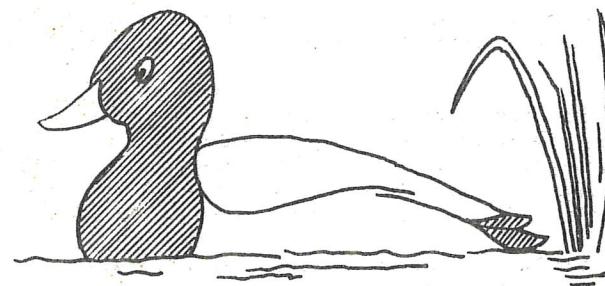


The lesser

Squawk



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SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

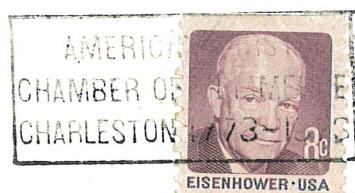
FIELD TRIP - ALL DAY - SEPT. 22
SANTEE SWAMP BOAT TRIP

ATTENTION
SKY-WATCHERS GROUP FORMING
FIRST MEETING TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON

REQUEST

Items for publication in the Lesser Squawk should be submitted in writing to the Editor by the 20th of the month.

THE LESSER SQUAWK
THE CHARLESTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
2260 DALLERTON CIRCLE
CHARLESTON, S. C. 29407



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I don't know what happened on the two summer field trips, but there were only six participants on each trip. Both trips were to extremely interesting areas (Battery Historic Area on Santee River and the Santee Caves up on Lake Marion), so those who missed them missed two good ones!

At the Executive Committee Meeting on August 14, it was decided that we would issue a statement opposing the location of the proposed metals recycling plant on the Ashepoo River. We are not opposed to the plant per se, because they are to be highly commended for their efforts to re-use our national resources. However, we would urge that the plant relocate on a more industrialized river rather than to degrade a river that is virtually unpolluted.

A member of the Executive Committee, Dr. Hans Heller, recently suffered a heart attack. Please join me in wishing him a speedy recovery.

See you on the next field trip in September?

Alan M. Bills

VOLUME XXIV OR XXV?

Is this Volume XXIV or XXV? Are we a volume ahead of ourselves? Shortly after our July issue was mailed, I received a "Speed Letter" from the Colorado State University Library asking what happened to the January 1972 issue of the Lesser Squawk. In trying to answer this, I discovered 3 issues dated November 1971. One was listed as Volume XXIII No. 9, and 2 were XXIII No. 10. All previous issues in 1971 were Volume XXII, with the October issue being Number 8. From this, I concluded the actual November issue was a large 8½ x 11 issue, with the Woodpeckers on the back and should be Volume XXII No. 9. The small format issue describing the December activities is the December 1971 XXII No. 10 issue and the other small issue describing the January activities is the missing January 1972 Volume XXIII No. 1 Lesser Squawk. If this is true, then all 1972 Lesser Squawks are Volume XXIII, all 1973 issues are Volume XXIV and we are ahead of ourselves.

Is this the correct solution to our mystery? Can some of our readers help with this problem? Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Perry E. Nugent

ERATTA

The editor wishes to apologize for incorrectly spelling Mr. Edward Dingle's name in the article on the Prairie Falcon, and the omission of Mr. Edmund R. Cuthbert's name from the article on Meadow-Beauties. Also, in the second line of the second paragraph of the Sky-watcher's guide, the date should be July 2. Also, in the July Bird Movements under departures the species is Bachman's Warbler.

SKY-WATCHER'S GROUP MEMBERSHIP

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

PREFERENCE OF DAY OF WEEK _____

Between Cygnus and Altair are two faint but charming little constellations. Directly south of Deneb, a diamond-shaped figure formed of four stars, with a fifth a few degrees below it make up the configuration of Delphinus, the Dolphin, (or, more familiar to Charlestonians, the Porpoise). About five degrees north of Altair is the smallest constellation in the heavens. Made up of four very faint stars, Sagitta, the Arrow might be easily identified.

From this latitude, the Big Dipper has practically disappeared into the haze of the northern horizon. However, Cassiopeia, (the crooked W), is back in view in the northeast, directing the eye to Polaris, the North Star.

By the time Pegasus is almost overhead, around midnight at the beginning of the month, Saturn will rise in the northeast. At the end of the month, it will rise about 10:30 p.m.

The Autumnal Equinox will occur on September 22, at 11:00 p.m., at which time, the earth will reach the half-way point on its orbit between summer and winter.

With the return to Standard Time in October, we plan to organize the Sky-watchers Group for the 1973-74 season. Enclosed in this issue of the Squawk is a membership blank. If you wish to join the group, please fill in and mail to Mrs. J.L. Griffin, P.O. Box 72, Citadel Station, 29409, before September 20. You will be notified of the time and place of the first meeting. Since plans include a brief indoor discussion, as well as a period of outdoor observation, inclement weather is not expected to preclude any meeting.

Elizabeth D. Simons

REPORT FROM CAPE ROMAIN

The fall arrivals have begun to appear at the refuge with Blue-winged teals being seen on August 17. There are many Black Terns at Jack's Creek again this year and several Wood Storks (Ibis) around the refuge. Burkett Neely saw a ragged looking Eagle, possibly a moulting immature Bald, at Moore's Landing on two occasions near the end of July. There are a number of Black-bellied Plovers, just back from their summer vacation, adding to the colorful array of shore birds at the refuge. If you are interested in Sandpipers, Plovers, and their allies, the mudflats and sandbars around Moore's Landing offer a good chance to see and become familiar with the more common species, as well as the possibility of observing a rare shore bird or two.

Executive Committee Meeting August 14, 1973 8 Members present

Alan Bills announced that the Charleston Natural History Society has become a full member in the National Audubon Society as opposed to the provisional membership of previous years. Certain requirements will have to be met to retain this full membership each year. Also the North American Nest Record Card Program asked our chapter to be a regional center. CNHS would coordinate the collection and distribution of the nest record cards. The president would like to talk to interested members to see how much support they would offer.

To retain our full chapter membership in Audubon, the Executive Committee must have at least 5 meetings with a majority present. A motion was made and passed that the members of the Executive Committee would be allowed two unexcused absences from the monthly meeting.

Concerning the financial matters, the committee decided to transfer \$500.00 in a savings account to accumulate interest. Also a committee of three will investigate research programs in the area to which CNHS could contribute. This committee will determine the amount and the requirements of the grant.

Ann Pratt

SANTEE SWAMP BOAT TRIP

The September field trip will be to the Santee Swamp, on September 22. Mr. John Cely of the Columbia Audubon chapter will be the field guide. We will go by powered boat into the swamp from Low Falls Landing on Lake Marion. Flat-bottom boats of 14 ft. length and powered by a 10 horsepower motor will be most suitable according to Mr. Cely, but rigs in this general range will also be suitable. This will be an all day trip, so please bring your lunch. Also, remember to bring along a life jacket. Persons wishing to participate should meet Richard Porcher at Lesesne Gate at The Citadel at 6:45 a.m. in order to organize into a caravan to proceed to Low Falls Landing.

If you have extra space in your boat and don't mind taking an extra passenger, please call Richard Porcher (home number: 884-9474; office: 723-0611) by September 15 and let him know how many spaces you have available. Anyone wishing to go who needs one of these spaces can also call Richard and he will place you in one of the boats. It is also requested that anyone going, regardless of whether they have spaces for extra persons or not, to call Richard prior to Sept. 15, in order that he have an idea of how many people are going.

COWBIRD EGGS AT SEABROOK ISLAND

In mid-July, David Huff discovered 2 Cowbird eggs along with 3 White-eyed Vireo eggs in a nest at Seabrook Island. These unusual eggs were brown with dark spots instead of the more typical white with brown or purple spots.

According to South Carolina Bird Life, the first cowbird egg found in the low country was discovered by Ernest Cutts, who also confirmed this sighting, May 5, 1965, in a White-eyed vireo nest. There is one sighting of a Cardinal feeding an immature Cowbird by Ted Beckett, at Magnolia Gardens during the spring of 1965.

This sighting appears to be the second egg record for our area. David checked the next one week after first discovery and found 2 young cowbirds along with 2 baby vireos. It is surprising the two Vireos were not crowded out by the larger and more vigorous cowbirds. This is probably what happened to the third vireo egg. The following week the nest was empty and the fate of its occupants is unknown.

Perry E. Nugent

FAMILY BEHAVIOR IN COWBIRDS?

During the last two weeks of June 1973, Chris and I observed 4 Cowbirds at our feeder. One had the pattern of a male, but the head was light buff and the body dark gray. This bird was usually alone, but occasionally was seen with the other cowbirds. The others were a mature male with its brown head and black body and two with gray and some fuzzy down or baby feathers. Each of these 2 graybirds begged for and were given food by the adult male. Their appearance and activity gave the indication that they were young fledglings. The way they begged for food was similar to the immature Cardinals that were around at the same time.

I have often seen mature male Cardinals feeding mature females, who put on the helpless baby act during courtship, and wonder if this has ever been observed with Cowbirds? Perhaps these 2 young Cowbirds were born near our house, in some other species nest, but this doesn't explain the feeding of them by the mature male. Can anyone offer an answer to this behavior? It certainly is in contrast to anything I have read on Cowbirds.

Perry E. Nugent

LIATRIS SQUARROSA - SCALY BLAZING STAR

On August 12, 1973, while walking through a pinewood off Hoover Road in the Francis Marion Forest, Ted Beckett discovered a single plant about 20" tall with small heads of lavender flowers in each leaf axil. Since Ted had never seen it before, he collected a portion and showed it to Edmund Cuthbert, who identified it as Scaly Blazing Star, Liatriis squarrosa. The Manual of The Vascular Flora of the Carolinas says this species is rare in the mountains and along the coastal plain, although common in the Piedmont. It is usually found on basic or circumneutral soils. This plant was growing with Yellow Fringed Orchids in a pineland habitat that would tend to have very acid soil.

The Scaly Blazing Star is somewhat less spectacular than many of its more ornamental cousins that are sold commercially as attractive perennials, but is a very interesting, although rare, member of our low country flora.

Perry E. Nugent

LOBLOLLY BAY

One of the more striking of Lowcountry plants is a flowering specimen of loblolly bay (Gordonia lasianthus). These small trees can be readily recognized by their glossy black-green leaves which from July to September are intermixed with numerous white blooms. They are restricted in their habitat to swamp margins and bays where the requisite peaty soils and high moisture content are found.

Their only native relatives are the very uncommon Stewartias. Other members of their family (Theaceae of which there are some 500 species) are the familiar Camellia japonica and sasanqua and, of course, tea.

They may be seen in bloom now in the Francis Marion National Forest in whose many bays and along the winding black gum drains they are common. To the southeast of Charleston, there are several prominent stands on the outer reaches of Caw Caw Swamp.

Edmund R. Cuthbert

FIELD TRIP TO BATTERY HISTORIC AREA

My apologies to the Society for not being more explicit in the announcement for the July field trip. I stated the trip would be to the Battery Historic Area, but I gave no explanation as to where this area was. At least one person was under the impression that the field trip was to the Battery along Murray Boulevard and came so attired.

The Battery Historic Area is in the Francis Marion National Forest set aside by the government as a scenic area. It is located on the Santee River near Honey Hill, in Berkeley County, about an hour's drive from Charleston. The major attraction is an old Battery used during the War of Northern Aggression to prevent enemy ships from sailing up the Santee River. Two interesting finds were recorded in the vicinity of the Battery by those fortunate enough to go on the trip. A specimen of Goodyera pubescens, an orchid commonly called the Downy Rattlesnake Plantain, was found by Coots Donaldson. This was a significant botanical find because only recently has this orchid been reported as occurring natively in the South Carolina Plain.

The return trip to Charleston was made through the Francis Marion National Forest along Forest Roads 201, 161, and 176. In one cypress pond that we stopped at, Litsea aestivalis, Pond Spice, listed as one of our rarest shrubs, and Utricularia inflata, an aquatic species of bladderwort and a representative of carnivorous plants that trap insects, were observed by the group. Numerous stops were also made at savannahs where three species of Habenaria were observed: H. ciliaris, the Yellow-Fringed-orchid, H. cristata, the Crested Fringed-orchid, and H. blephariglottis, the White Fringed-orchid. We also treated ourselves to ripe huckleberries and blueberries that were very plentiful along the edge of savannahs and in the low pinewoods.

If a return trip is made next year to The Battery Historic Area, I urge each member to attend. I sincerely believe it will be an outing you will enjoy.

Richard Porcher
Field Trip Chairman

THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

During September, the two brightest planets seen from earth will be visible in the evening sky, even before dark. Following the sunset, Venus dominates the west and may be discerned in the colorful afterglow which lingers in the direction of the sun's disappearance. As twilight ends, Venus sets. In the east, Jupiter will be high in view, having risen about two hours before sunset. By 8:30 p.m. at mid-month, Mars, also, will rise, a little north of east.

At 9:00 o'clock on September 1; 8:00, on the 15th; and 7:00 on the 30th; Cygnus, the Swan will be a little north of overhead. The Swan is also called the Northern Cross, because this group forms an almost perfect cross. The brightest star in the group is Deneb, representing the head of the Cross, or the tip of the Swan's tail. Extending southwestward from this are three fainter stars, while at right angles from the second star are two others equi-distant, one northwest, and the other, southeast. These represent the arms of the Cross, or the wings of the Swan.

Two brilliant stars which, together with Deneb form the Summer Triangle are in excellent view. Blue-white Vega is about 15 degrees west of Deneb, and approximately 30 degrees southeast of Vega is red Altair.

Beautiful little Corona is now approaching its setting just north of west, and the Square of Pegasus is high in view in the east.

BIRD MOVEMENT IN SEPTEMBER

ARRIVALS

2 Blackpoll Warbler 20 Orange-crowned Warbler
3 Eastern Phoebe 21 Song Sparrow
4 Shoveler 22 Bewicks Wren
5 Cape May Warbler 23 Northern Phalarope
6 Red Head 24 Black and White Warbler
7 Marbled Godwit 25 Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle)
8 Wilson's Phalarope 26 Lark Bunting
9 Gadwall 27 Alder Flycatcher
10 Swanson's Thrush 28 Swamp Sparrow
11 Water Pipit 29 Red-breasted Nuthatch
12 Short-billed Marsh Wren 30 Winter Wren
13 Hermit Thrush
14 American Wigeon
15 House Wren
16 Catbird
17 Ruby-crowned Kinglet

DEPARTURES

4 Greater Shearwater 25 Sooty tern
8 Gray Kingbird 26 Blue Goose
11 Louisiana Waterthrush 27 Blue-winged Warbler
14 Orchard Oriole 28 Swanson's Warbler
19 Noddy Tern 29 Chuck-Wills-Widow
20 Gull-billed Tern 30 Bank Swallow
24 Yellow-throated Vireo 31 Thrail's Flycatcher
Prothonotary Warbler

The numbers or abbreviations before the birds name in this list indicate the earliest known arrival or latest known 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

June 28 Swallow-tailed Kite - U.S. Vegetable Breeding Lab, Perry E. Nugent
August 5 Whimbrel - Mt. Pleasant Causeway, Perry & Chris Nugent
August 5 Long-billed Dowitchers, Mt. Pleasant Causeway - Perry and Chris Nugent
August 7 Blue-winged Teal - Magnolia Gardens - Ted Beckett
August 19 Ovenbird 2260 Dallerton Circle, Perry & Chris Nugent
Northern Water thrush - Frances Marion National Forest - Ted Beckett

The species listed above are uncommon or rare in our area. Some may be rare in one season and common in another. The Blue-winged Teal and Oven bird represent dates close to the earliest arrival date for each species. There is room in this column for observations other than birds. Any sighting of some phase of nature would be welcomed. If your sightings require more detail than will fit in this column, write a short article such as the two on Cowbirds and the one on the Scaly Blazing Stars in this Squawk.

FAMILIAR BIRDS - NEW NAMES

In the June 1973 issue of The Chat, Page 45, Eloise F. Potter brought our attention to changes in common and scientific names made in accordance with the "thirty-second Supplement" to the American Ornithologists Union check-list of North American Birds, that appeared in the April 1973 issue of The Auk, pages 411-419. These changes are made for scientific reasons and to facilitate the inclusion of Middle America and the West Indies in the next edition of the A.O.U. check-list. The following is a list of the changes that are important to birders in the Charleston Area. * - Newly accepted common name.

Changes for taxonomic reasons.

Great White Heron merged with Great Blue Heron*
Blue Goose merged with Snow Goose*
Green winged teal* merged with common teal
Harlan's Hawk merged with Red-tailed Hawk*
Red-shafted, Yellow Shafted, and Gilded Flickers are merged to Common Flicker*
Empidonaxtraillii is split into Empidonax traillii, Willow Flycatcher* (Southern-western "fitz-bew" type) and Empidonax alnorum, Alder Flycatcher: (Northern-Eastern "fee-bee-o" type)
Parula Warbler becomes Northern Parula
Audubon's and Myrtle Warblers merged into Yellow-rumped Warblers*
Bullock's and Baltimore Orioles merge to Northern Oriole*
Ipswich merged into Savannah Sparrow*
Dusky Seaside, Cape Sable merge into Seaside Sparrow
Slate-colored, white-winged, Oregon and Guadalupe Juncos merged into Dark-eyed Junco*

Additional Changes

Wilson's Petrel becomes Wilson's Storm Petrel
Common Egret becomes Great Egret
Wood Ibis becomes Wood Stork
Widgeon now spelled Wigeon
Shoveler becomes Northern Shoveler
Common Scoter becomes Black Scoter
Pigeon Hawk becomes Merlin
Sparrow Hawk becomes American Kestrel
Upland Plover becomes Upland Sandpiper
Knot becomes Red Knot
Catbird becomes Gray catbird
Yellow throat becomes Common Yellow Throat

At first these changes appear confusing, but with a little study most of them seem reasonable. The "Great White Heron" and "Blue Goose" will still be used to refer to those forms of "Great Blue Heron" and "Snow Goose". This is also true of the use of "Yellow-Shafted Flicker" to designate the form of Common Flicker found in our area. When you report sightings of these birds, use the familiar name, but remember they are sub species with one or more other distinct morphs making up the species. In the Charleston area, one form is usually more common than the other, as in the case of the Great Blue Heron, Myrtle Warbler, Blue Goose, Savannah Sparrow, Seaside Sparrow, and Slate-colored Junco. In many species only one form occurs in our area.

One think that has always interested me is when "Lumpers and Splitters" get together, several species that appear distinct, such as the Flickers, are merged and other forms that are almost impossible to distinguish, like the Willow and Alder Flycatchers, are separated. The distinction between these two flycatchers is by voice only. I wonder if "Fitz-bew" and "Fee-bee-o" are enough to prevent a merger of these two species? This is where I get confused.

Do not let these changes stop you from reporting your observations each month. Use the name you know best and let me worry about the new ones. Report anything you find interesting. It might be more important than you think.

Perry E. Nugent