Note:** If your garage has windows and cannot be darkened, this rescue technique won't work. Instead, hang the feeder high up, inside the garage, so the bird can feed itself and rest comfortably. Leave it alone, and leave the door open in case it calms down enough to figure out how to leave. Near dusk, the flashlight technique will work better.

Taken from the website [www.hummingbirds.net/about.html](http://www.hummingbirds.net/about.html)

## AIKENS' BIRDS WELL FED

Aikens' wild birds are certainly eating well these days. Last year (2007) Birds & Butterflies customers purchased more than 58,000 pounds of bird food or nearly 30 tons. That is an average of 160 pounds of bird feed per day.

## BINOCULAR SALE

	<u>Regular Price</u>	<u>Sale Price</u>
Audubon 8x42 Equinox	\$180.00	\$135.00
Audubon 8x42 Equinox HP	\$280.00	\$210.00

Only one pair of each model remaining.

## UPCOMING BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES SEMINARS AND FIELD TRIPS

Thursday, April 17	North American Shorebirds
Thursday, May 8	South Carolina Wildflowers
Saturday, May 10	Wildflower Field Trip to the Sumter National Forest
Thursday, June 19	Butterflies of SC and GA and Butterfly Gardening

## PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*)

The male painted bunting has been described as "North America's gaudiest songbird." I think North America's most striking or beautiful songbird is more descriptive. There is no mistaking a male painted bunting with any other native bird species. With its blue head, green back and orange-red breast it is truly striking. The female is less colorful but still attractive with her all green plumage.



Courtesy of National Parks Service

The painted bunting is a summer, breeding resident in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia and Florida and winters in extreme south Florida, the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America. It is more common in coastal areas of South Carolina, but every year seems to bring more sightings in the Aiken area.

Preferred habitat for painted buntings is brushy thickets, woodland borders or edges, and brushy roads. Near the coast one of their favorite habitats are the small hammocks in tidal marshes.

Painted buntings natural food is small seeds and insects.

They will come to birdfeeders, especially near wooded areas, with white millet or sunflower meats being the preferred food. Last spring, at our home on Surrey Circle, we had a male painted bunting on one of our platform feeders for an afternoon. What a treat it was to watch him there.

Painted buntings have 1 or 2 broods of young per year. Their nest is usually located in thick vines or shrubs. They lay 3-5 light blue-white or grey-white eggs with brown spots.

Watch for painted buntings at your feeder and let us know if you see one.



Courtesy of South Carolina DNR

## PART-TIME, OCCASIONAL HELP NEEDED AT BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES.

MAY ONLY BE A COUPLE OF TIMES PER MONTH.

MAY INCLUDE SOME SATURDAYS.

PLEASE CALL IF INTERESTED.

## PLANTS THAT ARE GOOD FOR HUMMINGBIRDS

### Wildflowers & Vines (Native)

Cardinal Flower  
 Bee Balm  
 Wild Columbine  
 Trumpet Honeysuckle  
 Indian Pink  
 Canada Lily  
 Wood Lily  
 Purple Bergamot  
 Fire Pink  
 Indian Paintbrush  
 Red Turtlehead  
 Spotted Jewelweed  
 Cross Vine  
 Trumpet Vine  
 Butterfly Weed  
 Smooth Phlox  
 Lupine

### Other Plants

Sage  
 Snapdragon  
 Sweet William  
 Zinnia  
 Phlox  
 Petunia  
 Penstemon  
 Morning Glory  
 Trumpet Creeper  
 Foxglove  
 Bleeding Heart  
 Dahlia  
 Four-O-Clocks  
 Gladiola  
 Butterfly Bush  
 Rose of Sharon  
 Coralberry  
 Canna Lily  
 Geranium  
 Impatiens  
 Lantana  
 Verbena

## PLACES TO VISIT

### Silver Bluff Audubon Center & Sanctuary

The Silver Bluff Audubon Center & Sanctuary (SBAC) near Jackson, SC is comprised of 3,145 acres of upland pine forest, hardwood bottoms, open fields, lakes and streams. It is owned and managed by the National Audubon Society. In the past SBAC could have been described as a preserve where public



use was not encouraged. This is no longer the case and responsible public use of the area is encouraged. Two trails have been developed and are open for public use Monday thru Saturday from 9:00AM until 5:00PM. There is one ¼ mile trail and a 2 mile trail. Dori and I have walked the trails. They are well cleared and level. It was an enjoyable experience and we saw lots of birds, wildflowers and other wildlife.

SBAC is also home to the endangered Wood Stork during the summer months, beginning in

July. A trip to see them is worth the effort. The gates into the ponds where the storks will be feeding are open the same hours as the trails. Please call the SBAC before visit to see the storks. Since they are an endangered species, visitation is controlled. You might also see the pair of bald eagles that nest at SBAC.

For information on visiting the SBAC call the Education Center at 803-471-0291 or 803-827-0781 for the Sanctuary Office. Sanctuary and Center Manager Dan Connelly or Paul Koehler, Center Director will be happy to help you plan a visit. Brochures and maps are also available at Birds & Butterflies. The next month or two would be a great time to visit SBAC and view migrating songbirds.



Photos by Ron Brenneman

**Great  
 Backyard  
 Bird Count  
 Feb.18, 2008  
 at the  
 Silver Bluff  
 Audubon  
 Center  
 &  
 Sanctuary**



# PHOTO SECTION



## Red-Shouldered Hawks

Sam Coles photographed these beautiful birds of prey in the "Horse District" of Aiken during the week of Feb. 4, 2008.



## Tiger Swallow Tail on Lantana



Photo by Ron Brenneman



## Lunar Eclipse



Photos by George F. Alexander ©

If you would like to submit photos for inclusion in future Birds & Butterflies Newsletters please send email them to [birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com](mailto:birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com). Please include a short description of the photo and your name. We can't promise to use all of them but we will try.