

THE LESSER SQUAWK  
THE CHARLESTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, INC.  
2260 Dallerton Circle  
Charleston, S. C. 29407

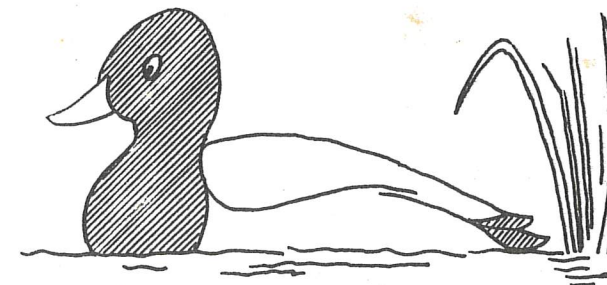
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The Lesser  
Squawk



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NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

REGULAR MEETING AT CHARLESTON MUSEUM LECTURE HALL

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1973 - 8:00 P.M.

SKY-WATCHER'S MEETING

NOVEMBER 15, 1973

CITADEL CAMPUS

BELLEFIELD BIRD CENSUS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18

FIELD TRIP - WAMBRAW CREEK

Sunday, November 4, 1973

NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

Mr. Carlyle Blakeney, Special Southeastern Regional Rept. of the National Audubon Society, Atlanta, Ga., will address the CNHS at the regular meeting on Nov. 13, on the topic "STREAM CHANNELIZATION AND ITS EFFECT ON SURROUNDING AREAS".

W. Bruce Ezell, Jr.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that as many as possible will try to make the field trip this month. It should be a different experience to canoe down Wambaw Creek. So that as many as wish can take part in this trip, any member who has a canoe or a folbot is asked to call Richard Porcher if he has any room or wishes to lend his boat for the trip.

Probably one of the most disturbing features of development in our area is the proliferation of shopping centers which are devoid of vegetation. If any of you have visited Florida, you must have noticed how many of the shopping centers are so beautifully landscaped. Surely we can do as well here in South Carolina? Let us try to encourage developers of shopping centers to include islands of vegetation in their plans or some trees to add a little shade in those blazing hot parking lots.

Alan M. Bills

FOUR HOLE SWAMP FUND

The Executive Committee has authorized a continuing campaign for funds to retire the debt that National Audubon has on the swamp property (approx. \$400,000). Please forward any contributions to the Secretary-Treasurer and mark your checks for Four Hole Swamp Sanctuary.

STAR WATCHERS 1ST MEETING SCHEDULED

The first meeting of the Star Watchers group has been set for November 15, 1973, 7:30 P.M. at the home of Hilda Griffin, Citadel Campus. If those attending will come to the Service Station yard diagonally across from the Armory, someone will be there to show the way to Quarters M-8. After a short meeting, there will be a field trip nearby to view the fall constellations.

An invitation has been graciously extended to the Sky Watchers Group by Dr. Richard Dominick, to visit Wedge Plantation, McClellanville, on our first extended field trip. Through Dr. Dominick's Questar telescope, participants will view the comet discovered by Dr. Lubos Kohoutek of the Hamburg Observatory in Germany, last March. More particulars on this can be reviewed in Miss Simons October Sky-Watchers' Guide

The date and other particulars will be given at our first meeting November 15.

Hilda Griffin

PUBLICATION OF INTEREST

A publication of interest to casual as well as professional botanists in this area is a forthcoming book by Dr. Julia F. Morton on medicinal plants and folk remedies used in South Carolina. Her book is based on considerable research of medical files as well as interviews with local residents. The University of South Carolina Press, who is publishing the book later this year is trying to obtain a rough estimate of the number of copies to print. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this book when it becomes available, please call Karen Ingram after 4 P.M. (722-0413) by November 13.

Karen Ingram

REPORT FROM CAPE ROMAIN

There is a new boat service to Bulls Island, operated by Jay Shuler. It leaves Moore's landing at 8:30 A.M. and returns in late afternoon. The cost is \$5.00 per person, \$10.00 per family with children under 12 and \$3.00 per person in large groups.

The ducks have arrived in large numbers as have many other birds. About 200 Night Herons, mostly Black-crowned, have been around all month. Over 3000 Common Scoters are in the bays and many Commorants have come through. Burket Neely observed nearly 5000 Swallows along the waterway for several days. There were 4 Purple Gallinules at House pond in late September and early October. Three young Pelicans with some down on them were on Marsh Island Oct. 4. They were very healthy and will probably be able to head south before cold weather.

All 3 species of Falcons were seen during October. There were several Sparrow and Pigeon Hawks throughout the refuge and their larger cousin, the Peregrin Falcon, was seen on October 4 and 11 at Cape Island.

Marbled Godwits and Whimbrels are common on the mud flats off Moore's Landing.

One Pilot Whale washed up on the refuge about the time those in North Carolina ran aground.

There will be a deer hunt October 29-October 3, on Bulls Island.

SPARROW HAWKS (KESTRILS) AT SEABROOK ISLAND

On Sunday, October 7, 1973, while out for an evening ride Chris and I observed about 25 Kestrils. They were on the wires, trees and in the air as we rounded the corner toward the entrance of the new Seabrook development. Everywhere we looked, at least one of these interesting little Falcons could be seen. Some were hovering over the open grassy area, near the road, looking for insects, their primary food. Others were on wires, eying Morning Doves, wondering if they could handle anything this big.

It is good to see this many Kestrils, because they seem to be suffering a population decline in some parts of their range.

Perry Nugent

BELLEFIELD BIRD CENSUS

The annual Bellefield bird census will be held on November 18, 1973. There is a limit of 50 birders for this count, 36 from CNHS and 14 from the Columbia Audubon Chapter. Those who will take part have been contacted and should meet Dr. Harry Freeman at the Mt. Pleasant Piggly Wiggly by 5:30 A.M. We will assemble at the Holliday Inn on U. S. 17 North in Georgetown at 7 A.M. for coffee and pastries, be assigned to survey groups, begin birding by 8 A.M., and depart from Bellefield by 1:45 P.M.

A lunch bag will be furnished and we will be guests of Miss Ella Severin for lunch at the Holliday Inn.



# MIDDLEBURG PLANTATION

Once again we had an enjoyable time with Mr. Edward Dingle. Birding at Middleburg is always nice, especially when combined with a tour of the lovely plantation house, and a chance to see Mr. Dingle's paintings. It is very rewarding to listen to a master ornithologist-artist reminisce about birding in the past, to see some of it captured on canvas, and to see the latest paintings still in progress.

Our quest for birds began with a walk toward the rice mill and paddies behind the house. The early morning was pleasant, although the birds were silent until a Red-bellied Woodpecker began to scold from high in a tall oak. As we neared the rice fields a Great (Common) Egret settled down on a clump of grass out in the water and posed for all to see. Toward our left behind some brush, the high pitched whistle of Wood Ducks could be heard. Hoping to see these beautiful summer ducks, we walked on a dike separating two ponds, and to our surprise could see nothing on the water, even though we could still hear the birds. Continuing along the dike we watched a Catbird as it came with in a few feet of us, and then saw 3 Wood ducks rise up out of the marsh grass and disappear. This must have been some sort of signal because 4 more ducks were seen over the trees to our left and as we got back to the end of the dike 2 Male Wood Ducks swam out of the grass and flew away. Low in the grass at the water's edge, a small dark gray bird was flying out, catching insects and returning to a perch where it sat wagging its tail. This Pheobe seemed oblivious of our presence.

Back near the house, we discovered several trees on both sides of the path were alive with birds. Songs of the Chickadee, Titmouse, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby Crowned Kinglet, Pine Warbler, and many other birds were blended into a stirring Sunday choir. There were so many birds it was hard to describe the different ones so other people in the group could see them. Each of us were probably looking at a different bird. In addition to those mentioned above, Yellow Throated, Yellow Prairie and Parula Warblers were seen. One unusual bird caught my attention, but flew before other people could see it. The bright yellow and black-striped breast, with an olive streaked back was unfamiliar to me. A search through Robbin's Field Guide left us with the idea that it was a Cape May Warbler.

Next we started down Mr. Dingle's drive way looking for the Bald Eagle's nest and admiring the splendid live oaks that line both sides. Mr. Dingle said the nest was in continuous use since 1948, and there was one eagle around at this time, although, as we could see, not at home.

In attempting to walk to Pumpkin Hill church, through the woods from Middleburg, those of us who stayed with Julian Harrison, came to a very large Southern Red Oak that tapered gradually upward 60-70' to a crown which was filled with birds. This ended any idea we had of going to the church and for those who did not turn back, offered a good chance to study Red-eyed Vireos, Parula, Yellow throated and Prairie Warblers. One female Hooded Warbler flitted around long enough for us to be sure of her identity. Again I saw the yellow and black striped breast and olive back of a Cape May Warbler. While Julian and I were trying to decide if there was another possibility for this brightly striped little bird, a Great Blue Heron squawked out on the rice pond and a large bird flew over the tree tops above us. Surprised to see it had a white head and tail, I tripped over a stump while trying for a better look and was unable to point out a very striking mature male Bald Eagle to the others before it flew away. Since the bird was headed straight toward the nest, seen earlier, we returned to the avenue of oaks hoping every one could see him. This time he was home, sitting in the tree top above the nest and well aware that we were watching him.

Seeing a mature male Bald Eagle is an experience not soon forgotten. This bird is truly majestic and exciting. How anyone could think of shooting one is beyond me. Our National Emblem is very impressive and this particular bird was a fitting climax to a nice field trip.

Perry Nugent

## THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

From early evening twilight until 8:00 p.m. during the month, four of the planets may be seen at the same time, giving Sky-watchers the opportunity of tracing the ecliptic, (the apparent path of the sun). Venus, increasing steadily in brilliance, continues to dominate the southwestern sky. Jupiter is next, about half-way between the meridian and Venus. High in the east, Mars may be located, unmistakable in its fiery brilliance. And, by the end of the month before Venus sets, Saturn will rise north of east.

Mercury is now a "Morning Star", and will be visible nearly all month. It will reach its greatest western elongation, (distance west of the sun), on November 25. For those who have telescopes with adequate screening equipment to protect the eyes, an interesting occurrence may be observed on November 10. Mercury will transit, or cross the face of the sun, from just before sunrise until 8:18 a.m. This will not be visible except through the necessary screening, because Mercury will appear as a tiny black dot against the overpowering brilliance of the sun. Blindness could result from any attempt to observe otherwise.

Between 8:00 and 10:00 pm. at mid-month, (two hours later at the beginning, and two hours earlier at the end), the parade of winter constellations will begin to appear in the east, as the Summer Triangle moves toward its setting in the west. Five-sided Auriga, containing the first magnitude star, Capella, will be well in view, north of east. South of this constellation is Taurus, the Bull. A bright, red star represents the Bull's "red, angry eye", which, together with four or five other stars of much less brilliance form a triangular figure, representing the face of the Bull. The tips of the horns extend about ten or twelve degrees northeastward from the face. One of the "horns" is a star which belongs, also, to Auriga.

Just above the eastern horizon, three stars in a row proclaim that Orion the Hunter is returning to view. These three stars indicate his belt. He appears to be lying in a prone position, with his shoulders in a slanting attitude north of the belt, and at the same distance south, his heel is represented by a very bright star.

Overhead lies the Square of Pegasus, from the northeastern corner of which Andromeda extends. Two faint stars at right angles north of the middle star in Andromeda represent her outstretched arm. Just beyond the second star of the arm is located the most distant object that be discerned by the naked eye. By looking indirectly at the point, a faint blur of light may be seen. This is the famous Nebula in Andromeda. A telescope will reveal a wheel-shaped object. It has been found that this is a galaxy of stars similar to our Milky Way System, but separated from it by one million, five hundred thousand light-years. In terms of miles, this would be 8 million trillion miles away! Light travels 186,000 miles per second).

To relax from such mind-boggling figures, we might locate Cassiopeia close to the meridian in the northern sky. Looking northward from Cassiopeia, it is easy to find Polaris, our ever-dependable North Star. Polaris is only 465 light-years away!

Elizabeth D. Simons

## PUBLICITY COMMITTEE REPORT

In an effort to make the public more aware of our existence and purpose in the Charleston community, the CNHS recently participated in two local television interviews. On Sept. 28, Bruce Ezell and Richard Porcher appeared on Charleston Today, Channel 4, where they discussed the history of our organization, as well as monthly activities and affiliation with National Audubon. On Oct. 4, Mrs. Hilda Griffin and Dr. John Reed appeared on Kaleidoscope, Channel 5. They briefly reiterated the points brought out by Bruce and Richard and showed slides of a recent trip. Both shows were good exposure for CNHS and we certainly appreciate the fine job these four did. Watch for spot announcements of National Audubon on the local TV and radio stations.

Karen Ingram



BIRD MOVEMENT IN NOVEMBER

ARRIVALS

1 Sprague's Pipit	7 Gadwall	23 Double-Crested Cormorant
Fox Sparrow	12 Fulvous Tree Duck	24 Common Merganser
2 Broad Winged Hawk	Great Black-backed Gull	Saw Whet Owl
3 White-Winged Scoter	16 Bufflehead	28 Common Teal
Ipswich Sparrow	Golden Eagle	European Wigeon
4 Common Goldeneye	17 Rought Legged Hawk	European Teal
Snow Bunting	19 Glaucous Gull	30 Brant
5 Parasitic Jaeger	20 Red Crossbill	? Horned Lark
6 Old Squaw	21 Raven	

DEPARTURES

2 Gray Cheeked Thrush	7 Red-eyed Vireo	Blackpoll Warbler
3 Purple Martin	9 Worm eating Warbler	18 Solitary Warbler
Cape May Warbler	10 Indigo Bunting	20 Yellow-billed Cuckoo
American Redstart	Yellow crowned Night Heron	21 Veery
5 Chimney Swift	11 Yellow Breasted Chat	? Swallowtailed Kite
Painted Bunting	12 Magnolia Warbler	Wilson's Phalarope
6 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	14 Magnificent Frigate bird	Purple Gallinule

The numbers or abbreviations before the bird's name in this list indicate the earliest known arrival or departure date in our area. If you see one of these species before or after the above date, it is worthy of a report to the editor.

OBSERVATIONS

September 23	4 Ospreys	-	Castle Pinkney	Avery Burns
	3 Ospreys	-	Wando Area	Avery Burns
October 5	200 Purple Martins		U.S. Vegetable Lab	Perry Nugent
7	4 Wood Storks		Andal Creek	Chris & Perry Nugent
8	Zebra Butterfly		U.S. Vegetable Lab	Perry Nugent
13	Swamp Sparrows		Magnolia Garden	Ted Beckett
	Marsh Hawks		Magnolia Garden	Ted Beckett
	2 Shovelers		Magnolia Garden	Ted Beckett
	Black and White Warblers		Magnolia Garden	Ted Beckett
	40 Immature and ♀ Painted Buntings		Ravenwood	Bill McIntosh & Ted Beckett
14	Yellow Warbler		Middleburg Plantation	Francis Barrington
	2 Cape May Warblers		Middleburg Plantation	Perry Nugent
	2 Red-eyed Vireos		Middleburg Plantation	J.Harrison & P.Nugent
	♀ Hooded Warbler		Middleburg Plantation	J.Harrison & P.Nugent
16	Many Palm Warblers		Magnolia Garden	Ted Beckett
18	White Throat Sparrow		Riverland Terrace	Francis Barrington
18	♀ Scarlet Tanager		Riverland Terrace	Francis Barrington
21	Black-Throated Blue Warbler		Riverland Terrace	Francis Barrington
22	2 Blue Geese		Magnolia Garden	Ted Beckett
23	3 Lesser Scaup		Stono River	Francis Barrington
15	30-40 Black-bellied Plovers		Folly Beach	Peg & Ted Metcalf

The Metcalfs also observed several hundred tree swallows resting on beach sand or lighting on the swaying sea oats. (Unusual to be resting at mid-day?)

OBSERVATIONS

Continued from Page 4

The species in this column are uncommon in our area during one or more seasons. The Purple Martins and Painted Buntings represent unusually high concentrations, probably they are groups gathering for their Fall migration. Some of these birds were observed near their early arrival or late departure date. These two dates seem to be confusing to many of us. They are the earliest or latest the species has been seen by competent birders in our area over the years. On that date you would not expect to see many of these birds. Since the majority of each species would arrive after the early date and leave before the late date.

GENTIANAS

The star of November is the gentian of the pine savannahs where its deepviolet-blue flowers can be found down in the frost-burnt grasses. Both Gentians saponaria and catesbaei are known from this immediate vicinity, although neither are common plants. On drier sites one can occasionally find a greenish-flowered species, G. villosa.

The gentians are names for a king of Illyria, Gentius, who was said to have first discovered their reputed medicinal properties. There are some 500 species in the genus. Growing in alpine situations as well as on the humid coastal plains of the sub-tropics, they are found primarily in cool temperate climates. A good spot to look for ours is in the moist pine forests of the Francis Marion National Forest.

Edmund R. Cuthbert

WE NEED YOUR HELP

There is need for more articles, by you, on your nature studies. Birds and wild flowers seem to be the most popular subjects, but your observations and research on any phase of natural history would be welcomed reading in the SQUAWK. These articles can be a single observation or detailed research. Some subjects that we need better coverage on are: Snakes, insects including moths and butterflies, mammals, amphibians, fossils, shells, ferns and mushrooms. Can you write on one of the above? How about mushrooms and shells? Your efforts would be greatly appreciated and I am looking forward to publishing them in coming issues of the LESSER SQUAWK.

The Editor

NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP

The November outing will be a float trip on Sunday, the 4th., down Wambaw Creek. Nothing larger than a canoe or Folbot is recommended because of the shallow water that will be encountered. The party will leave the Charleston Museum at 6:45 A.M. This early time is necessary in order to catch the outgoing tide. High tide in Charleston will be at 1:54 A.M. EST. Since there is a 4-hr. lag time on Wambaw Creek, high tide on the creek will be around 6:00 a.m. The party will proceed via U.S. 17 to McClellanville, then turn left on SC 45. The float will begin at the crossing of 45 and Wambaw Creek. The Field Chairman will arrange to have cars at a landing downstream in order to return to the starting point to get the cars left behind. Please bring lunches and life jackets. If you need further information, please call the Field Chairman, Richard Porcher (home:884-9474; office: 723-0611).

Richard Porcher  
Field Chairman