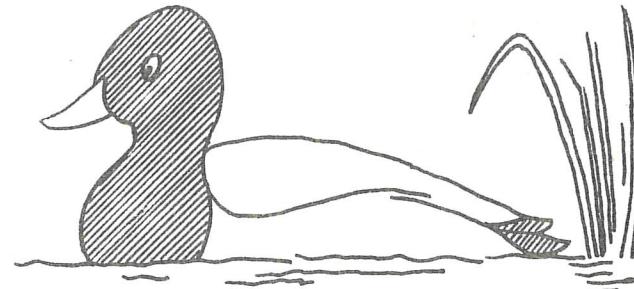


the lesser

Squawk



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THE LESSER SQUAWK
THE CHARLESTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
116 PRESIDENTS CIRCLE
SUMMERVILLE, S.C. 29483



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The program for this month should be one of the highlights of the 1972-73 year. Mr. John Henry Dick, the renowned naturalist and wildlife painter, will present a slide program on one of his recent trips to either New Guinea or Iceland. Place this program on the top of your list!

The field trip on March 18 will be our annual pilgrimage to Bulls Island. The boat will leave Moore's Landing at 8:00 AM, so plan to meet there. (See map inside). Since the boat can only hold 21-22 persons, it will be first come first served on this trip. The boat will however return for a second load, so if you miss the first boat, you can do some birding or walking around the landing until the boat returns. If you so desire, you may also bring your own boat and launch it at the landing. The boat will return from the island at about 4:00 PM. Bring a lunch, beverage, and insect repellent and be prepared for a fine field trip. Your leader will be Richard D. Porcher, Jr.

MARCH ACTIVITIES

Tuesday, March 13, 1973 - 8:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING AT CHARLESTON MUSEUM

FIELD TRIP - ALL DAY - MARCH 18, 1973

BULLS ISLAND - CAPE ROMAIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

SKYWATCHERS' FIELD TRIP - MONDAY, MARCH 26 - 7:30 PM

Home of Mrs. J.L. Griffin - Citadel Campus

THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

Our home planet has a special part to play, this month, which affects us all, whether Sky-watchers or not. On March 20, at 1:00 PM, Earth will reach the half-way point on its orbit between winter and summer. At that moment, spring will officially begin in the northern hemisphere, and autumn, in the southern. The day and night will be of equal length; hence the term by which we know it, - the Vernal Equinox.

During the first week, Mercury may be seen for a short time after sunset, then it will move into the sun's glare until the 22nd, when it will become visible in the early morning sky about 5:00 o'clock.

Saturn, still in Taurus, is now west of the meridian during early evening hours. At the beginning of the month, it sets at 1:30 AM, and two hours earlier at the end.

With one exception, the constellations containing the brightest stars are all west of the meridian by 9:00 PM on March 1; an hour earlier on the 15; and by 7:00 PM on the 31. Taurus, with red Aldebaran, moves nose-downward directly toward the western horizon, with the tips of his horns pointing upwards. Orion follows a little to the southeast of Taurus, and brilliant Sirius, in Canis Major may be located not far from Orion's knee. Overhead, just west of the zenith, Castor and Pollux, in Gemini, the Twins, shine side by side. Pollux, the brighter of the two, is yellow in color, and Castor is white. Although, to the unaided eye not quite first magnitude in brilliance, Castor is revealed through the telescope, to be a system of six stars. Five-sided Auriga, containing Capella, is high in the northwest. Capella, also a yellow star, has been found by astronomers to be about the same age as the Sun which gives light and heat to the earth. It is much larger than the Sun, and nearly two hundred times more brilliant, yet its distance from our Solar System is so great that, to our vision it is reduced to a bright, twinkling star.

East of the meridian, Leo, the Lion is in full view. This constellation is made up of two star groups. It contains one first magnitude star, "Regulus", - which suggests the dot under a backwards question-mark, or the tip of a handle of a sickle, outlined in fainter stars. Just north-east of the backwards question-mark is a triangle of one second magnitude, and two faint stars, with the apex pointing toward the horizon. By connecting these two groups, it should not be difficult to imagine a lion with a bushy mane. Regulus is the lion's chest, and Denebola, the apex of the triangle, is the tip of the lion's tail.

When facing north, Sky-watchers will see the Big Dipper high in the northeast, with the bowl upside down, and the handle pointing eastward. The "Pointers" in the bowl direct the eye downward to Polaris, the North Star. The Big Dipper is actually only a part, (albeit the most conspicuous part), of the constellation, the Great Bear, (Ursa Major). At this time, the Bear lies on its back with its feet above it. The bowl of the Big Dipper represents the haunches, and the handle, the tail of the animal. Three pairs of faint stars in a line running from west to east, indicate three of the paws, - the two hind paws and one front paw. The other front paw is hidden by the bear's body.

In the early morning sky, Venus has now disappeared from view. Mars rises between 3:00 and 4:00 AM, followed shortly by Jupiter. The two planets draw steadily closer together, to rendez vous in conjunction early in April. More about that next month.

The meeting of the Sky-watchers' Group will be held at the home of Mrs. J.L. Griffin, on the Citadel campus, Monday, March 26, at 7:30 PM.

Elizabeth D. Simons

THE WEDGE PLANTATION

The sunrise was beautiful as we drove along U.S. 17 toward the Wedge. There was a rather unusual rainbow running nearly straight down to the right of the Sun as we turned off the highway. It was a deep warm red on its left side grading to a bright whitish yellow on its right, creating a striking pattern with the clouds in the sky.

Soon there were about 20 people eager for an interesting tour of the plantation and a chance to see the moth and butterfly collection that Dr. Richard Dominick is working on. The plan was to bird-watch for a while and then to return to tour the lab. at mid-morning. With this in mind, Dr. Dominick took Richard Porcher, Dr. John Reed and I on a quick tour of the main areas in his English Jeep, an interesting and exciting experience for anyone visiting the Wedge.

The bird watching portion of our trip got off to an unfortunate splash as several people, who walked out to a duck blind to observe White Ibis, fell in when the boardwalk gave way! With the able assistance of Dr. Dominick, a large and lovely fireplace, and a clothes dryer, the wet members who had remained with us were well on their way to drying out by 10:00 AM.

As everything came back to normal, several people began going back into the field. Birds seemed to be everywhere. Along a road by the end of a pond, one Virginia Rail flew a short ways and walked slowly into the marsh grass giving us a good chance to observe it. There were Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons and Caspian Terns flying around over the dikes near the Santee River. A Lesser Yellowlegs was busy poking for his breakfast through a pad of waterweeds near another duckblind, while overhead several Vultures and one Osprey were gliding on the air currents. Several small birds that could be identified only as sparrows and wrens, were flitting back and forth on the dike being extremely careful not to let us get a good look at them. Toward the end of the dike, one little bird kept bouncing along for several minutes in front of us until we were within 10 feet of it. This dark backed, streaked breasted bird, constantly wagging a tail that had white outer feathers was finally identified as a Water Pipit.

Returning to the woods we followed a road winding toward a small Cypress pond. There were numerous Myrtle Warblers, Chickadees, Carolina and Winter Wrens, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets flying around the brush. Several Hermit Thrushes, Brown Thrashers, Towhees, and White-throated Sparrows were busy turning over leaves searching for little delicacies. One Kinglet put on a nice display with its seldom seen red crown. In the marsh grass at the edge of the pond were an immature Little Blue Heron, a Common and a Snowy Egret, giving a good opportunity to observe and discuss the differences between these three white birds. From the dam we could see an Osprey's nest in the top of a large tree and one adult standing nearby. Hoping for a better look at this beautiful bird we headed down a road that parallels the pond, stopping to observe 2 Red-tailed and one Cooper's Hawk as they rode some thermals high over an open field. Nearing the nest tree, we were thrilled to see the Osprey still standing guard - a striking sight, particularly at close range.

On our way back toward the lab. we were in for another treat when a catbird flew out of the woods and lit on a branch long enough for us to learn that it does indeed have a black cap and orange pants.

Back at the lab. we discovered the bird that had been punching holes in a puddle in front of our cars, giving us a chance to decide that it was a Snipe, even though Mother Nature took the option of changing the coloration a little.

BIRD MOVEMENT IN MARCH

The following birds normally arrive in the Charleston area during March:

Wilson's Plover	Red-eyed Vireo	Hooded Warbler
Swallow-tailed Kite	American Golden Plover	Acadian Flycatcher
Parula Warbler	Veery	Northern Waterthrush
Chimney Swift	Louisiana Waterthrush	Eastern Wood Pewee
Eastern Kingbird	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Prothonotary Warbler
Upland Plover	Yellow-breasted Chat	Blackburnian Warbler
Chuck-wills Widow	Pectoral Sandpiper	Black-necked Stilt
Mississippi Kite	Common Nighthawk	Orchard Oriole
Least Tern	Black-throated Green Warbler	Roseate Tern
Yellow-throated Vireo	Painted Bunting	Summer Tanager
Great Crested Flycatcher	Stilt Sandpiper	Black Rail

The following birds usually leave this area during March:

Horned Lark	Long-eared Owl	Brown-headed Cowbird
European Widgeon	Bewick's Wren	Redhead
Red-necked Grebe	Yellow Rail	

OBSERVATIONS

Jan-Feb	Field Sparrow	Dallerton Circle (at feeder)	Perry Nugent
Feb. 4	Eastern Glossy Ibis	Savannah National Wildlife Refuge	Perry Nugent
Feb. 11	Pine Siskins	Hobcaw (Mt. Pleasant)	Ted Beckett
Feb. 24	Cedar Waxwings (200)	Porter Gaud Campus	Julian Harrison

Francis Barrington reports that he fed Evening Grosbeaks from his hand during the recent snowstorm.

Frank A. Lawkins has reported a very probable sighting of Purple Martins all winter along Harbor View Road. If this sighting can be confirmed, this could be a new record for this bird wintering in this area.

AMERICAN HAZEL NUT

American Hazel Nut, Corylus americana rather common in the mountains, can be found on a few favored sites in the Lowcountry. These shrubs tend to form large stands, for their roots, pushing through the rich humus on swamp-side bluffs, send up new shoots at frequent intervals, which results in a thicket-like growth.

They are notably attractive from late fall to early spring because of the long yellow catkins that grace their bare twigs. In mid-fall the leaves turn a beautiful orange-yellow, and, along with the subsequent appearance of the catkins, serve to distinguish these shrubs with relative ease. Alders, members of the same family, are somewhat similar, but their fall foliage is not as showy, their catkins not as long or yellow, and they prefer decidedly wet sites. Also, alders are usually arborescent, individual plants; whereas the hazel nut forms a rhizomatous bosque of cane-like shoots.

Edmund R. Cuthbert, Jr.

After lunch we saw a movie of nesting Arctic Terns in the Valley of 10,000 Smokes, Katmai National Monument, Alaska. This is a great place for the botanist to study plant succession on volcanic pumice.

Following the movie, several of us had to return to Charleston. The day had been most enjoyable thanks to Dr. Dominick and his cooperative birds. The only bird that did not show was the Bald Eagle, whose nest fills the top of a pine tree near the entrance to the Wedge. Perhaps the eagle had taken an extended weekend trip to its second home in the Francis Marion National Forest.

Finally, as we drove out the entrance road, a Bluebird flew across in front of us and a Broad-winged Hawk lit in a tree across from the mailbox, making a nice ending to a wonderful day at the Wedge.

Perry E. Nugent

BIOLOGY SEMINARS

The Citadel Department of Biology is presenting a series of Research Seminars in Biology. Those planned for March are as follows:

March 6, 1973	- Mr. Ted A. Beckett III, Magnolia Gardens and Nursery. Topic: Habitat Management for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker.
March 13, 1973	- Dr. James Barrier, Head, Department of Biology, The Baptist College at Charleston. Topic: Pesticide Levels in White-tailed Deer.
March 19, 1973	- Dr. Allen Feducca, Assistant Professor of Zoology, The University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill. Topic: Problems in Avian Phylogeny and Reconstruction.

All seminars will be held at 8:00 PM in Duckett Hall Auditorium, Room 101. The public is welcome. For further information please contact Professor Dennis M. Forsythe, Dept. of Biology, The Citadel, Telephone 723-0611 ext. 488.

FASHION SHOW TO BENEFIT MUSEUM

The Citadel Faculty Wives Club will sponsor a Benefit Fashion Show March 15, 1:30 PM in Mark Clark Hall. The proceeds will go to the Charleston Museum to aid in preserving some of our Charleston heritage. Tickets are available at a \$2.50 donation at the Canteen in Mark Clark Hall, The Tavern Wine Cellar, and at the gift desk at the Charleston Museum.

MAP TO MOORE'S LANDING

