

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

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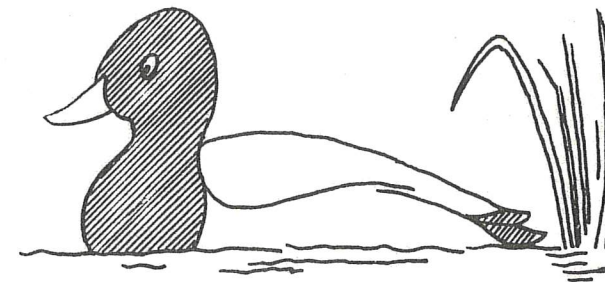
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FIRST CLASS MAIL



the lesser Squawk



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ARTICLES TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE APRIL ISSUE OF THE LESSER SQUAWK MUST BE SUBMITTED
IN WRITING BY MARCH 20, 1976.

MONTHLY MEETING

Tuesday, March 9, 1976
Regular monthly meeting at 8 pm in
Charleston Museum Lecture Hall
Topic: Cooper River Historical District
Speaker: Mr. Henry Cauthen, Director of
the Preservation Society of Charleston

MARCH FIELD TRIP

On March 26, 27, and 28 the CNHS will have a camping and boating trip to the lower Wambaw Creek area of Francis Marion National Forest. Everyone is welcome to come stay during the day or camp out Friday and Saturday nights. We will be using Elmwood Campground which has water and toilets and is open to camper trailers, and the weather by that date should prove to be mild and agreeable.

There should be no mosquitoes but gnats might be a problem, so bring insect repellent. Everyone who has canoes should bring them as boats will not be provided by the CNHS but with all there is to do there should be a boat available at some time during the weekend for everyone who wants to paddle off down the Wambaw. Fishing is also possible there but one requires a license if a rod and reel are used.

We all know the attributes of this special place for we've had many trips to the Wambaw but we've never had a chance to spend an entire weekend there, also the swamp at night can be studied. It's the beginning of spring now with birds moving North, the first flowers coming out, and the deciduous trees of the swamp beginning to show the first hint of new leaves. See you there.

Directions

Go North on Hwy. 17 to Hwy. 45 at McClellanville. Turn left on 45 and about 3 or 4 miles there is a small National Forest Road No. 211 to the right. Turn on to it

and you'll pass over a small concrete bridge and pass two exit roads to your left. The second exit is marked Still Landing. Continue on to an intersection, the right lane of which has a gate about 500' away, take the left lane and within 200' on the left side, is the entrance to Elmwood. Almost all National Forest roads are marked by a 3 digit number and are shown on the small maps available from the Forest Service.

David Huff
Field Trip Chairman

MARCH PROGRAM

The program for the March 9th meeting of the Charleston Natural History Society will be a slide-lecture presentation on the COOPER RIVER HISTORICAL DISTRICT that has been nominated to The National Register by the Preservation Society of Charleston. Mr. Henry Cauthen, Director of the Society, will narrate a slide series on some of the historical sites in the proposed District, and will also explain the procedure by which sites, or districts, can be nominated to The National Register. Richard D. Percher will narrate a series of slides of the natural history of the CRHD, and also discuss how naturalists and environmental organizations can assist historical preservationists in making nominations to The National Register.

Richard Percher
Program Chairman

A New Spring Bird Count

A new spring count will be held, Sunday May 9 at Bears Bluff on Wadmalaw Island. Details will appear in the Spring Lesser Squawk. Those interested call Alston C. Badger at 559-0371 at work or 795-1875 at home.

Report from the Executive Committee

At the Executive Committee meeting on 23 February, the Committee drafted the following proposal for consideration by the Membership:

Be it resolved that the Charleston Natural History Society supports the nomination by the Preservation Society of Charleston of the COOPER RIVER HISTORICAL DISTRICT to the National Register. The Society has long been aware of the rich natural history of the proposed district, and this, in combination with the concentration of highly important historic sites, certainly qualifies the area to become a registered district. The Society believes that the conservation of such an area by placing it on the National Register would be of tremendous importance to the people of South Carolina and thereby urge the South Carolina Department of Archives and History to recommend to the Keeper of the National Register that the COOPER RIVER HISTORICAL DISTRICT be placed on the National Register.

The Executive Committee will formally present the above proposal to the Membership for a vote at the April meeting of the Society.

Richard D. Percher

Audubon Society and other nearby conservation groups. Spoil from channel dredging was carefully spread to the right depth in a shallow area, allowing restoration of natural marsh vegetation, wildlife and aquatic life.

Downward Trend? The annual California condor survey is only one indicator of the status of this endangered species; the birds are spread so widely over such remote and rugged terrain that a count of the entire population is impossible. In this year's survey 29 of the big birds were sighted. Biologists estimate the total population is about 50, but they also say the overall pattern of the surveys, along with other data, "suggests a downward trend."

OFFICERS

President: Richard D. Porcher, Jr., Biology Department, The Citadel, Charleston S. C., 29409
Vice-President: Ms. Anne Pratt, 4-B Michel Pl. Charleston, S. C., 29401
Secretary-Treasurer: Steve Walker, 32 Bull St., Charleston, S. C., 29401
Members at Large: Bobin Huff, Susan Roche, Coots Donaldson, Mary Reed, Robert Payne, Pete Laurie, Alan Bills

Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation: Robert Payne
Program: Richard Porcher
Membership: Ann Pratt
Field Trips: David Huff
Publicity: Coots Donaldson

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Phone 556-3841

Your Dues are Due

For those CNHS members who chose not to join the National Audubon Society your dues of \$5.00 are now payable to our Secretary-Treasurer, Steve Walker, 32 Bull Street, Charleston, S. C., 29401. Make checks payable to the CNHS. This also applies to those people who belong to another Audubon Chapter out of our area and wish to continue receiving the Lesser Squawk.

Steve Walker

February Field Trip: Santee NWR

A rare Sprague's pipit was the highlight of an otherwise somewhat disappointing field trip to Santee National Wildlife Refuge on the north shore of Lake Marion.

Perry Nugent first spotted this normally western species of pipit around noon and a group of six birders studied it at close range for 20 minutes. By this time, however, most of the 40 CNHS members participating in the field trip has returned to their cars for lunch after discovering that the huge flocks of ducks and geese that make Santee NWR famous apparently had already left the refuge to return to their northern breeding grounds.

Several flights of Canada geese estimated to total about 1000 birds were seen during the morning but only from a great distance. A solitary snow goose was spotted among the Canadas. Smaller flocks of ducks, principally mallards and shovelers, also were seen, but again most were beyond the range of binoculars.

Scattered flocks of killdeer, meadow larks, redwings, and water pipits crisscrossed the open fields now deserted by the wintering waterfowl. Hedgerows held an abundance of Savannah sparrows along with the usual chickadees and ruby-crowned kinglets.

The soft "yank, yank" of the seldom seen red-breasted nuthatch was detected in the pine stands near the beginning of the Wildlife Trail and a pair of the small birds stayed in view long enough for most of the group to get a glimpse. Also seen in the pines were downy, hairy, and red-bellied woodpeckers and lots of very vocal pine warblers.

After lunch a brief stop at the limestone sinkholes located just across the lake provided a look at some unusual terrain, some interesting water plants, and a single fox sparrow.

Although the birding was a little slow, clear sky and pleasant temperatures made the day enjoyable and produced a surprisingly good count of 75 species.

Pete Laurie

A Sprague's Pipit - February 21, 1976

This interesting little bird was observed at the Santee National Wildlife Refuge by Judy Enenstein, Marian Greely, Francoise Chevais, David Knott, David Laurie and I while on a Charleston Natural History Society field trip.

As we walked along a road through the center of a field toward the observation platform a small streaked bird with white outer tail feathers flew up and right back down between us and a small pond to our left. Thinking it was a Vesper Sparrow, I located it and to my surprise, saw a slender bird with a pointed bill. Fortunately, for us, the grass had been burned and there was little cover to hide this rather plain bird. Its actions were those of a pipit, but it did not resemble the more familiar Water Pipit. Through spotting scopes and binoculars we spent 20 minutes

observing its streaked back and upper breast, pointed bill and flesh colored legs in good, 12 noon light at distances of 25-50 feet. This co-operative bird was still feeding when we decided it really was a Sprague's Pipit and started toward the Fort Watson parking lot.

There are 10-12 records of this bird in South Carolina making ours an interesting find on an otherwise poor birding day.

Perry E. Nugent

The Sky-Watchers' Guide

(A word of explanation is due the readers of The Sky-watchers' Guide. The writer regrets its omission from the February issue of the Squawk, the cause of which was personal illness. He hopes that no further interruption will occur, - at least she will do her best!)

By the time it is dark during the evenings of March, three planets will be in view. Nearing the western horizon, Jupiter is moving toward its setting which occurs between 9:00 and 8:00 p.m. from the first to the end of the month.

When twilight has ended at the beginning of the month, Mars may be seen just west of the meridian, and about double that distance thirty days later at the same time of evening.

About 9:00 p.m., at the beginning of March, and two hours earlier at the end, Saturn will transit, or cross the meridian.

These three planets, therefore, will guide the viewer along the ecliptic, which at this time of the year, curves across the sky from west to east.

It may be a bit difficult to realize that the earth, from which we view the changing aspect of the sky, is also moving through space. The changing aspect of the sky is, of itself, a proof of this fact. On March 20, at 6:50 a.m., the earth will reach a point on its orbit exactly west of the sun. On that day, which is known as the Vernal, or Spring Equinox, the sun will rise directly in the east, and set directly in the west. Thus, the division of daylight and darkness will be equal.

Between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. at mid-month, Taurus, Orion, and Canis Major may all be seen approaching their setting. The ecliptic runs between the horns of the Bull, with Orion to the south, and Auriga to the north of that imaginary line. The five-sided figure of Auriga is formed of one brilliant star, (Capella), two second magnitude stars, (of about the same brightness as Polaris), and three third magnitude stars.

To the east of Taurus is Gemini, dominated by the two bright stars, Castor and Pollux.

About as far above the eastern horizon as Gemini is above the western, Leo the Lion is now in view, and Saturn is located midway between these two constellations. The head of the Lion, (or the "backwards question-mark"), contains one first magnitude star, - Regulus, - which appears as the "dot" under the "question mark". Regulus is directly on the ecliptic. Extending eastward from the Lion's head is a triangle of stars with the apex pointing to the horizon. This triangle represents the haunches and tail of the Lion.

When facing north, the observer will be able to see the Big Dipper at its best at this time of year. Four stars form the bowl, and three fairly bright ones form the handle, giving an "upside-down" appearance to the Dipper. With the aid of binocu-

and if the river already has state protection. Governor James E. Holshauser, Jr. has made such a request and the river has scenic river status in the state. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, which administers the Rivers Act, has said the area qualifies for such protection. The river is threatened by the proposed Blue River Power Project of the American Power Company and would affect both West Virginia and North Carolina, flood homes and farms, and spoil the recreational value of the famous New River Gorge, the wildest stretch of white water in the Eastern U.S. Kleppe is due to make a decision in March.

House Committee Reports Out Strong Coastal Zone Bill The House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee has reported out a package of amendments to strengthen the Coastal Zone Management Act. They would aid states in planning for energy development on their coastlines and in controlling other development there. Funds to states to minimize environmental harm from development would be applicable only to energy projects, and would thus not act as an inducement for other types of industrial development there.

CONGRESS PASSES AND PRESIDENT SIGNS A BLACKBIRD ERADICATION LAW

Congress and the President flouted the National Environmental Policy Act and the Federal Environmental Pesticide Control Act by passing a law which directs the Department of Interior to kill millions of wintering blackbirds in western Kentucky and Tennessee. The measure waives NEPA, FEPCA and "any other provision of law."

The panic-bred, ill-conceived bill, H.R. 11510, was introduced, passed by the House and Senate, and sent to the President all in one day. No hearings had been held, there was virtually no debate, and the bill was passed on a voice vote.

The dangerous precedent set by the bill caused immediate protest from conservationists. Representative Robert L. Leggett, who chairs the Fish and Wildlife and Environment Subcommittee and who brought the bill to the floor, then wrote to the President and asked him to defer action until the Subcommittee could hold a hearing and make recommendations to him.

At that hearing, February 2, the Fish & Wildlife Service's witness--on instructions from Interior Secretary Kleppe--endorsed the bill, while the Environmental Protection Agency and the Council on Environmental Quality recommended a veto. Cynthia E. Wilson, our Washington Representative, charged that "what is needed is not ill-considered poisoning programs or hastily passed legislation, but basic research into the ecological factors which have caused these enormous roosts." Wilson offered the Society's assistance to the states of Kentucky and Tennessee on constructive efforts to solve the problem.

Dr. Melvin I. Dyer, a blackbird expert and recipient of a grant from National Audubon to study the problem said at the hearing that blackbirds must be "considered a large and valuable international resource," and pointed out that "massive annihilation" would probably not alleviate agricultural losses and could well lead to increase of populations of other pest birds.

The President, however, did not wait for the Committee recommendation but signed the bill on February 4. Will we now be faced with back door legislation to overturn the Executive Order ban on poisons for predator control or to bring back DDT? Unless conservationists protest, it is very possible.

Guess What the Corps Has Been Up To. The Army Corps of Engineers, which in years past has flooded out or dried out many a marsh, is now making them and has completed a 352-acre project in the Mississippi delta that is the largest man-made marsh ever built in this country. The project had the active encouragement of the Orleans

State Parks, 1205 Pendleton St., Columbia, S. C., 29201 or telephone 758-3622.

OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Advanced amateur photographers are invited to participate in an Outdoor Photography Workshop May 15 and 16 at Santee State Park to be conducted jointly by the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Division of State Parks, and the Wildlife and Marine Resources Department.

Instructors for the program will be provided primarily by the South Carolina Wildlife magazine staff, headed by Ted Borg, the magazine's chief photographer.

Dennis Gunter, State Park Naturalist of the Parks Division, said the workshop is designed for the advanced amateur photographer who wishes to improve his technical skills in outdoor photography. Included in the two-day workshop will be discussions of techniques and equipment for photographing wildlife, plants, scenic, close-ups and outdoor activities.

Interested persons may receive further information and a registration form from the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Attention: Dennis Gunter, 1205 Pendleton Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. Accommodations are available at the park, but the registration fee doesn't cover food and lodging.

Applications will be accepted no later than April 9, 1976 on a first come, first serve basis. Only 50 persons can be accommodated. Reservations for cabins should be made directly with the Park Superintendent as soon as possible.

AUDUBON LEADER - February 11, 1976

Protect Alpine Lakes Region One of the most beautiful and still unspoiled areas remaining in the U.S. is the Alpine Lakes/Cascade Mountains region in the state of Washington. Legislation to protect this area has long been sought and a bill (H.R. 7792) sponsored by Rep. Lloyd Meeds (Wash.) is awaiting markup by the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. Conservationists are backing Meeds' 384,000-acre proposal (cut down from an original plan for a 575,000-acre wilderness within a million-acre National Recreation Area). However, the timber industry is lobbying heavily to cut even that plan to 300,000 acres; this would eliminate some of the most important areas. Citizens are writing to their Congressmen urging them to accept the Meeds proposal and not to cave in to the timber lobby.

Wool Growers Pressing For Poison 1080 Ranchers and wool growers met with Interior Secretary Thomas S. Kleppe during the last week in January. They are clamoring for the use of the dangerous toxicant 1080 for an "experimental" program to control predators and they want Kleppe to revoke the 1972 Executive Order ban on poisons for predator control. The National Audubon Society and other concerned groups have requested a meeting with Kleppe, and National Audubon wants to explain its position opposing any further relaxation of the 1972 ban. The precedent for weakening the ban was set last summer, just as conservationists had feared, when the ranchers were victorious in their fight to re-register the use and sale of sodium cyanide: it is now in wide use throughout the west. Conservationists are urged to write to Kleppe opposing any use of 1080: Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. 20240

Kleppe's Decision To Save New River Expected In March In your letters to Interior Secretary Kleppe about 1080, you might also include a paragraph asking him to designate Wild and Scenic River System protection for a 26.5-mile segment of the New River in North Carolina. Under the Wild and Scenic River System Act, Kleppe is authorized to give the river protection if the governor of a state requests it

lars, an extra star, - faint and apparently quite close to the star next to the end of the handle, will be seen. Actually, these two stars are very far apart: at least 16,000 times the distance of the earth from the sun! The two outer stars in the bowl of the Big Dipper are the "Pointers", directing the eye to Polaris, the North Star, which may be located about midway between them and the horizon.

At the beginning of the month, two planets may be seen as "Morning Stars". Venus rises an hour before the sun, followed by Mercury about fifteen minutes later. However, by mid-month, while Venus remains in view in the dawn light, Mercury will become lost in the glare of the rising sun.

Elizabeth D. Simons

Bird Movements in March			
Arrivals			
Date	Species	Date	Species
3	Least Bittern	15	Yellow-throated Vireo
	Wilson's Plover		Red-eyed Vireo
	Chuck-will's Widow	16	Golden Plover
5	Swallow-tailed Kite		Veery
	Parula Warbler	18	Louisiana Waterthrush
7	Chimney Swift		Yellow-crowned
	Wood Thrush		Night Heron
10	Eastern Kingbird	20	Pectoral Sandpiper
11	Upland Sandpiper		Common Night Hawk
12	Mississippi Kite		Black-throated
	Glossy Ibis		Green Warbler
15	Least Tern	22	Stilt Sandpiper
			Gr. Crested Flycatcher
		23	Hooded Warbler
Departures			
Date	Species	Date	Species
8	Horned Lark	16	Long-eared Owl
9	European Wigeon	19	Bewick's Wren
16	Red-necked Grebe	21	Yellow Rail
		29	Fox Sparrow
		30	Redhead
		31	Long-billed Curlew

The following have been seen at least once during March in South Carolina:

Lapland Longspur	Dickcissel	Wilson's Warbler
Purple Sandpiper	European (Great) Cormorant	White-tailed Kite

This column is primarily a guide for C.N.H.S. members although the dates should apply to all migratory birds of the coastal plain and many over the whole state. It has been a feature of the Lesser Squawk for many years and a number of the dates are from observations of our members. There seems to be much confusion about the meaning of the dates and the fact that common and very rare species are included in the list. These dates are the earliest arrivals or the latest departure as recorded in "South Carolina Bird Life" by Sprunt and Chamberlain unless there is an earlier or later date in the more recent issues of the Lesser Squawk. Any species that we have sufficient data on should be included in this list. A rare but regular visitor is just as important as the most common bird. Several species on the list are common on the coast during one season and inland during another season, therefore, they may be permanent residents but their relative abundance

varies throughout the year. The Goldfinch is a good example of this, abundant during the winter and rare during the summer on the coast. Easily recognizable subspecies are found on the list. The Red-eyed and White-eyed Towhees are forms of the Rufous-sided Towhee, the former being a winter visitor and the latter a permanent resident of the coastal plain. One challenge for C.N.H.S. birders is to find and report species before or after the date they have previously been observed. This is one reason for publishing the list. Another is to inform our readers when to start looking for each species. You should expect to find very few specimens of a species at the beginning or end and considerable more during the middle of their visit to the Lowcountry.

Perry Nugent.

The Blueberries

Moist sites in March not infrequently support a flowering colony of at least one species of blueberry. Their small, pink to white blooms, pendant from a maze of greenish twigs, delight the eye with an ethereal quality, but not infrequently bedevil the brain trying to unravel their proper names.

One of the earliest to bloom and most conspicuous is the high-bush blueberry, *Vaccinium corymbosum*, from which the commercial blueberry has descended. These large shrubs are common in the moist pine woods of the Francis Marion National Forest. *Vaccinium elliotii* is a plant of swamp forests where its white to deep pink blooms are conspicuous against the grays and browns of late winter. *Vaccinium tenellum* is a principal member of pine barren communities, where it forms sizeable colonies, and in those same habitats you often find mats of the creeping, evergreen *V. crassifolium*. Growing on a wide range of sites, *V. atrococcum* forms a large, graceful shrub that bears small white to greenish blossoms. The low-bush blueberry, *V. stamineum*, grows in extensive patches in thin, moist pine-oak forests. Largest and most spectacular with its wonderfully curved trunks is the sparkleberry, *V. arboreum*, which is partial to very dry sites. In the southeastern tip of the state our only other evergreen species, *V. myrsinites*, grows in the sub-tropical splendor of scrub-palmetto thickets.

Blueberries belong to the family Ericaceae, which includes a diversity ranging from rhododendrons to pipsissewa to the strange Indian - pipes. There are about 200 species of *Vaccinium*, being found in temperate Eurasia, the cooler parts of North America, the mountains of Madagascar, Indo-Malaysia, New Guinea, Polynesia, and the Andes. The word *Vaccinium* is said to be the Latin name of the plant, and it stems from *vacca*, meaning cow. One species, *V. vitis-idaea*, is called Cow-berry. However, *vacca* is very close in spelling to *bacca*, meaning berry, from which very possibly the word originally came.

Aside from the occasional use of *Vacciniums* as ornamental they are almost exclusively known for berry production - the blue and cranberries being commonly harvested in North America. In Europe such intriguing names as bilberry and whortleberry are applied to several useful species.

Edmund R. Cuthbert

Observations

Date	Species	Location	Observer
Jan 11	Immature Bald Eagle	Bear Island	Thomas Reeves
	1 Black and White Warbler	Bear Island	Thomas Reeves
19	1 ♀ Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Mt. Pleasant	Mr.&Mrs. Grayson G. Hanahan
24	1 Orange-crowned Warbler	Kiawah Island	Thomas Reeves
Feb 6	* Lincoln Sparrow	2260 Dallerton Circle	Perry & Cris Nugent
7	2000 Greater Scaup	Breach Inlet	Edmund Farrar, Jr.
8	1 Black and White Warbler	Frances Marion Nat. Forest	Edmund Farrar, Jr.
	6 Evening Grosbeaks	I'on Swamp	Thomas Reeves
10	1 Glossy Ibis	Cooper River Bridge	Edmund Farrar, Jr.
14	1 Peregrine Falcon	Magnolia Gardens	Edmund Farrar, Jr.
	1 Lincoln Sparrow	Magnolia Gardens	Edmund Farrar, Jr.
	1 Glossy Ibis	Magnolia Gardens	Edmund Farrar, Jr.
15	1 Black and White Warbler	Mt. Pleasant	Edmund Farrar, Jr.
23	pair Evening Grosbeaks	2260 Dallerton Circle	Cris & Perry Nugent

* The Lincoln Sparrow, a daily visitor to our feeder since October departed February 6.

An Amendment to Our Constitution

The Executive Committee of the C.N.H.S. met February 23, 1976 and adopted a motion to amend the constitution and by-laws of the society. The purpose of this motion was to include the editor of the Lesser Squawk as a permanent Executive Committee member. At the March meeting the society will be asked to vote on a motion to amend Article IV, Section 2 of the revised constitution and by-laws in order to add the following wording to the end of the second sentence, after the "year."

"and (d) the editor of the Lesser Squawk".

Steve Walker

SOUTH CAROLINA WILDFLOWER WEEKEND

The Division of State Parks, S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism and the Department of Biology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, will sponsor a Wildflower Weekend, April 10-11, 1976. Under the Direction of qualified botanists from various colleges and universities in South Carolina, the program is designed to acquaint the public with the undisturbed natural areas and to discover the wide variety of spring wildflowers within South Carolina. The program will consist of various field trips throughout the state that the participant may attend, including mountaintop ridges, coves and streams; climax oak-hickory forests of the Piedmont; cypress swamps, bays, and bogs of the coastal plain; to the salt marsh, dunes and the maritime forest along the Atlantic coast.

For a detailed list of field trips and registration information contact the Division of State Parks at the following address: Spring Wildflower Weekend, Division of