

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

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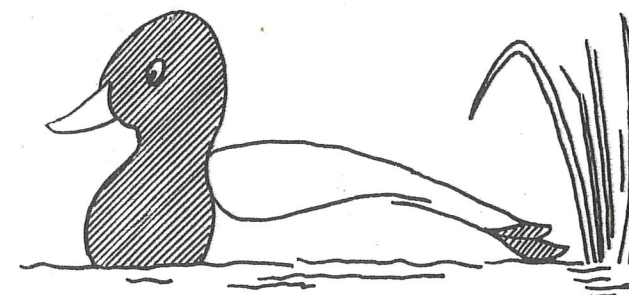
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the lesser

Squawk



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JUNE ACTIVITIES

No monthly meeting in June

No field trip in June

Bird Study Group - Saturday, June 15 The Bird Study Group will meet at the Charleston Museum at 6:30 A.M. We will go to Moore's Landing to see what we can do with shorebirds and gulls. Then we will go to I'on Swamp with the hope of finding some of the warblers, buntings, and kites that avoided us on the last trip.

Perry Nugent

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have noticed in recent weeks that the use of herbicides to clear the right-of-ways for power poles has been on the increase. How many of you have driven down a beautiful green-lined country road only to come suddenly upon a swath of brown desolation along the roadside? I understand the need to keep these right-of-ways clear, but surely this method can be replaced. Obviously, it must be the cheapest method, but the time is long past when we must consider only economics - we must be willing to pay a little more for the elimination of these brown smears on our landscapes. Incidentally, I have also noticed that the state highway department also uses herbicides to eliminate growth in ditches along I-26. I would rather see the beautiful stands of cattails which grow along these wet bottoms than a brown, lifeless smear. How about you? Make your feelings known to the state highway department and the power companies on this subject.

Alan M. Bills

Bird Movements in June

Arrivals

1 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	16 Roseate Spoonbill	25 Brown-headed Cowbird
14 Sooty Tern	17 Bridled Tern	

Departures

1 Bairds Sandpiper	Shoveler	18 Gannet
2 Sora Rail	6 Avocet	Tree Swallow
3 Northern Phalarope	Sharp-tailed Sparrow	19 Lesser Scaup
4 Solitary Sandpiper	7 Surf Scoter	22 Common Tern
5 Horned Grebe	9 Bonaparte's Gull	23 Red-breasted Merganser
Black-polled Warbler	10 White-rumped Sandpiper	25 Snow Bunting
6 Blue-winged Warbler	13 Black-billed Cuckoo	28 Marbled Godwit
American Wigeon	17 Knot	

A Rare Form of Rhododendron Canescens

Ted Beckett has found an interesting colony of wild azaleas (*Rhododendron canescens*) growing in the Francis Marion National Forest. He reports that all of the plants at that site bear flowers with separate petals, rather than the sympetalous (united petals) condition that characterizes this species, as well as the genus.

The specimen, which he had, had none of the tubular appearance that one associates with this familiar flower, but instead with its thin, flaring petals the blossoms, at least at the first impression, remind one of those of *Cleome*.

There is one record of this sort of mutant in *Rhododendron maximum* (rose bay), but apparently this is the first finding of this condition for *R. canescens*, or any other deciduous *Rhododendron*, in the Carolinas. While such anatomical variations as this are most uncommon in this genus, the presence and arrangement of pubescens and color variations, for instance, can vary considerably, leading some authorities to doubt the validity of some species. It is not improbable that the deciduous *Rhododendrons* in this area represent a complex gene pool, primarily separated into species but with many genetic, evolutionary webs still intact.

Edmund R. Cuthbert

Birding on the Waterhorn-May 19, 1974

The second trip of our Bird Study Group was to the St. James Santee Church and the Elmwood Camp ground in the Waterhorn area of the Francis Marion Forest. Our first stop was on Old Georgetown Road next to a house landscaped with old cars and other assorted junk where a find stand of several *Magnolia* species grows. Many birds were singing on both sides of the road. The early morning ensemble was made up of interesting strains of ZEE ZEE ZOO ZEE by Black-throated Green Warblers, ZEEEEEEEEEE - up of the Parula, a loud trill of Pine Warblers, and WEETAWEETEE-O of the Hooded Warbler. A loud melodious hiccough sent part of our group into the woods in search of an elusive Acadian Flycatcher, that played hide and seek, barely giving us time to see it nab breakfast. Meanwhile the people who stayed on the road were watching a Ruby-throated Hummingbird that returned to the same twig after each flight around the neighborhood. Perhaps there was a well hidden nest nearby. The continuous strains and variations on WEETA WE-TEE-O coming from the *Magnolia* woods sent us back in search of a Hooded Warbler that really hammed it up when we finally found him.

14 Wood thrush	50 Black-th. Green Warbler	260 Orchard Oriole
2 Hermit thrush	1 Blackburnian Warbler	252 Boat-tailed Grackle
12 Eastern Bluebird	234 Yellow-throated Warbler	150 Common Grackle
166 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	2 Blackpoll Warbler	10 Brown-headed Cowbird
19 Ruby-crowned Kinglet	239 Pine Warbler	110 Summer Tanager
2 Loggerhead Shrike	64 Prairie Warbler	270 Cardinal
26 Starling	1 Palm Warbler	2 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
208 White-eyed Vireo	1 Ovenbird	9 Blue Grosbeak
9 Yellow-throated Vireo	1 Northern Waterthrush	9 Indigo Bunting
3 Solitary Vireo	4 Kentucky Warbler	69 Painted Bunting
85 Red-eyed Vireo	53 Yellowthroat	42 American Goldfinch
1 Black and white Warbler	14 Yellow-breasted Chat	170 Rufous-sided Towhee
68 Prothonotary Warbler	71 Hooded Warbler	13 Savannah Sparrow
1 Swainson's Warbler	2 American Redstart	1 Sharp-tailed Sparrow
1 Worm-eating Warbler	21 House Sparrow	4 Seaside Sparrow
1 Orange-crowned Warbler	3 Bobolink	4 Chipping Sparrow
293 Parula Warbler	29 Eastern Meadowlark	167 White throated Sparrow
3 Yellow Warbler	356 Red-winged Blackbird	28 Swamp Sparrow
27 Myrtle Warbler		1 Song Sparrow
		1 Nashville Warbler

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 the Editor by the 20th of the month.

About 9 A.M. we started toward the church listening to Red and White-eyed Vireos, Wood Pewees, Crested Flycatchers and stopping long enough to watch a male Summer Tanager sing a lovely rendition of Pi-tuck.

At the church 5 Red-cockaded Woodpecker nest trees were strangely quiet with no birds around. The action was beyond the back left corner of the church yard where 2 Bobwhites flew up and out of sight and several noisy young Pine Warblers were begging for food from their parents. A pair of Parula Warblers were nervously flitting around behind the church and as we were searching for a nest, 2 Red-cockaded Woodpeckers began feeding young in a nearby tree. These Woodpeckers occupied our attention for several minutes as they carried little morsels to several noisy babies in their nest hole. Meanwhile the pair of Parulas showed much interest in a particular ribbon of Spanish Moss hanging from a Live Oak. If this was their nest, it was well camouflaged and could not be seen. After watching a White-breasted Nuthatch for a few seconds we reluctantly left the church with its avian congregation and continued toward the Wambaw bridge by way of Forest Road 210. On this road we made one stop when 5 Bluebirds flew across in front of us and although they did not stop, we got good views of a Yellow-throat, a Blue gray Gnatcatcher and 3 Red-shouldered Hawks.

Soon after turning on to Road 211 we saw a male Indigo Bunting fly into the woods and although he could not be found, an active colony of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, several Crested Flycatchers and a Bluebird made the stop worth while. As we watched the Woodpeckers carry food to young, 2 Wood Thrushes were singing a delightful melody from somewhere deep in the woods. Continuing along 211 we saw more Bluebirds and stopped to watch a pair of Blue Grosbeaks gathering nesting material on the road. At this time Richard Porcher's group caught up with us. Burnham Chamberlain was with them and in time to help us find a bird that sounded like a hybrid between a Pine Warbler and one or more species of bunting. This bird was singing from high in pines and turned out to be a Yellow-throat. Even when this interesting warbler got down low it still did not sing like it should. This is the second Yellow-throat that I have observed singing from pinetops and sounding similar to buntings. Perhaps it is as Burnham said "that boy didn't read the book."

Just before we arrived at the Elmwood Campground a bright rufous backed female Kestrel (Sparrow Hawk) flew across in front of the cars.

The walk from the campground to the bridge was especially interesting in the company of Mr. Chamberlain. It is a pleasure to listen to Burnham describe some of his many observations of birds. This morning we had trouble finding many of the birds that were singing but listening to the chorus was wonderful. One sleepy Barred Owl hooted at 12 noon and the closer we got to the bridge more Hooded and Prothonotary Warblers were heard.

While standing on the bridge waiting for the Swallow-tailed Kites, we watched Parula Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and White-eyed Vireos as they worked the trees along the creek for their lunch. One male Ruby-throated Hummingbird divided his time between feeding on trumpet vine at the end of the bridge and sitting on various branches nearby. A little after 1 P.M. 3 Mississippi Kites came by, but no Swallow-tailed Kites were seen until I was going home. This Swallow-tailed Kite was far away in the sky, but with 11X binoculars I could see the characteristic double V silhouette with the white head and underparts that reflected sunlight as the magnificent bird turned in the air.

One of the last birds David Lourie and I saw was a beautiful male Prairie Warbler. It flew across in front of us, lit in a low bush and allowed close study until we got tired and left. This is sort of ironic since we heard Prairie

and Black-throated Warblers all morning without seeing any. Perhaps we will have better luck with these two species on the next trip.

Perry E. Nugent

The Sky-Watchers' Guide

In the year 1609, Galileo Galilei constructed the first telescope for astronomical use. Through his crude instrument, he made discoveries never before seen by the eyes of man. Among these discoveries were four of the twelve moons of the great planet, Jupiter. This summer of 1974 will be an advantageous time for telescope owners to watch the Jovian satellites shifting their positions night after night, just as the Italian astronomer watched them 365 years ago. Even a pair of good binoculars makes possible such an experience, provided they are held very steadily for it must be remembered, movement as well as light is magnified by them. When Jupiter was high in view a number of years ago, this writer found that by lying flat on her back, with head elevated by a support, and bracing her elbows against her body while holding the binoculars firmly, she was able to accomplish this.

In mid-June, Jupiter will rise about midnight, and a little earlier each evening thereafter until the end of August, when it will rise shortly after sunset. Largest of all the planets, the diameter of Jupiter is $11\frac{1}{2}$ times greater than that of the earth, yet its largest moon is only about $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of our world. Therefore, even through a telescope or binoculars, the four visible moons appear as hardly more than points of light strung out on one or both sides of their parent planet. These small bodies are constantly revolving around Jupiter, counter-clockwise, just as earth's moon revolves around our planet.

Mercury, Saturn, and Mars may all be seen in the western half of the sky after sunset. Mercury will reach its greatest eastern elongation on June 4, setting north of west about 9:15 P.M. Saturn will then appear to be near Mercury. They may be distinguished by color, and by the fact that Mercury, shining white, may be twinkling. Saturn is yellow. About twenty-five degrees higher in view, not far from Castor and Pollus, the red planet, Mars shines with diminished brightness, due to its increasing distance from the earth.

Since June is the month of the longest days and the shortest nights of the year, there are fewer hours for Sky-watching. This is because the earth, maintaining its position tilted toward the North Star, will reach a point on its orbit directly south of the sun on June 21, at 1:38 P.M.

Even though there are fewer first magnitude stars to be seen during the summer months, the constellations have a soft quality of beauty which makes Sky-watching extremely worthwhile. As soon as it is dark, at the beginning of June, the parade of these constellations will begin, and as the month advances, they will slowly proceed along their curved paths, ever westerly. The ecliptic, - the path followed by the sun, moon, and planets, - runs much lower than in winter. In the southeast, Scorpius, the Scorpion is in full view. Consisting of a large curve of faint stars, it contains one bright star, red in color. The claws of the Scorpion are represented by a smaller curve of stars at the western end of the large one. The bright, red star is Antares, which means "Mars' Rival". If the observer will compare them while Mars is still in view, he will understand the reason for the name. Antares is a supergiant star with a diameter nearly 300 times greater than that of our sun. The astrologers who named the constellations in ancient times, saw in this one the scorpion alleged to have fatally bitten Orion. It will be noted that these two constellations are never in view at the same time.

Spring Bird Count - 1974

On Saturday April 27, 1974 twenty-five C.N.H.S. members and their guests enjoyed a very successful Spring Bird Count. Although some areas were inadequately covered, 165 species and 8894 individual birds were observed. This was just two species short of our record of 1973. A glance through the list shows nothing really unusual. The Nashville Warbler was observed by Perry Nugent for several minutes as it worked the top of a pine in the early morning sun. All the field marks were seen including the reddish cap.

The following individuals contributed immeasurably to the success of this count: Ted Beckett, E. B. Chamberlain, David Chamberlain, Calvin Clyde, Cindy Floyd, Dennis Forsythe, Emily Grimbail, Andy Harrison, Julian Harrison, David and Bobbin Huff, Evan Hyde, Pete Laurie, David Lourie, Bill McIntosh, Perry Nugent, Frederick Probst, Jack and Francis Ralston, John and Mary Reed, Tom Reeves, Arthur and Gayle Smith, Grant and Lee Ann Staley.

Julian R. Harrison

Tally Of Spring Bird Count

3 Common Loon	121 American Coot	1 Chuck-will's widow
2 Pied-billed Grebe	78 American Oystercatcher	1 Common Nighthawk
232 Brown Pelican	112 Semipalmated Plover	103 Chimney Swift
127 Double-cr. Cormorant	4 Kildeer	25 Ruby-th. Hummingbird
12 Anhinga	69 Black-bellied Plover	6 Belted Kingfisher
34 Great Blue Heron	3 Ruddy Turnstone	5 Yellow-shafted Flicker
45 Green Heron	5 Common Snipe	55 Pileated Woodpecker
31 Little Blue Heron	93 Whimbrel	116 Red-bellied Woodpecker
20 Cattle Egret	14 Spotted Sandpiper	12 Red-headed Woodpecker
100 Common Egret	1 Solitary Sandpiper	1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
167 Snowy Egret	106 Willet	9 Hairy Woodpecker
69 Louisiana Heron	22 Greater Yellowlegs	15 Downy Woodpecker
8 Black-cr Night Heron	14 Lesser Yellowlegs	6 Red-cockaded Woodpecker
4 Yellow-cr Night Heron	40 Knot	23 Eastern Kingbird
4 Least Bittern	10 Least Sandpiper	190 Great Crested Flycatcher
2 American Bittern	46 Dunlin	3 Eastern Phoebe
22 Glossy Ibis	137 Dowitcher	20 Acadian Flycatcher
116 White Ibis	20 Semipalmated Sandpiper	36 Eastern Wood Pewee
1 Mallard	20 Western Sandpiper	420 Tree Swallow
2 Green-winged Teal	1 Marbled Godwit	9 Rough-winged Swallow
22 Blue-winged Teal	12 Sanderling	113 Barn Swallow
2 American Wigeon	11 Black-necked Stilt	23 Purple Martin
45 Wood Duck	14 Herring Gull	331 Blue Jay
1 Scaup	79 Ring-billed Gull	41 Common Crow
3 Red-breasted Merganser	337 Laughing Gull	90 Fish Crow
48 Turkey Vulture	1 Bonaparte's Gull	128 Carolina Chickadee
12 Black Vulture	5 Gull-billed Tern	202 Tufted Titmouse
8 Cooper's Hawk	26 Common Tern	2 White-breasted Nuthatch
16 Red-tailed Hawk	27 Least Tern	66 Brown-headed Nuthatch
10 Red-shouldered Hawk	203 Royal Tern	1 Brown Creeper
1 Marsh Hawk	107 Black Skimmer	173 Carolina Wren
10 Osprey	70 Mourning Dove	25 Long-billed Marsh Wren
54 Bobwhite	2 Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1 Short-billed Marsh Wren
23 Clapper Rail	1 Screech Owl	53 Mockingbird
6 Sora	2 Great horned Owl	6 Catbird
33 Common Gallinule	16 Barred Owl	28 Brown thrasher

Bootes is now high overhead, with orange-red Arcturus at the zenith.

If one has a clear view of the northern sky, without the frustration of "light pollution", he may be able to discern that the Big and Little Dippers are separated by the tail of Draco, the Dragon. The tip of the tail is a faint star about five degrees northeast of the "Pointers" in the Big Dipper. By tracing a sinuous curve of faint stars around the bowl of the Little Dipper, then sharply northeastward, and abruptly southward from that point, the head of the Dragon will be seen as a five-sided configuration containing one star brighter than the rest.

Venus continues to dominate the early dawn, rising about two hours before the sun all month long.

For vacationing Sky-watchers, a night spent in the open under the stars will present a never-to-be-forgotten experience!

Elizabeth D. Simons

Observations

Date	Observation	Location	Observer
April 22	Chuck-Will's Widow-Nest	Hobcaw	Coots Donaldson
" 25	Swallow-tailed Kite	Hobcaw	Coots Donaldson
" 27	Swallow-tailed Kite	Hobcaw	Coots Donaldson
" 28	Black-billed Cuckoo	Hobcaw	Coots Donaldson
" 28	Whip-poor-will singing	Riverland Terrace	Francis Barrington
" 28	Tennessee Warbler	Fairlawn Plantation	Perry Nugent
May 1	33 Water Pipits	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
" 1	300 Bobolinks	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
" 1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Summerville	Edmund Cuthbert
" 1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Mt. Pleasant	Dr. Harry Freeman
" 3	3 Water Pipits	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
" 4	Black-burnian Warbler	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
" 9	Roseate Spoonbill	Kiawah	Ben Gibbs
" 12	Magnolia Warbler	Isle of Palms	David Huff
" 14	300 Barn Swallows	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
" 14	2 Cliff Swallows	U.S. Veg. Lab.	Perry Nugent
" 26	Wood Stork	Magnolia	Ted Beckett
" 26	2 Black Ducks	Mt. Pleasant Causeway	Perry & Chris Nugent

The efforts of those individuals who contribute observations for this column are greatly appreciated. If you observe any unusual bird, flower, or other interesting animal or plant, please take the time to let me know. Your observation might be more important than you think.

Perry Nugent

The Osborn Report

April 20	Pair of Anhingas circling pond
	Common Egret
	White Ibis
24	Orchard Oriole
26	G. Crested Flycatcher
29	Summer Tanager
30	Kingbird

- May 1 Painted Bunting - a green one! Female or immature male
 5 Hummingbird
 4 Spotted Sandpipers at pond
 Blue Grosbeak
 Little Blue Heron
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo
 Red-Eyed Vireo
 Pewee
 Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher on nest
 8 Carolina Wrens fledged 3 in garage. First out fell victim to Mama Cat. Second one I carried out to pine where parents were and it flew strongly to join them. Third managed fine alone to join rest.
 Woodthrush singing at dusk.
 9 A freshening shower in mid-afternoon. Then the bird song. All in yard singing were: Bluebird, Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-throat Warbler; Prairie Warbler, Parula Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Painted Bunting, White-Eyed Vireo, Chickadee, Mockingbird, Thrasher, Gnatcatcher, Titmouse, Yellow-throat, and Great Crested Flycatcher.
 Woodthrush at dusk.
 11 Mississippi Kite overhead
 13 Mississippi Kite again
 15 Seems all bird families are being raised in the yard. Three nests of thrashers, one of cardinals, believe hummingbird, Orchard Oriole, Summer Tanager, Parula, Yellow-Throated Warbler, Carolina Wrens, Mockingbird, and chickadee all are carrying food and disappearing into Oak and border shrubbery.
 19 Watched female Hummingbird gather strands of spider web.
 20 Red-Eyed Vireo singing cheerily!
 Also a Yellow-Throated Vireo for comparison
 Pine Warbler

Dot Glover

Poinsett State Park

Having spent a recent week-end at Poinsett State Park, we would like to commend our park system. South Carolina has a fine group of interesting, beautiful, and well-run parks. We thoroughly enjoyed Poinsett, near Sumter. It is only 110 miles from Charleston and yet it has much of Carolina mountain flora in addition to typically low-country Spanish moss and cypress. The winding roadways are bordered with mountain laurel. We enjoyed the Coquina Nature Trail which circles the clear lake. Downy false fox glove (*Aureolaria virginica*) and the striking variegated milkweed (*Asclepias variegata*) were in bloom. Along the stream leading from the spillway, Louisiana water thrushes and prothonotory warblers were evident and we have never seen so many 'tame' parulas. Looking down into a lush fern bed below the dam, we saw a tremendous king snake majestically cruising along. Camping always gives us a chance to play our favorite bed-birding -- identifying the many early flyers by their calls. Chuck-will's widows and barred owls called during the night. In spite of ending our stay in a downpour without raincoats, we had a good time.

Peg and Ted Metcalf