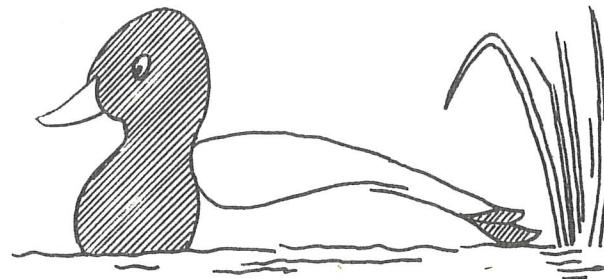


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Squawk



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JANUARY ACTIVITIES

REGULAR MEETING AT CHARLESTON MUSEUM LECTURE HALL
TUESDAY, January 8, 1974 - 8:00 P.M.

SKY-WATCHER'S MEETING
January 15, 1974
7:30 P.M.
Sullivan's Island

FIELD TRIP
Sunday, January 27, 1974
SANTEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Everyone is talking about the energy crisis these days and I suppose that is good because it does keep us aware of the problem. However, it seems to me that the government is not acting as decisively as one might expect in a real crisis.

Let us all try to conserve energy ourselves and to try to influence our friends and neighbors to do the same. After all, it is a well-known fact that the amount of oil in the earth is finite and the less we waste, the longer it will last. Scientific forecasters have predicted that at the present rate of consumption, we will exhaust the earth's supply of oil within 30 years, so within our lifetimes and those of our children, new sources of energy must be found.

Let me take this opportunity to wish each and everyone of you a prosperous and happy New Year.

Alan M. Bills

NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

Mr. John Henry Dick, a perennial favorite of The Natural History Society, will speak to us again for the January 8th Meeting. His topic will be his recent trip to the Galapagos Islands. Plan now to attend this interesting and informative program.

Wm. Bruce Ezell, Jr.

REPORT FROM CAPE ROMAIN

Burkett Neeley reports the water fowl population is at its peak at this time of year, with the highlight being 15 swans on Bull's Island. Geese have been seen flying in the area but not on the ground. There is one snow and at least 10 canada's.

MAPLES

One of the few plants to venture into bloom in January is the red maple. *Acer rubrum*. It is a tree notable for its autumn foliage and crimson whisps of bloom and seeds in winter and early spring. Less common members of the *Aceraceae* in the Lowcountry are the boxelder, sugar maple and silver maple. The boxelder can be seen along Bee's Ferry Road and on the banks of the Tail Race Canal. Silver maples are very common along the mid course of the Santee River, presumably having been dispersed as seeds from the river a montane source. The sugar maple has been reported from Pee Dee counties and along the Savannah River.

There are 150 species of maples, being found in Europe, North America and, principally, eastern Asia. This noble genus has supplied us with food, household goods and shade, but a few of the less well-known species are worthy of special mention. Some of the Japanese species, particularly *A. palmatum* and *A. jepenium* and their varieties are extremely ornamental. A member of our society has a very beautiful collection of Japanese varieties.

The Bellefield Bird Sensus
Tally of Bellefield Count, 11-18-73

Species	No.	Individuals	Species	No.	Individuals
Shortbilled Marshwren	3	Mocking bird		34	
Catbird	9	Brown thresher		21	
Robin	67	Hermit thrush		7	
Eastern Bluebird	7	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		3	
Golden-crown Kinglet	25	Ruby-crown Kinglet		151	
Waterpiping	4	Starling		13	
White-eyed Vireo	4	Solitary Vireo		1	
Black and white warbler	1	Myrtle warbler		123	
Yellow throated Warbler	1	Pine Warbler		25	
Prairie Warbler	2	Palm Warbler		4	
Yellow throat	6	Eastern Meadowlark		6	
Redwing Blackbird	347	Rusty Blackbird		17	
Boat-tailed Grackle	31	Common Grackle		3260	
Brown-headed Cowbird	10	Cardinal		83	
American Gold finch	147	Rufous-sided Towhee		95	
Savannah Sparrow	34	Sharp-tailed Sparrow		16	
Seaside Sparrow	24	Slate-colored Junco		19	
Chipping Sparrow	11	Field Sparrow		6	
White-throated Sparrow	41	Fox Sparrow		14	
Swamp Sparrow	61	Song Sparrow		45	
		Total birds		8341	
		Harry W. Freeman			

Observations

Dec. 1*	2,000+ Ducks	Edisto Beach	Perry & Chris Nugent
	Ipswich Sparrow	" "	Perry Nugent
	Common Loon	" "	Perry Nugent
	4 Gannets	" "	Perry Nugent
7	Orange Crowned Warbler	Riverland Terrace	Frances Barrington
9	Junco's	" "	Frances Barrington
13	8 Hooded Mergansers	Clemson Expt. Station	Perry Nugent
15	Purple Finch	" " "	Francis Barrington
	4 Red-breasted Mergansers	Stono River	Francis Barrington

*this unusually large concentration of ducks was all around the pier and in the surf along the beach. About 80% were Lesser scaup with a few goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Surf and Commonscooters.

Ted Beckett reports a mature Bald Eagle and many Fulvous Tree Ducks are currently visiting Magnolia Gardens.

SKY-WATCHERS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Elsewhere in this issue in the Sky-Watchers' Guide, Miss Simons reported on the first field trip of the newly-formed Sky Watchers' Group.

It was an exciting experience for approximately twenty CMHS members and guests and gratifying that some of the guests have since become members.

The gracious hospitality and kindness of Mrs. Dominick and Dr. Dominick was exceeded only by the view. We would like to express our sincerest appreciation for both. Hilda C. Griffin

Acer ginala is a wonderfully fragrant plant; while *A. griseum* is admired for its flaky bark. *Acer Pennylvanicum*, found in our mountains, has interestingly striped bark when it is a young tree.

The name *acer* comes from Latin, meaning hard or sharp (acid, acerb, etc, are cognate words). It alludes to the sharply pointed leaves according to most sources, but at least one reference attributes the name to the Roman's use of maple wood for lances.

Edmund R. Cuthbert

AUDUBON ACTION GUIDE

Inasmuch as some confusion seems to exist among our members as to what we can and cannot do in and for Audubon. The following statements from The National Audubon Society are offered to the membership of CNHS:

If, in the judgment of the Internal Revenue Service, the National Audubon Society were to devote a "substantial" part of its efforts to influencing legislation, the contributors to the Society would no longer be permitted to list their gifts as deductions on their income tax returns. Because tax-deductible status helps encourage gifts, it is the policy of the Society to stay within the limitations of this tax provision. To do so:

1. You cannot make a direct appeal by mail, or by resolution, or by your publication, urging your members of the public to support a particular bill, or to vote in a particular way in a referendum, or to urge a legislator to vote for or against some piece of legislation.

2. You can ask your members and the public to speak out on non-legislative government matters. For instance, you can urge a mayor, or governor or highway commissioner to take some administrative action, and you can present your organization's views at hearings held by administrative agencies, commissions, boards and other non-legislative bodies. Hearings called by legislative committees to seek the views of the public constitute a special case. Conservation organizations that on occasion present statements at such hearings apparently have not jeopardized their tax-deductible status.

3. You can report the status of a bill and you can remind your members of its importance. (For example: "H.R.11618, the bill that would help protect the alligator, is still stalled in the Senate Commerce Committee."

4. You can keep reminding your members that it is their duty as well as their right, as citizens, to let their legislators know their views. If your members remember this, there is no need to tell them to write their local, state or federal legislators when an issue of importance to conservation comes up. All you should have to do is give them the facts (point #3 above)--let them do the rest. This approach is not a way of circumventing the spirit of the law; it is an entirely legal and moral way of carrying out our avowed purpose of informing and alerting our membership, and the public in general, to matters pertaining to wise use of natural resources.

THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

Comet Kohoutsk, coming out of the "Wings" of the celestial "stage", will be the premier performer in the western sky during January evenings.

Very early on the morning of December first, a number of Sky-watchers and their friends caught a glimpse of it as it was approaching the sun. Dr. Richard Dominick had graciously invited the group to his home, the Wedge Plantation near McClellanville, in order to view the comet through his excellent telescope. Conditions were as near perfect as anyone could have wished. The weather was dry and crystal-clear, so that in the black pre-dawn sky, stars of every magnitude were like sparkling, burnished jewels. In addition to the anticipated thrill of "capturing" the comet, the viewers experienced two additional bonuses: a faint satellite moving rapidly from west to east overhead, and Saturn with its rings wide open, as it approached its setting in the northwest. It is conceivable that the satellite might have been Skylab.

After January first, the comet will begin to appear near the southwestern horizon soon after sunset. It has now made its loop around the sun, and is commencing its return trip far out into space. Each evening, it will appear higher, and become brighter until January fifteenth, when it will reach its most intense magnitude. It will then be as bright as any star in the heavens, and its tail preceding it is predicted to stretch one quarter of the way across the sky. (Some scientists believe that the brilliance of the comet may even rival that of the moon). After January fifteenth, it will be located progressively higher above the horizon, but also, it will become progressively fainter, until, by February first, it will be lost to view. This visit of Kohoutek is the only one which will occur during the lifetime of any present inhabitants of the earth, because it is not expected to reappear for 75,000 years.

Venus and Jupiter are both low in the southwest, the former setting about an hour after the sun, and the latter, a half-hour later. This will be Venus' last appearance as an "Evening Star" until next November.

Mars is high in the eastern segment of the sky after sunset, and about four hours later, it will reach the meridian.

Saturn is visible all night, rising just before sunset, and setting shortly before sunrise.

The constellations of January are the same that were described in December. Orion may now be seen standing upright in the south, and, in a line northeast of his upraised arm, Castor and Pollux, the Twins, are in excellent view. Further description of the constellations will be deferred until next month.

The Sky-watchers' Group has been invited by Mrs. Theodore Wichmann to hold the next meeting at her home on Sullivans Island on January 15 at 7:30 p.m. She suggests that members bring flashlights with them. Since this date coincides with Kohoutek's most favorable appearance, let us hope for cooperation from the weather!

Elizabeth D. Simons

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The Bellefield Bird Census

The annual bird count at Bellefield Plantation in Georgetown took place November 18, 1973. Forty-eight people participated of which approximately 14 were from the Columbia Audubon Society. Everyone met before the count at the Holiday Inn for a quick breakfast; and after, for a "Happy Hour" ending in a delicious buffet dinner. Mrs. Ella Severin was host for the group on that sunny November day. One-hundred-twenty species were seen including one unusual sighting of the western kingbird. The following list are those 120 species and number of individuals seen during the count.

Tally of Bellefield Count, 11-18-73

Species	No.	Individuals	Species	No.	Individuals
Common loon	1		Semipalmated Sandpiper	2	
Horned Grebe	6		Western Sandpiper	26	
Pied-billed Grebe	5		Sanderling	200	
Brown Pelican	24		Herring Gull	542	
Double Crested Cormorant	580		Ringbilled Gull	248	
Great Blue Heron	17		Laughing Gull	103	
Green Heron	1		Forster's tern	11	
Little Blue Heron	5		Royal tern	1	
Common Egret	15		Caspian tern	23	
Louisiana Heron	14		Black skimmer	175	
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	1		Mourning Dove	19	
White Ibis	15		Yellowbilled cuckoo	2	
Mallard	7		Barn Owl	1	
Blackduck	17		Barred Owl	3	
Greenwinged teal	1		Belted Kingfisher	29	
Wood duck	20		Yellow-shafted flicker	68	
Bufflehead	4		Pileated Woodpecker	32	
Hooded Merganser	7		Red-bellied Woodpecker	43	
Red-breasted Merganser	15		Red-headed Woodpecker	4	
Turkey Vulture	13		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	17	
Black Vulture	5		Hairy Woodpecker	8	
Cooper's Hawk	1		Downy Woodpecker	12	
Red-tailed Hawk	11		Red-cockaded Woodpecker	36	
Red-shouldered Hawk	2		Western Kingbird	1	
Marsh Hawk	16		Great-creasted flycatcher	1	
Osprey	1		Eastern Phoebe	5	
Pigeon Hawk	1		Treeswallow	2	
Sparrow Hawk	7		Rough-winged Swallow	4	
Bob white	3		Blue Jay	226	
Clapper Rail	57		Common Crow	246	
Common Gallinule	4		Fishcrow	82	
American coot	1		Carolina Chickadee	176	
A. Oystercatcher	50		Tufted titmouse	43	
Black-bellied Plover	16		Whitebreasted Nuthatch	2	
Killdeer	2		Brown-headed Nuthatch	99	
Wimbrel	1		Brown Creeper	1	
Solitary Sandpiper	1		House Wren	9	
Willet	15		Winter Wren	7	
Lesser Yellowlegs	1		Carolina Wren	74	
Knot	2		Long-billed Marsh Wren	2	

THE SAVANNAH WILDLIFE REFUGE

On December 8th, eleven hardy members of CNHS made a trip to the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge. The weather was cold and windy with rain. This limited our activities to observations through rain-scattered windows, but we were able to see many interesting birds.

Mike Prevo was our guide. He showed us many Pintails and a few shovelers feeding in a pond behind the manager, Mr. Preston Lane's house. The contrast of brown, gray, black and white of the pintail drake is very striking and set off well by the longtail feathers. The male Shoveler is dressed in a less formal attire, but the combination of greenish head, rufous sides and belly, pale blue wingpatch, white breast, and green speculum is beautiful in a different way.

Next Mike took us across U.S. 17 to a series of dikes that are open to the public for a nature drive. As we turned off the highway and rounded the first curve on the dike, a Kestrel could be seen perched high in a tall tree overlooking a pond and marsh that was full of coots and snipes. Further along, we flushed an American Egret and a Little Blue Heron, then, near a large white teepee-like building, we saw a Red-tailed Hawk sitting in a willow tree over a canal. This but'io flew across the road, lit in another tree and posed for all to watch before flying away over the marsh.

One section of the dike goes through an area where very tall marsh grasses line both sides. This area is the feeding ground for puddle ducks. There are many openings in the grass and on the right is an open canal. We saw Mallards, Pintails, Gadwalls, Wood ducks, Black Ducks and one Great Blue Heron fly up as we drove through this area.

After this the road turns to the left through a stand of large trees. That is always a good place to see small birds, when the weather is a little better. On both sides of the road it is a short walk through the woods to marsh or ponds where you can see rails, gallinules and more ducks. There are places in this section where some ponds can be observed from cars. These openings were particularly advantageous on trip. In one opening the air was full of green-winged Teal, Wood Ducks, and pintails, with a few Shovelers and Blue-winged Teal. After this the road turns toward the north and back in the direction of the highway. On the left are ponds with low vegetation in them. This is a good area for Ring-necked ducks and on this particular day, Marsh Hawks. One marsh Hawk flew up the road in front of the car for several hundred feet, before flying away. Back out on U.S. 17, we stopped at some turnouts to observe Ring-necked and Ruddy Ducks. Close up, the Ring-necked Duck is very interesting with its dark purple head, greenish-black breast, black back and verticle white stripe between the breast and the gray side. It's bill has a black tip, then a white ring, next blue gray and then another white ring. I had never seen the detail of the bill as well as on this particular occasion. For some reason these ducks were more interested in feeding than in what we were up to.

The pond in front of the headquarters building had a good-sized flock of Canvasbacks, as well as more Ring-neckeds, Ruddies, and a few Wigeon's. There were also a few ring-billed Gulls and several terns over the pond.

Since the weather was getting worse, Mike offered to show us the film about the refuge that had been shown on Channel 5, Charleston, December 7. The film is well done and worth watching. The most interesting feature of the film and any trip to the Savannah refuge are the comments by Pres Lane. I doubt if anyone can listen to Mr. Lane reminisce about the refuge, wildlife, and nature in general without gaining something. It is very rewarding to have had the privilege of listening to one of mother nature's truest friends and I am grateful for that opportunity.

Perry Nugent

STUDY COURSE IN NATURAL HISTORY

Would you like to learn more about birds, plants and animinalis? Are you interested enough in some subject to participate in a study course? Several members of CNHS have asked me about setting up a study program on birds and I know others are interested in wild flowers. Let me know what you think of the idea and what subjects would suit you. If there is enough enthusiasm for a particular phase of natural history, perhaps something can be worked out. Your response will determine the feasibility of a particular program.

The above paragraph was run in the December Lesser Squawk and we have had six responses. All were interested in birds and four were also interested in botany. Surely there are more CNHS members interested in some program. How about people with experience on a subject. Are you willing to help lead one of the groups? Richard Porcher is the only leader to come forward so far. He will conduct the botany course if enough people are interested.

Perry Nugent

FIELD TRIP JANUARY 27, 1974

The January 27th field trip will be an all day outing to the Santee Wildlife Refuge on Lake Marion. The departure time will be 7:00 A.M. from the Charleston Museum. Due to the energy crisis, we will form a car pool at the Museum in order to take as few cars as possible. We will also conform to the speed limit set by the President. Your cooperation is asked in the above matter.

At this time of year the refuge should have a high population of water fowl, including geese. This should be an excellent family trip, so bring the young ones. Also bring lunch and warm clothes.

Further information will be provided by the Field Chairman, Richard Porcher (Home Ph.#884-9474, Office Ph.#723-0611, Ext. 487).

Richard Porcher