

## CNHS OFFICERS

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The Charleston Natural History Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Members of Audubon that live in the Charleston area automatically become members of CNHS. A portion of the annual dues paid to Audubon are returned to CNHS to cover operating expenses.

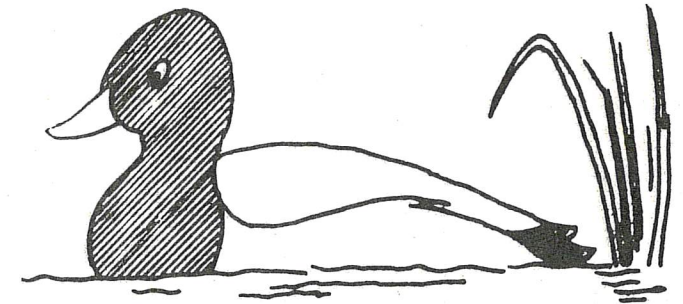
CNHS normally meets on the second Tuesday of each month (except June, July, and August) at 8:00 p.m.

One field trip a month is scheduled on a Saturday or Sunday to any of a variety of local natural areas.

THE LESSER SQUAWK welcomes any written contributions from the membership. The deadline for each issue is the 20th day of the preceeding month.

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## the lesser Squawk



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### FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP:

#### GUILLIARD LAKE

Field Trip Chairman David Huff has scheduled a field trip for Sunday, February 20 to Guilliard Lake and the Battery Historic Area in the Francis Marion National Forest near Jamestown.

To visit this typical southern river bottom swamp along the Santee River, CNHS members and guests should be at the Charleston Museum at 7:30 a. m. Bring your lunch.

### FEBRUARY PROGRAM

#### WILL FEATURE EVERGLADES

Date: February 8, 1977

Place: Baruch Auditorium

Program: CNHS member Terry Richardson will present a slide program on the natural history of the Everglades.

### OPENINGS AVAILABLE

#### ON CAMPING TRIP

A few openings are still available on the camping trip to Bulls Island on January 14, 15, and 16. Anyone interested in joining this expedition should contact David Huff (886-6911) as soon as possible.

Day visitors are welcome to join the group on either that Saturday or Sunday. The concession boat (\$5.00) runs daily from Moore's Landing to the island.

## STATE PARK BIRD COUNTS

The South Carolina Division of State Parks will sponsor a Mid-Winter Bird Count on January 29 and February 5, 1977. The program is to be held at fourteen parks across the state, selected to allow the greatest geographic diversity. Seven of the parks will be covered on each day with the counts tentatively beginning at 8:00 a.m. and concluding at 5:00 p.m.

On Saturday, January 29, 1977 counts will be held at Aiken, Cheraw, Croft, Hickory Knob, Hunting Island, Santee, and Oconee State Parks. Counts at Huntington Beach, Kings Mountain, Lynches River, Rivers Bridge, Sadlers Creek, Sesquicentennial and Table Rock State Parks will be held on February 5, 1977.

These counts are being conducted to allow the accumulation of data on bird populations in South Carolina, as a complement to the Christmas count. The data on the avifauna of South Carolina's State Parks will ultimately be used in the nature interpretive programs of the Division of State Parks and will provide baseline data for long term studies of bird populations in our parks. A compiled listing of all birds from all sites will be available to all participants.

Birders are needed to assist in these counts. All interested birders should contact Brian E. Cassie or John Reid Clonts; Division of State Parks; S. C. P. R. T., Suite 113; 1205 Pendleton St.; Columbia, S. C. 29201; telephone 803/758-3622.

## CNHS COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO I'ON SWAMP CONTROVERSY

At the request of Jay Shuler of the McClellanville-based Santee Preservation Society, CNHS president Richard Porcher has selected a committee to look into the current controversy surrounding logging operations in the I'on Swamp area.

I'on Swamp, in the Francis Marion National Forest, has historically produced many sightings of Bachman's warbler, an endangered species considered the rarest song bird in North America.

Jay would like CNHS to join the Santee Preservation Society in an effort to halt the sale of timber in this area in order to protect the habitat of the bird. Several recent studies of Bachman's warbler and the I'on Swamp habitat have produced conflicting results.

The committee, consisting of Carlyle Blakeney, Jr., Dr. Julian Harrison, David Chamberlain, Perry E. Nugent, and Pete Laurie, will examine all available information and report its findings to the CNHS executive committee. The executive committee then will decide upon a suitable course of action.

before sun-up may see Mercury as a "Morning Star". It will reach its greatest western elongation on the 28th of January; at that time it will be visible for about an hour before the sun rises. Within a couple of weeks following this date, Mercury will slip from view into the sun's glare. Since Mercury makes a complete revolution on its orbit in 88 days, we shall see it next as an "Evening Star" when it reappears from behind the sun some six or seven weeks later.

Elizabeth D. Simons

## WILDLIFE PRINTS AVAILABLE

The following wildlife prints are available on a first come, first served basis at the office of Carlyle Blakeney, Jr., Southeast Regional Representative, National Audubon Society.

Ray Harm - Screech Owl  
- Calif. Ground Squirrel  
- Calif. Quail  
- Road Runner  
- Wood Thrush  
Cohelach-Grizzly Bear  
- Egret

Eckleberry - Palm Tanager  
Roger Tory Peterson - Boblink

All prints are signed. Prices range from \$35 to \$80 except for the Peterson print which is considerably more. All proceeds will go to the National Audubon Society. Most of these prints are no

longer available commercially.

If you are interested in any of these prints call or write Carlyle or visit his new office on the third floor of the King and Queen Bldg. on King St. in Charleston.

W. Carlyle Blakeney, Jr.  
Southeast Regional Office  
P. O. Box 786  
Charleston, S. C. 29402  
Telephone 723-6171

## NEW CHECKLIST OF SOUTH CAROLINA BIRDS NOW ON SALE

A new checklist of South Carolina birds, prepared by Perry E. Nugent, now is available for CNHS members.

The new checklists contain a variety of useful information on the status of each species, including early and late dates of arrival and departure for migrants. As such they are valuable additions to standard field guides. Many experienced birders use checklists to keep a permanent record of each day afield.

To defray printing costs the checklists will be sold for 10 cents each with a minimum mail order of 10. To order checklists send a personal check to Pete Laurie, 1153 Cottage Rd., Charleston, SC 29412. Make checks payable to the Charleston Natural History Society.



## THE SKYWATCHERS' GUIDE

As odd as it may seem, in January, when the Northern Hemisphere may expect the coldest temperatures of the season, the earth is about two million miles closer to the sun than it is in July. It must be remembered, however, that the sun is still to be seen at a much lower angle than it is in the summer, and its rays therefore reach us, not directly, but slantingly. Because of the fact that at this time there is less distance between the earth and the sun, the speed of the earth increases, and by the end of the month, the lengthening of daylight will be perceptible.

Venus still dominates the western sky after sunset, remaining in view longer each evening until the 25th, when it reaches its greatest eastern elongation. It will then set after 9:00 o'clock.

As soon as it is dark, two other planets may also be seen. Jupiter will be near the meridian, and Saturn will be well above the eastern horizon.

January presents the year's most brilliant array of stars, which will continue to command the sky throughout the winter. Six stars of the first magnitude, or brighter, are now in view. Aldebaran, in Taurus will be on the meridian about 8:00 p.m. at mid-month; Betelgeuse and Rigel in Orion, and Capella in Auriga will be approaching the meridian; and three others will be following from eastward. Not far behind Auriga, Gemini, the Twins are now high in view. Castor, a second magnitude star, and Pollux, of the first magnitude, represent the heads of the Twins, just about 5 degrees apart. About 15 degrees southeast of Pollux is Canis Minor, the Lesser Dog. Having found these, the observer cannot fail to see Sirius, the brightest star which can be viewed from Earth. Sirius, which means

"sparkling", is well-named, for it flashes sparkling colors like those of a diamond. Nearer the Solar System than any other bright star seen from this latitude, Sirius is eight light-years away. Should some catastrophe suddenly extinguish this star, we on earth would not know of the fact until eight years later. Sirius is the only bright star in Canis Major, the Greater Dog. Two of the stars of this constellation are of the second magnitude. One, extending five degrees west of Sirius, represents a front paw of the dog, and the other, about ten degrees nearer the southern horizon, represents a hind paw. Sirius is the dog's throat, and two faint stars about five degrees east and at a right angle to Sirius, form the head. A faint star to the left of the hind paw indicates the end of the back, and another forming a triangle with that and the hind paw is unmistakably the tip of the dog's tail.

When the atmosphere is clear, sky-watchers not hampered by artificial light should be able to see the Milky Way band extending from northwest to southeast across the sky. Seen by the naked eye as a soft glow, binoculars or a small telescope will reveal some of the myriad individual stars of which this is composed.

Dangling from the middle of Orion's belt is a row of faint stars that represent his sword. A fuzzy blur of light in the sword presents, through optical aid, a magnificent sight. It is an enormous nebula composed of luminous gases, (mostly hydrogen), which is the material from which stars evolve. Many stars are embedded in this nebula, and without doubt others will emerge as they take form. This nebula is 26 light-years across, and 1600 light-years distant from the Solar System.

Those sky-watchers whose day begins