

THE LESSER SQUAWK
The Charleston Natural History Society, Inc.
116 Presidents Circle
Summerville, S.C. 29483

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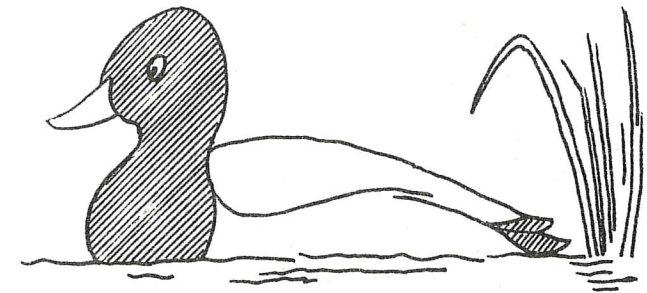
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the lesser

Squawk



Published at Charleston, S.C. by The Charleston Natural History Society, Inc., October, 1972, Volume XXIV No. 9. Editor: Alan M. Bills, 116 Presidents Circle, Summerville, S.C. 29483, Phone 873-0481; Assistant Editor: Perry E. Nugent, 2860 Savannah Highway, Charleston, S.C. 29407, Phone 556-3841

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OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

Tuesday October 10 - 8:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING AT CHARLESTON MUSEUM

FIELD TRIP - half day - Oct. 15
Isle of Palms

This month's program is concerned with dredging and marsh destruction along the North and South Carolina Coasts. The speaker will be Bruce Stebbins, who is a biologist with the Division of River Basin Studies of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

The field trip this month will be a short one (let's hope it's cooler than the last one). Those wishing to spend half a day on the Isle of Palms should meet at the Charleston Museum at 6:30 AM on October 15.

The purpose of this, undoubtedly, is to encourage only those who are conservation-minded. There are two paths to follow from the starting-point. One path leads to the left down to an observation platform, where through field glasses we saw, on the rocks far below, the Sea Lions sunning themselves. After retracing our steps to the starting-point, and descending the path in the opposite direction, we entered an elevator and were carried at least six stories down to a dimly-lighted cave. At one side there was a natural opening covered with poultry wire. Through this opening, we viewed the large cave into which the Sea Lions retreat for protection in stormy weather. Sunlight at the mouth of the cave revealed the surf rolling in. Fortunately, all visitors observed the printed request for quiet.

Washington is "Christmas Tree Country". Spruce, Fir, Hemlock, White Pine, and Balsam forests clothe the countryside. Most spectacular of the flowers that we saw were Rhododendron in many colors: pink, purple, red, lavender, white, and yellow. Seattle is a beautiful city built between Puget Sound and Lake Washington. Across Lake Washington, we were taken to see Snoqualmie Falls, an impressive volume of water plunging from a height 110 feet greater than that of Niagara. A ride through the Snoqualmie Pass of the Cascade Mountains was a memorable experience. The road wound its way near the tops of the mountains where we could see snow above, beside and below us. We learned that the snow does not become completely melted until August, and the next snowfall begins one month later.

Since Seattle is some 15 degrees nearer to the North Pole than is Charleston, we were able to witness the proof of that fact as presented by the sky itself. During the first week of June, the sun set considerably farther NW, and daylight lingered until after 9:30 PM. After dark, the handle of the Big Dipper was almost directly overhead, and the Pointers in the bowl revealed Polaris much higher on the meridian than at our latitude.

As long as memory lasts, we shall relive the outstanding experiences of our wonderful western vacation.

Elizabeth D. Simons

BIRD MOVEMENT IN OCTOBER

The following birds normally arrive in this area during this month:

Gannet	Red-necked Grebe	Ring-necked Duck
Red-breasted Merganser	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Henslow's Sparrow
Brown Creeper	Common Tern	Whistling Swan
White-throated Sparrow	Solitary Vireo	Long-eared Owl
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Savannah Sparrow	Surf Scoter
Kirkland's Warbler	Red-throated Loon	Horned Grebe
Slate-colored Junco	Yellow Rail	LeConte's Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Snow Goose	Snowy Owl
American Avocet	Robin	Short-eared Owl
Western Kingbird	Hermit Thrush	Redhead
Canada Goose	Rusty Blackbird	Hooded Merganser
Purple Finch	Lesser Scaup	Canvasback
White-crowned Sparrow	Common Loon	Greater Scaup and Pine Siskin

The following birds usually depart from this area this month:

Black Rail	Rough-winged Swallow	Black-throated Green Warbler	Mississippi Kite
Black Tern	Hooded warbler	White-rumped Sandpiper	Kentucky Warbler
Acadian Flycatcher	Blue Grosbeak	Stilt Sandpiper	Northern Phalarope
Roseate Spoonbill	Lark Sparrow	Wood Thrush	Black-billed Cuckoo
Summer Tanager	Eastern Kingbird	Blackburnian Warbler	Upland Plover
Wilson's Plover	Magnificent Frigatebird	Northern Waterthrush	Least Tern

Great Crested Flycatcher
Cliff Swallow
Kirkland's Warbler

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Parula Warbler
Pectorial Sandpiper
Eastern Wood Pewee

Swainson's Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Sandwich Tern

The following birds have been sighted, but normally are not seen in this area:

Great Cormorant
Sandhill Crane

Tennessee Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Clay-colored Sparrow

THE CREEK BACK HOME

I have lived in the Town of Goose Creek for 15 years and I have seen practically every form of wildlife which roams the swamps and woods nearby. The creek itself was at one time tidal flowing almost to Summerville and along its edges many rice fields and canals were built for irrigation by plantation owners. Many of the old ruins of these fields can be seen today. As time progressed, the creek was dammed and now it is a vast marshy swamp containing an abundance of all forms of wildlife.

Along its edges in the dense Cypress and Tupelo swamps, turkey and deer live; Bobcats and fox roam the streams in search of prey; while overhead Red-tailed Hawk and Osprey glide with the air currents. The creek is the home for just about every form of wading and water bird many of which may be seen from the Railroad Trestle off Old State Road in Goose Creek.

In the winter, the migrating ducks make it their home. I have often seen hundreds of them flying high overhead as the evening sun fades on a cold winter day. In the spring it comes to life with alligators sunning on the banks, hawks nesting high in pine and sweet gum trees, and the familiar flight of the Wood Ducks as they fly in pairs searching for nesting cavities.

The creek has been a school for me from which I have learned that nature is a wonderful and magnificent thing which must be preserved by man for all mankind's sake.

Mitchell Binnarr

(The author is a new member of National Audubon and is currently a freshman at an Oklahoma college).

THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

October 12 is Columbus Day. (At least it was until it was decided that holidays must be observed on Mondays). "And what", you might ask, "has that to do with Sky-watching?" Only this: had Columbus not been an assiduous Sky-watcher, he might never have reached America, and thus led the way to the opening of this great land to our adventurous ancestors.

The Mediterranean Sea was his "Training-ground". There, he learned the skill of navigation by the stars, and became thoroughly familiar with the constellations of the northern hemisphere throughout all seasons. Most important, of course, was Polaris, the Pole, or North Star, which had been an unfailing guide to navigators since at least five or six hundred B.C.

When the Canary Islands dropped below the horizon as Columbus headed his little ships westward, and a vast sea of unknown size surrounded them, only the sky could be depended on to keep them on course. We all know the story of the near mutiny which occurred when, four

WESTERN ADVENTURE

(The following is the second part of an account of a trip taken by Misses Elizabeth and Eleanor Simons this past summer in the western United States)

California, Washington and Oregon are states of incredible beauty. Flowers, both wild and cultivated, are in profusion everywhere. Summer is the dry season in California, with practically no rainfall from March to September, yet Nature's hand is gentle on this region, - at least in the month of May. The grass which covers the hills in green during the winter is not dead in summer, but instead, becomes deep gold in color. Predominant among the wild flowers are yellow Scotch Broom, wild Mustard, and blue, purple and white Lupine.

The Pacific coast presents a panorama of wild beauty. Great boulders which have been carved by the action of the surf stand rugged and firm under the pounding of the waves, and the beaches are strewn with pebbles. Farther northward, besides rocks and pebbles, the tides cast up driftwood in the form of dead trees, - hundreds of them, - and leave them stacked in neat curves as the waves retreat. Many of the beaches we saw were of black sand, proving their volcanic origin. Pebbles by the million covered them, but not a shell of any description was visible along the more than 800 miles that we traveled.

In the San Francisco area, we were surprised to find some familiar birds. Not only were there English Sparrows and Starlings, but Mockingbirds, Chickadees, and Mourning Doves. New for this writer's Life List were House Finches, Brown Towhees, Western Rufous-sided Towhees, Scrub Jays, Steller's Jays, and Plain Titmice. A little farther south, we saw Western Gulls, Avocets, Forsters Terns and White-crowned Sparrows.

Most awe-inspiring of all the living things we beheld were the great Redwoods. Our introduction to them was in the Muir Woods National Monument, some seventeen miles from San Francisco. It is with a feeling of reverence that one enters this sanctuary, and looks upward 200 and more feet to the tops of these majestic giants. Pollution of any kind is forbidden, including noise pollution. No transistor radios are allowed. The Redwoods here are the Sequoia sempervirens. In the Mariposa Grove of Yosemite National Park, and along the coast of Northern California, are Sequoia gigantea. As the name implies, these trees exceed in size the Sequoia sempervirens. They are unbelievably huge, some reaching 300 feet in height, and 40 feet in circumference. Here and there in the Mariposa Grove we saw red Snow Flowers brightening the soft duff beneath the trees. These fleshy flowers are so-called because they appear just before, or immediately after the blanket of snow has melted. Apparently they are related to the Indian Pipes, since they have no green leaves or stems.

It was in the Mariposa Grove that a flash of color moving through an evergreen tree caught my eye. Flying into closer view, and perching long enough for me to observe its field marks, the colorful bird proved to be a Western Tanager. To say that I was excited hardly approximates my delight at this discovery!

Yosemite was created by glacial action during the Ice Age, forming a canyon of majestic granite cliffs, swiftly running rivers, and picturesque lakes. Most outstanding of the cliffs is El Capitan, its sheer face extending 3564 feet from its flat summit to the floor of the valley. Several magnificent waterfalls plunge from great heights, increasing in volume as the warmth of spring and summer heat melt the edges of the glaciers that feed them. From Glacier Point above the valley, spectacular view of the snow-capped mountain peaks, and of the glaciers themselves is spread before the eyes of the beholders.

Of particular interest on the Oregon coast are the Sea Lion Caves. One enters through a gift shop of diversified wares to please all types of tourists, and it is only through inquiry that information may be obtained concerning the admission fee and the direction to follow.

or five weeks after departure on August 8, no land had yet been sighted; and of the appearance of a flock of migrating birds heading southwestward, which renewed the hope of the men and vindicated Columbus' dream. To keep this hope alive, Columbus offered a reward to the man who should first see land. On the night of October 11, he himself discovered a glimmer of light on the horizon toward which they were sailing. The hour was 10:00 PM.

On that date, this year, we too should be able to see the sky as he saw it, with a difference of only a few degrees of latitude. Cassiopeia, now nearing the meridian, directs the eye to Polaris midway between that constellation and the northern horizon. The Summer Triangle of three bright stars is in the western half of the sky. Between Cygnus, the Swan, and Aquila, the Eagle, two very small and faint, but fascinating little constellations may be detected. One is Delphinus, the Dolphin, (or, Porpoise), made up of five stars. Four of these form a diamond which represents the head, and the fifth indicates the tail a little to the southwest. The other constellation is Sagitta, the Arrow. Four stars form a perfect arrow from tip to feathers. High overhead, just east of the meridian, is the Great Square of Pegasus, formed by four stars. The star in the northeastern corner of the Square belongs, also, to another constellation which will be discussed next month.

At 2:00 AM on October 12, 1492, the keen eyes of an anxious sailor made the discovery which had been so long awaited - LAND! The hour could be accurately recorded in the ship's log because of the positions of the constellations on that date. Present-day Sky-watchers who happen to be awake on this 480th anniversary can check their watches with the appearance of the heavens. At 2:00 AM, the Summer Triangle will have completely disappeared from view; the Square of Pegasus will be in the west moving toward its setting; and in the eastern half of the sky, the bright stars of winter will be sparkling.

We have no way of knowing the location of the planets in October, 1492, (at least, this writer has none), but following is the guide for Sky-watchers of 1972:

Two planets will be seen as "Evening Stars" throughout the month. Saturn rises between 8:00 and 8:30 o'clock, and thirty minutes later, Jupiter sets. In the last week, Mercury may also be discerned in the southwest about an hour after sunset.

Between 2:00 and 3:00 AM, brilliant Venus rises, and will climb higher into view until it fades in the brightening dawn light.

Elizabeth D. Simons

EDITOR'S NOTE

I wish to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have contributed and continue to do so. Keep it up! However, let's see if we can get some viewpoints on local matters of conservation. If you have a pet conservation project or would like to express yourself on any conservation activity (pro or con), please write me and give me your views. How about the Horse Range Creek channellization controversy for openers?

Alan M. Bills