

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

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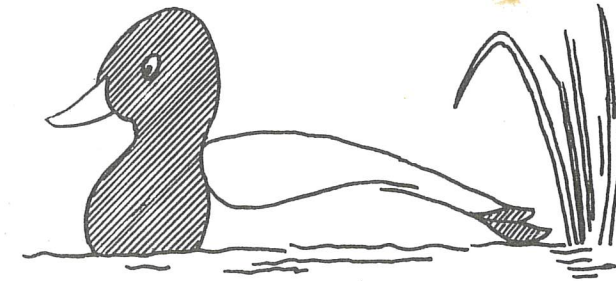
FIRST CLASS MAIL



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the lesser

Squawk



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APRIL ACTIVITIES

MONTHLY MEETING TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 1974 - 8:00 P.M. AT
THE CHARLESTON MUSEUM LECTURE HALL

Program: Mr. Jay Schuler

Topic: Fiddlers and Swans

FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY AFTERNOON APRIL 21

The April field trip will be an afternoon visit to the beech forest near Huger in the Francis Marion National Forest. Spring wildflowers should be in full bloom at this time. The beech forests in the Coastal Plain correspond to the more extensive areas in the Piedmont and northeast which are noted among nature lovers for their handsome trees, diversity of species, and profusion of herbaceous spring wildflowers.

Richard Porcher will be the leader. Plan to meet at the Charleston Museum at 1:00 P.M., Sunday afternoon. For additional information, call Richard Porcher: 723-0611, ext. 487.

Richard Porcher
Field Chairman

SPRING BIRD COUNT-SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 1974

The Spring Bird Count sponsored by the Carolina Bird Club will be held on Saturday, April 27, 1974 starting at 6:30 A.M. EDT. All members of C.N.H.S. and guests are invited to take part. Please contact Dr. Julian R. Harrison (795-1694) weekdays after 6:30 P.M. by April 22, so that field parties can be pre-arranged. This will save time on the morning of the count. We will assemble at Gregories Texaco Station at the intersection of highways 17 and 41. Bring lunch, rain gear and be prepared to spend 8 hours in the field. Last year 15 observers saw 167 species, let's see if we can find 175 this year.

Julian R. Harrison

BIRD STUDY GROUP

The Bird Study Group will meet at the Museum at 7A.M., April 20 for a half day trip to I'on Swamp in the Francis Marion National Forest. The spring migration will be in full swing and we should have many opportunities to observe warblers and other bird species. Anyone seriously interested in birds is welcome to join us.

Perry Nugent

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

There was an excellent response to my call for volunteers to serve on the Conservation Committee and I am extremely gratified with the interest so expressed. Therefore, in the same spirit, I am calling upon all those with some writing ability, journalism, artists, etc. to join with our editor Perry Nugent, in forming a Bulletin Committee. As I mentioned at the meeting last month, the circulation of the Lesser Squawk has now risen close to the 500 mark and we must organize this Committee to aid the editor in this undertaking. So please, if you can spare a few minutes or a few hours each month for writing articles (on any subject concerning natural history or conservation), for typing, for folding, stapling and addressing, let us know right away. We need your help now! One great area in which almost anyone can help is to make a point of recording the birds, plants or animals seen in your yards each month, and sending these into Perry with the date and anything unusual the birds or animals may be doing. This data is very valuable in determining the distribution of birds, animals and plants in our local area. This would take very little of your time each month and would be of great benefit to the Society.

Alan M. Bills

THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

Two great religious festivals occur, this year, during the month of April. The celebration of the Jewish Passover will begin on the seventh, and Easter, - the greatest of all Christian feasts, - one week later, on the fourteenth. There may be some who will wonder what connection Passover and Easter have with Sky-watching, and also, why these occasions never fall on the same dates every year. The answer for both queries is the same. The dates were set, centuries ago, according to the Lunar Calendar. As the name implies, the Lunar Calendar refers to the moon. It is the ancient way of measuring time, during the course of a year, by the movement of the moon through its cycles of phases. Since the moon revolves around the earth in approximately $29\frac{1}{2}$ days during the earth's revolution around the sun in a period of about 365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days, there are sometimes 12 months in the Lunar Calendar, and sometimes thirteen. Passover begins on the evening of the Full Moon which occurs nearest to the first day of spring, (March 20, 21, or 22). Easter is always on the first Sunday following the Full Moon that occurs on or after the twenty-first of March. As stated in last month's Squawk, the Vernal Equinox, or first day of spring in 1974, occurred on March 20; subsequently, the moon will be Full on April 7.

Again, this month, only two planets will be visible in the evening sky, both of which will be west of the meridian when twilight ends. Mars is in Taurus, just northeast of Aldebaran, giving the appearance of two "red angry eyes". Saturn is in Gemini, about five or six degrees southwest of Castor and Pollux. Before midnight, Mars will set, and Saturn will follow in about two hours.

Thursday, April 25

Dr. Charles F. Leck, Assistant Professor
Department of Zoology
Rutgers University
Topic: Food Competition and Other Ecological Relationships Among Tropical Birds

Tuesday, April 30

Mrs. Patricia J. Torri, Graduate Student
Department of Microbiology
Medical University of South Carolina
Topic: Immunological Parameters in Down's Syndrome (Mongolism).

OFFICERS

President: Alan M. Bills, 116 Presidents Circle, Summerville, S. C., 29483

Vice-President: Richard D. Porcher, Jr., Biology Dept., The Citadel,
Charleston, S. C., 29409

Secretary-Treasurer: Mrs. Jack Pratt, P.O. Box 251, Sullivans Island, S. C.
29482

Members at Large: Perry Nugent, W. Bruce Ezell, I. Mayo Read, Mrs. Jesse L. Griffin, Hans J. Heller, and Mrs. James Ingram. Mrs. Daniel Huger

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S. C., 29409

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

By 10:00 P.M. at mid-month, Leo will be overhead, straddling the meridian. In the west, a curve may be traced through Capellia, in Auriga, eastward to Castor and Pollux, thence southward to Procyon, and southwestward to Sirius. Framed with this curve will be Orion, the Hunter.

A similar curve may be traced in the eastern half of the sky. The Big Dipper is now high in view, with the "Pointers" of the bowl on the meridian in the north. By following the "handle" to its end star, the curve may be traced southeastward to Arcturus, a brilliant orange-colored star, then southward to the white star, Spica, which is very close to the ecliptic. The constellations of which these stars are a part will be discussed next month.

The two brightest planets will dominate the early morning sky. On Easter Day, Venus and Jupiter will rise in conjunction almost two hours before the sun. Thus, those who rise early in preparation for attending a Sunrise Service may experience an extra treat on a special day.

Elizabeth D. Simons

BULLS ISLAND, MARCH 16, 1974

The early morning air was full of bird songs as we gathered at Moore's Landing for the boat ride to Bulls Island. Pine, yellow-throated, and Parula Warblers were singing familiar melodies as the sky began to brighten. A few minutes after 7:30 A.M. Jay Schuler started the boat and we were on our way. At first very few birds were seen, but soon 2 Louisiana Herons were seen standing at the waters edge searching for breakfast. In the air, were several Laughing, Ring-billed, and Herring Gulls, Caspian and Forster's Terns and Brown Pelicans. At one point 4 gulls were flying directly behind us close enough so we could see the color of their eyes. On several occasions one or two American Oystercatchers flew by giving us a good look at a large and interesting shorebird. Two Common Mergansers came over the boat as we approached Bulls Island. This Northern Merganser is an uncommon winter visitor in our area.

It was about 8A.M. when the boat docked at the Island and we began the walk to the Visitor Contact Station. Once again the air was full of cheerful warbler choruses with short solos by the White-eyed Vireos, and Towhees. After pausing for a few minutes at the station many of us decided to walk the nature trail to the two Summerhouse Ponds. For reasons not yet clear most birds chose to sit tight as they sang making it difficult to see them. After 5 minutes a few of us saw a Yellow-throated Warbler as it caught insects in the tree tops. In the time it took us to find this bird most of our party hurried on ahead as if they had an important date further along the trail. How anyone can see anything while walking at that pace is hard to understand and the Veery that flew across the path behind them is a good example of what they missed. This thrush was very interesting, not only because of its color, but also because March 16 is the earliest spring arrival date for it in our area.

The dike between Upper and Lower Summerhouse Ponds is a good place to observe the activity on each of them. Today there were Great Blue, Little Blue, Louisiana, Yellow-crowned Night and Black-crowned Night Herons along with American and Snowy Egrets all around the Upper Pond. Once the sky was full of Night Herons that flew from their roost trees in the far right corner of the pond. The water was dotted with Common Gallinules, Coots, Blue-winged Teal, Black and Ring-necked Ducks, and at least one Shoveler, Green-winged Teal and Ruddy Duck. The edges of the dike were alive with Swamp, Savannah, and two Henslow's Sparrows. At this time we were joined by Hans Heller,

Alan Bills, Ann Pratt and the first drops of rain. Choosing to ignore the rain, we studied Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Towhees, White-throat sparrows, Cardinals, Brown Thrashers, Cedar Waxwings, a female Yellow-throat, and a Catbird as they fed in the Tallow trees on the edge of the lower pond. With the rain becoming heavier and accompanied by much thunder, we headed toward an open shed near the Visitor Station where we spent the next two hours trying to dry out and hoping for another crack at birding. Dr. & Mrs. Rambo and Peter Laurie joined us at this point and tried to help decide who was to blame for the bad weather. By 12 noon Peter and I were the only ones under the shed still waiting for the storm to break. Most of the others had decided to call it a day and went home.

The rain let up a little before 1 P.M. and as is usually the case, the birding was terrific. Two Sora and three Virginia Rails were seen walking in the open on water ferns at the edge of cattails in House Pond. These 5 fascinating little birds allowed Peter and I to observe them for several minutes at a distance of 75-100' from Beach Road. Near the intersection we had the dubious pleasure of seeing a Cottonmouth Moccasin. The woodland chorus was at its best on Light House road with Frogs, Warblers, Thrushes, Kinglets (both Ruby and Golden-crown), Goldfinches, Chickadees, Titmice, Gnatcatchers, Crows, Cedar Waxwings, and one flock of Pine Siskins, making up the Orchestra. The Siskins sound like a Goldfinch with a cold. At a fire lane a beautiful male Wood Duck in full breeding plumage was swimming on an open pond. There were several black Fox Squirrels throughout the area. Once Peter got a glimpse of a Pigeon Hawk as it flew out of a tree over my head and disappeared.

At Moccasin Pond were Cormorants, Coots and Horned and Pied-billed Grebes. Next we decided to take the road that cuts across to Sheepshead Road. Once a flock of over 500 Myrtle Warblers went by flitting from tree to tree. Along Sheepshead Road were some pools with Wood Ducks, several species of woodpeckers, and one Turkey that I barely saw before it ran back into the woods.

The return boatride began at 4:15 P.M. and was even more exciting than the morning ride. We saw Common Loons, Buffleheads, and both Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, and one Marsh Hawk shortly after leaving Bulls Island. The tide was nearly high and very few mudflats were exposed so the shorebirds were concentrated on them. Most interesting were 5 or 6 Whimbrels and Marbled Godwits.

Karen Ingram and two of her students rode back with me and as we turned on to Highway 17 from Seewee Road a very unusual Cardinal caught our attention. It was light creamy pink with the crest and wings being a little more red. We turned around and returned to the spot, were joined by Peter Laurie who also saw the bird, but were barely able to get a quick glimpse as it flew into the woods.

My check list for this very enjoyable trip totaled 97 species of birds which is an excellent day under any conditions.

Perry Nugent

TRAVELING WITH THE GRIFFINS

Commencing this article, I am reminded of a little motherly advice once received: "Never start your letters with an apology". Starting this article I remember, however, the arm chair traveling I have done with so many CNHS members - John Henry Dick, the late Louise Barrington, Elizabeth Simons, to name a few - that I feel somewhat timid about reporting observations and

3. Dues for former members of CNHS are now due. Please return these.

Anne Pratt

BIRD MOVEMENTS IN APRIL

ARRIVALS

1 Solitary Sandpiper	Kentucky Warbler	18 Blue-winged Warbler
Swainson's Warbler	8 Sandwich Tern	19 Gray Kingbird
Yellow Warbler	10 Purple Gallinule	21 Swainson's Thrush
Black-polled Warbler	Bobolink	22 Red Phalarope
3 Yellow-billed Cuckoo	12 Black-throated Blue Warbler	23 Black-billed Cuckoo
4 Cliff Swallow	13 Gray-cheeked Thrush	24 Chestnut-sided Warbler
Indigo Bunting	15 Cape May Warbler	27 Kirtlands Warbler
6 Blue Grosbeak	American Redstart	28 Bank Swallow
7 Worm-eating Warbler	17 Magnolia Warbler	Early Scarlet Tanager
		Mid Gull-billed Term

DEPARTURES

2 Whistling Swan	16 Common Merganser	Louisiana Waterthrush
3 Old Squaw	Robin	27 Broad-winged Hawk
5 Virginia Rail	18 Canvasback	Solitary Vireo
6 Glaucous Gull	20 Common Goldeneye	Purple Finch
7 Rough-legged Hawk	21 Pine Siskin	28 Whip-poor-will
8 Ipswich Sparrow	Brown-headed Cowbird	Red-breasted Nuthatch
9 Golden-crowned Kinglet	22 Water Pipit	Palm Warbler
11 Baltimore Oriole	24 Bufflehead	29 Rusty Blackbird
13 Henslow's Sparrow	Winter Wren	30 Pintail
14 Brown Creeper	26 Blue Goose	Blue-winged Warbler
Phoebe	Parasitic Jager	Early Greater Scaup
		Late Short-eared Owl

CITADEL BIOLOGY SEMINARS

The following seminars will be held at 8:00 P.M. in Duckett Hall Auditorium; Room 101. They are free and open to the public.

Wednesday, April 3

Dr. John D. Costlow
Professor Duke University
Marine Laboratory, Beaufort, North Carolina
Topic: Temperature, Salinity, and other
Environmental Factors Affecting
the Larval Development of Mud-Crabs

Thursday, April 11

Dennis M. Forsythe, Assistant Professor
Department of Biology, The Citadel
Topic: Ecological Methods of Reducing
Bird Strike Hazard to Aircraft

Tuesday, April 16

Dr. K. N. Knight, Professor and Head
Department of Entomology
North Carolina State University
Topic: New Concepts in Pest Management

Tuesday, April 23

Dr. J. H. Oliver, Professor
Department of Biology
Georgia Southern College
Topic: Cytological Aspects of Tick
Reproduction

those affecting us closely. Charleston, being a part of the coastal zone, should be extremely aware of all threats to the coast. Most importantly, we should learn how the decision-making process works in our state and in our area so that we can take a stand once we have been informed and let our influence be felt. It was disappointing to me that more Charlestonians did not take advantage of this conference. We must care and show our concern in constructive ways then favorable results will come our way. We heard of an example of this from a member of the New Hampshire Legislature, Chris Spiron. He had been instrumental in helping a small town in his state rise up and say no to the proposed Onassis refinery. It was shown in many instances how strong support from citizens of a certain area have swayed decisions. In each issue of the Squawk we will publish pertinent conservation news. We urge you to carefully consider these matters, perhaps research on your own, and then take steps to express your opinions to those who make decisions.

1. The Chicago Bridge and Iron Company has applied for a permit to build a plant on Victoria Bluff, S. C. This area is one of a few pristine estuaries in the nation. The opposition is based on:
 - a. the project will end the ecosystem
 - b. the project is incompatible with existing land use in the area
 - c. the project will trigger more development

Please write to

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. Mr. Howard Callaway
Secretary of the Army
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C., 20310 | c. Senator Fritz Hollings
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. |
| b. Col. Robert C. Nelson
Department of Army
P.O. Box 919
Charleston, S. C., 29402 | d. Senator Strom Thurmond
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. |

In your letters, urge that the permit not be issued and also that this area be made an estuarine sanctuary under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

2. Closer to Charleston, I hear that Capers Island is being offered for sale again. If you can offer any information on legal or financial aspects of the possibility of the state purchasing this land, please do.

We invite you to submit any ideas or information on matters of environmental concern. Also we ask any who are strongly interested to join our Conservation Committee.

Anne Pratt

NOTES ON MEMBERSHIP

Please look over these policies on membership:

1. Anyone wishing to join the Charleston Natural History Society must join National Audubon.
2. Anyone transferring into our chapter from another should inform the National Audubon Society of this change.

impressions on a mere trip to Florida. On the other hand, my husband and I are enjoying a unique experience - it might be interesting to some. Also Perry has a Squawk to put out every month, and he needs all the help he can get.

Jesse, my husband, retired January 1, and we began to put form and substance to what had for a long time been merely visionary and shadowy. The question of how to travel could be answered in only one way - in a travel trailer, slowly, the gas situation, notwithstanding. This reminds me of a sign hanging on a gas pump in Naples, Fla. Instead of the usual "No Gas" or "Station Closed", this one read "Heck Yes, We have Gas!"

We left Charleston February 4, and visited our daughter-Susan in Savannah five days. Our next scheduled stop was to be Okefenokee Swamp but the weather was becoming wintry in earnest. We rode on waiting for the sun and warmth the Chamber of Commerce and the travel brochures so glowingly promised. Unable to outrun the cold, we finally stopped in Orlando, where it became apparent the mornings in the sunshine state could be as frosty as those in the palmetto state.

We postponed visiting the region's stellar attraction when we came across a lovely lake near Kissimmee and spent two days there observing the bird life which was interesting and varied. To quench our thirst, we picked and ate oranges from a nearby grove and considered it a real treat.

Occasionally forgetting there was no need, we would go hurrying along and then grin foolishly and strive to move leisurely. This was not possible on the Sunshine Parkway to Miami but the temptation was strong as the bird life became increasingly over-sized and was some indication of what to expect continuing south to the Florida Keys.

Many people, including a few of my friends, are content to zoom from Miami to Key West and back without savoring anything in between. My brother told me once the keys were an incredible series of 42 islands linked by as many bridges crossing blue-green water and very beautiful. I can't imagine anyone missing John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park (about which Mary and John Reed told us before leaving Charleston); an outdoor seaquarium; the 11,000-item Southeast Museum of the North American Indian; the Seven Mile bridge, the piece de resistance on the Overseas Highway; the Bahia Honda Key State Park to which we must eventually return; then finally the long span ends, the vision returns to normal and one is in Key West. There we saw the Maine Memorial; Audubon House and took a Conch Train tour. We were not especially interested in seeing the oldest anything, but were enchanted by the combination of water, land and bird life and warmth finally!

The incomparable Everglades came next and having exhausted whatever space to which I am entitled, will save until the next time...

Hilda C. Griffin

WISTERIA

One of April's most interesting flowering plants is our native Wisteria frutescens. Fairly common throughout the Lowcountry, it is to be looked for along damp roadsides where its rather short, deep purple racemes are frequently obscured by the thickety in which its vines tangle.

The wisterias were named in honor of an American scholar, C. Wistar, the specific name, frutescens, means becoming bushy, alluding to the sturdy

low habit of growth. Its much more rampant and showy asiatic cousins, W. sinensis and W. floribunda, are, of course familiar garden subjects. W. sinensis is the most commonly seen of the two. A practical manner of distinguishing them is that the flowers on the racemes of W. sinensis open almost simultaneously whereas those on W. floribunda open gradually.

Although the seeds of wisteria are said to be poisonous, one look on edible plants claims that the flowers may be used as a salad and when mixed with batter as fritters.

Edmund R. Cuthbert

OBSERVATIONS

Feb.	24	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Francis Marion Forest	Peter Laurie
	25	Immature Baltimore Oriole	Battery Point	Mrs. Ted Metcalf
March	2&3	Hundreds of Grt. Crested Cormorants	Charleston Harbor	Mrs. Ted Metcalf
*	4	Screech Owl	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
**	6	Parula Warbler	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
	10	Several Hundred Cormorants	Charleston Harbor	Mrs. Ted Metcalf
***	17	2 Audubon's Warblers	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
	20	Painted Bunting	Magnolia Gardens	Ted Beckett
****	23	Redstart	Magnolia Gardens	Ted Beckett
		Yellow-throated Vireo	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
		Red-eyed Vireo	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent

* The Screech Owl was the gray phase and seen at 10:00A.M. peeking out of a woodpecker hole in a hollow tree. There were many pellets below the tree. Most of them containing the remains of Crustaceans probably Fiddler Crabs.

** The Parula Warbler was seen 1 day after the early arrival date.

*** We believe these two warblers were the same birds that were observed on Feb. 24 because they were seen in the exact same place. More detail will appear in the next Lesser Squawk.

**** This Redstart was seen 24 days prior to the earliest recorded date.

The Purple Martins' arrival is noted with interest by Mrs. Robert Coleman who reports a male Purple Martin at her Martin House on Feb. 23 and 3 males and 2 females on Feb. 24. Mrs. Coleman observes that while not an early date it is the first time she has had the Purple Martins before March 12 and the first time males and females have arrived together.

Perry Nugent

REPORT OF OBSERVATIONS FROM OSBORN AND VICINITY

March 1 Red-shouldered Hawk on Hwy. 17 near Ravenel
 4 Pair of Red-shouldered Hawks, resident at neighbor's Mr. and Mrs. Roy Phillips observed daily for past few weeks.
 8 3 Red-shouldered Hawks hunting overhead, one much smaller than second, third one not near enough for comparison.
 9 Pair Red-shouldered Hawks overhead.
 11 2 flocks White Ibis (about 65) flying West to East overhead at 7p.m.
 12 Sparrow Hawk

March 13 2 Sparrow Hawks in pasture. One has been here all winter, arriving in September.

One rainy Sunday in December on my way to church a flock of ducks-8-flew up from a wide roadside ditch that was full of water. They showed much tawny brown and white, especially on sides and at base of tail. Since I was driving, was surprised by their appearance, had no field glasses, and the light was poor. I am only tentatively identifying them as Fulvous Tree Ducks. No other duck description fits them.

Dot Glover

NORTH AMERICAN NEST RECORD CARD PROGRAM

The CNHS has become a regional center for the North American Nest Record Card Program founded and directed by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. This program collects, processes, and stores information on the nesting biology of birds. Cards on all species of birds are sent to the regional center and hence to Cornell where the information is stored on computer tapes and memory discs. And the information is available to any qualified researcher, professional or amateur.

The program began in 1965, and now receives over 20,000 records annually from over 800 contributors in over 100 regional centers. It seeks both historical and current information on bird nests. Several studies, based on program data, have been completed by various persons.

The nest cards are designed for easy transferral of data to computer form. The front side of the card provides for general information about nest and its location; the back side has space for actual observations. Cards based on only one visit to the nest are useful, although their value is greatly increased if they record additional visits throughout the nesting period.

Anyone interested in participating in this program or needing more information please write: Professor Dennis M. Forsythe, Department of Biology, THE CITADEL, Charleston, S. C., 29409

Dennis M. Forsythe

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

A national conference on Coastal Zone Management was held in Charleston on March 13 and 14. Richard Porcher and Anne Pratt represented CNHS. We heard arguments ranging from fierce defense of the coastline and its protection to carefully-worded defenses from the oil industry and land developers. The conference grew out of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. This act was certainly a step forward for the coastal zone but is a nebulous act at best which tries simultaneously to pacify economic, environmental, and national interest. The purpose of the conference was to begin to give some meaning to the act and to develop some guidelines. Some of the conclusions reached at the conference may interest you. Firstly, more responsibility should be taken at the state level to control the coastal zone. Also decisions on environmental questions should be made by those most closely affected, the section of the general public closest to the situation. Lastly there is a need for a national policy so guidelines for many situations could be established and carried out uniformly.

These conclusions say to me very strongly that we the general public need first of all to educate ourselves on environmental matters, particularly