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The Charleston Natural History Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Members of Audubon who 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, August, and December) at 8:00 P.M. in Baruch Auditorium.

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 15th day of the preceeding month.

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## the lesser Squawk



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May 1977

### MAY PROGRAM FEATURES ALASKA

"Alaska: Wildlands for Tomorrow", a stunning slide-tape show, will be shown May 10 at 8 p.m. in Baruch Auditorium, Calhoun St., across from Gadsden. The film depicts the glories of one of the last remaining wilderness frontiers on our planet.

### BEAR'S BLUFF COUNT

Don't forget the spring bird count at Bear's Bluff Laboratory May 29. Participants will meet at 7 a.m. for a half-day count. A light lunch will be served. If interested, call Alston Badger at 559-0371 (day) or 795-1875 (night).

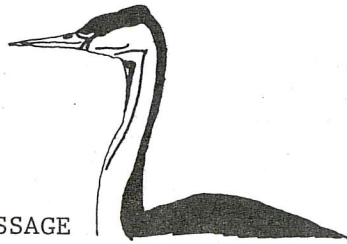
### BIRD STUDY GROUP OFF TO FRANCIS MARION

On May 7 we will again return to the Francis Marion Forest to look for Hawks, Kites, Warblers, Buntings, and Grosbeaks. The exact location will depend on where the most migrants can be found. This month's observation column will give you an idea what we might find in May.

Meet Saturday, May 7 at the Charleston Museum for another interesting half day of birding.

PERRY NUGENT





#### EDITOR'S MESSAGE

I'd like to give a plug for the program this month. The show explains why action is needed on the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act pending in Congress. The proposed law (H.R. 39) would create new national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests and wild and scenic rivers. It is supported by the Alaska coalition, a group of Alaska and national conservation organizations, including National Audubon.

An added plus: \*\*\*REFRESHMENTS\*\*\* will be served following the program.

BOBBIN HUFF

#### ALBINO MARTIN?

For the past 30 years I have placed gourds and houses up for the purple martin. They usually arrive here at my place on the 23rd of February of each year. At the present I have about 40 birds.

I have one male here now which has two white feathers on his back and one white tail feather. Is this unusual? Could there possibly be an albino (white) bird somewhere?

MILTON M. SPEAR  
Summerville

#### IMPORTANT HEARING

You are needed in Atlanta on May 14 to testify before the House Sub-Committee for Alaska National Interest Lands. This is your chance to stand up and say you care about saving Alaskan wildlands.

If you can't go to Atlanta, your testimony can still be read into the records. But in either case, you must write before May 7 to:

Honorable John Sieberling  
1324 Longworth House Off. Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

You must request to testify. And please do!

In cooperation with the Sierra Club we will try to arrange a workshop so you will be better informed, and car pools if you need a ride.

Look for a special mailing from Alaska contact person, Anne Craig. And try to come to the May program. The slides and narration on Alaska are excellent.

Call Anne Craig (577-9719) or Teddy Muckenfuss (795-4436) about the workshop.

This is vitally important to us all.

#### CHAMBERLAIN RESEARCH GRANT

Susan Roche received the E. Burnham Chamberlain Research Grant for \$250. The award will support her work on a review of the population status of the least tern and a comparative status of the species' nesting habitat.

#### DEPARTURES

DATE	SPECIES	DATE	SPECIES
1	Canada Goose	15	Gray-cheeked Thrush
	Black Duck		Ovenbird
	Green-winged Teal	16	Merlin
	Ruddy Duck	17	Cape May Warbler
2	Darkeyed Junco		Chestnut-sided Warbler
3	Hermit thrush		White-throated Sparrow
	Song Sparrow	18	Magnolia Warbler
4	Kirtland's Warbler		Red-throated Loon
5	House Wren	19	Gadwall
	Worn-eating Warbler		Upland Sandpiper
	White-crowned Sparrow		Swamp Sparrow
6	Robin	20	Common Snipe
7	Ringnecked Duck		Lesser Yellowlegs
	Whitetailed Kite	21	Swainson's thrush
8	Grasshopper Sparrow	22	Piping Plovers
9	Peregrine Falcon		Blackthroated Blue Warbler
	Golden Plover		Northern Waterthrush
10	Rubycrowned Kinglet	24	Veery
	Savannah Sparrow	25	Pectoral Sandpiper
11	Yellowbellied Sapsucker	26	Bobolink
	Orange-crowned Warbler		Red Crossbill
	Blackburnian Warbler	27	Purple Sandpiper
	Vesper Sparrow		Yellow Warbler
	Hooded Merganser		American Red Start
	Stilt Sandpiper		Leconte's Sparrow
	Wilson's Phalarope	28	Common Scoter
	Evening Grosbeak	29	Cliff Swallow
12	Great Blackbacked Gull		Mallard
13	Common loon		Bank Swallow
14	Roseate tern	Mid	Scarlet Tanager
	Yellow rumped Warbler		American Goldfinch
15	White winged Scoter		
	Short-billed Marsh Wren		

The following have been seen at least once in May:

Sooty Shearwater	Dickcissel
Whitetailed Tropic Bird	Nashville Warbler
Great White Heron	Wilson's Warbler
Caracara	Canada Warbler
Sandhill Crane	Western Tanager
Buffbreasted Sandpiper	Rosebreasted Grosbeak
Hudsonian Godwit	Tennessee Warbler



April 10	2 Swallowtailed Kites	Fairlawn Plantation	Paul Hamel & Perry Nugent
	American Bittern	" "	Paul Hamel & Perry Nugent
April 12	2 Least terns	Moore's Landing	Jay Shuler
April 14	Painted Bunting	2260 Dallerton Circle	Cris Nugent
April 15	Cape May Warbler	Fairlawn Plantation	Paul Hamel
April 16	2 Blackpoll Warblers	" "	Perry Nugent
	2 Swallowtailed Kites	" "	"
	Yellowbilled Cuckoo	" "	"
April 17	3 Worn-eating Warblers	" "	Jeremy James & Perry Nugent
	2 Ospreys	" "	Perry Nugent
	2 Broad-winged Hawks	" "	"
	2 Broad-winged Hawks	" "	"
	American Bittern	" "	"
	Baybreasted Warbler	" "	"
	Kentucky Warbler (dead)	Clayfield Road I'on Swamp	Gerald, Teddy & Michael Muckenfuss

Ted Beckett reports that there were two Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Magnolia instead of just one. They are both immature males. This species is found west of the Mississippi and is accidental on the East coast. There are only two records for South Carolina according to the records in Sprunt & Chamberlain's South Carolina Bird Life, 1970 revised edition. It was certainly a treat for me when I was able to see this species and add it to my life list.

SUSAN ROCHE

Where were your observations for April? It gets discouraging when I get so little from the members for this column. Send yours to me at 2260 Dallerton Circle, Charleston, S. C. 29407.

PERRY NUGENT

# BIRD ARRIVALS IN MAY

## ARRIVALS

DATE	SPECIES	DATE	SPECIES
2	White-rumped Sandpiper	5	Noddy terns
4	Black tern	12	Magnificent Frigatebird
5	Wilson's Petrel	17	Northern Phalarope
	Baird's Sandpiper	19	Audubon's Shearwater
	Wilson's Phalarope		

## SUMMER BIRD COUNT

The South Carolina Division of State Parks will sponsor a summer bird count on June 4 and 11, 1977. This count will act as a complement to the mid-winter bird count, which was held on January 29 and February 5 of this year. Counts will be conducted at fourteen state parks, selected to allow the greatest diversity, with seven parks to be censused on each weekend.

On Saturday, June 4, counts will be held at Aiken, Cheraw, Croft, Hunting Island, Sadlers Creek, Oconee and Santee State Parks. Saturday, June 11 will offer counts at Hickory Knob, Huntington Beach, Kings Mountain, Lynches River, Rivers Bridge, Sadlers Creek, Sesquicentennial and Table Rock State Parks.

These counts are conducted to gain insight into bird populations in our state parks. The data compiled on the counts will ultimately be used in nature interpretative programs in the state parks. A compiled listing of birds from all sites will be available to all participants.

Birders of all descriptions, expert and novice, are needed to assist. All interested persons should contact Brian Elliot Cassie or John Reid Clonts; Division of State Parks, Suite 113, 1205 Pendleton Street, Columbia, S. C. 29201; telephone 803/758-3622.

## THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

At the beginning of this month, two planets may be seen in the early evening sky, but by month's end, only one will still be in view. Jupiter, which we have followed throughout the winter, is now approaching the horizon just north of west, setting before it is completely dark, a little earlier each evening until it is lost in the bright glow of sunset.

By the time it is dark, Castor and Pollux in Gemini, the Twins, will be near the northwestern horizon, and Leo the Lion will be high in the west. Between these two groups, Saturn is located, shining with a steady, yellow glow.

When facing north about 8:00 p.m. at mid-month, sky-watchers should have no trouble finding the Big Dipper, now in the best position for observation. High in view, with the bowl and handle evenly balanced on the meridian, one can easily follow the "Pointers" to the North Star. Then, by tracing the handle and continuing a wide curve, the eye will pick up two bright stars: first, the fiery red Arcturus, and then the white star, Spica. Some fifteen degrees east of Spica, another planet awaits sky-watchers equipped with keen eyesight and good telescopes. Here is located Uranus, recognizable by its greenish color.

Until March of this year, it was believed that Saturn was unique in being surrounded by rings. Early in the month, astronomers at the Ames Research Center in California made a startling discovery from an airborne space laboratory, 41,000 feet above the Indian Ocean:



Uranus, also, is surrounded by rings! They are much thinner than Saturn's rings, and at present, nothing more is known about them. Uranus is more than a billion and a half miles away from the sun. From such a distance, tenuous details, overwhelmed by the bright light reflected from the surface of the large planet, could not be detected through the polluted atmosphere closer to the earth. In the months and years ahead, astronomers will be engaged in research to find the answers to this latest puzzle in the Solar System.

As Capella, in Auriga, sets in the northwest about 9:00 p.m. at mid-month in May, another bright star rises in the northeast. This is Vega, a blue-white star fifty times as bright as the sun, and 2 1/2 times as large in size. Its distance from Earth is 26 light-years, which means, of course, that when we view Vega, we are seeing it as it was 26 years ago.

From about 3:00 a.m. until dawn, the sky offers great reward to early risers, for the remaining three naked-eye planets will come into view. First, brilliant Venus, followed closely by Mars will appear above the eastern horizon, and on May 13, they will be in conjunction. About a week later, Mercury will rise in the early dawn, reaching its greatest western elongation on May 27.

Sky-watchers are reminded that, although Daylight Saving Time is now in effect, the hours mentioned in these articles are always according to Standard Time. During the next six months, therefore, all observations will have to be considered as an hour earlier than the clock would have you believe!

ELIZABETH D. SIMONS

BIRDING AT THE SEWER LAGOON

A dozen blue-winged teal nod their heads back and forth toward each other like dancers doing the Charleston, then tilt pink bottoms skyward to feed on the shallow pond bottom. Raucous clucks from comical red-nosed gallinules cause a glossy ibis to glance up from straining pond sediment to where snowy and cattle egrets drowse on the bank.

"Whatcha doin', lady?"  
"Watching the birds. Enjoying the day."

At the water's edge a greater yellow legs looks twice as tall as he preens above his reflection. A spotted sandpiper bobs hypnotically. Overhead a purple flash brings a martin for a drink.

"Oh, yeah! I like birds. I shoot them birds with my B-B gun!"

"You do, youthful person, and I shall wreak violence upon your small, uncivilized body." No, I didn't say it.

Honeysuckle flavors the cool morning air. Myrtles, willows, blackberry brambles, red sourgrass frame this idyllic picture.

He's still here. School-teacherly instincts take over. I let my young inquisitor look through the glasses. I explain how I've been checking 3 ponds since March 6 for my Citadel class. This oxidation pond, only a couple of hundred meters behind his school on Ft. Johnson Road., James Island, is my favorite. I then deliver my standard conserva-

Example: Markings of the male and female Yellow-Shafted Flicker appear to be the same except for the male's mustache. The mustache signals courtship behavior in the female. This is its releaser which acts as a signal for a particular action pattern. Females that are altered with painted mustaches are treated as males entering another males' territory. A pair of birds may be mated, but if man has given the female a good make-up job, her mate acts defensively to ward her off.

Learned behavior is influenced; i.e. if a bird has experience or practice, it will perform a task more efficiently. This concept is

illustrated well in bird song. The male White-Throated Sparrow will sing a song specific to its species but the song of a juvenile bird is not as developed as the adult. The bird will improve upon its skill in order to use its song in courtship.

The advantages of specific behavior are obvious. With minute differences in song, cross breeding is avoided. Also specific behavior tends to develop in a species so that it can adapt to its environment. The behavior of a species is vital to its survival in terms of reproduction, feeding, and its role in the food web.

Next month: Forms of innate behavior.

SUSAN ROCHE

OBSERVATIONS

DATE	SPECIES	LOCATION	OBSERVERS
March 27	Many Red eye Vireo	Fairlawn Plantation	Perry Nugent & Jeremy James
April 2	1 Philadelphia Vireo	" "	Perry Nugent
	Prothonotary Warbler	" "	Cris & Perry Nugent
	Acadian Flycatcher	" "	Perry Nugent
	Crested Flycatcher	" "	"
	Broad-Winged Hawk	" "	"
April 8	Summer Tanager	" "	"
	Ruby-Throated Hummingbird	Four Hole Swamp	Kevin Roche
April 9	3 Broad-Winged Hawks	I'on Swamp	Bird Study Group
	2 Swallowtailed Kites	"	"
	3 Yellow-Crowned Night Herons	"	"
	Summer Tanager	"	"
	Hooded Warbler	"	"
	Prothonotary Warbler	"	"
	Luna Moth	Charleston	Larry Thompson & Susan Roche
	4 Black-Necked Stilts	Drum Island	Larry Thompson & Susan Roche



tion lecture ("Love thy fellow animal as thy self.") and send my unimpressed friend on his way.

Actually, I've spent many pleasant hours around sewer lagoons in the last month and a half. Total species recorded around in or over the ponds have been 29 at the Fort Johnson lagoon, 44 at the Creighton Frampton pond and 47 at the Dills Bluff pond.

Though the ponds appear similar, they attract different species. The Dills Bluff pond is so near salt water that gulls rest there. The Fort Johnson High lagoon had 6 wood ducks and 2 least terns today, while the Frampton pond is always full of good things like green herons, snipes, and a kingbird just today.

My afternoon "nature breaks" after work provide a lovely semi-legitimate excuse for postponing housework. But remember that these ponds are snaky and they're posted. So don't ya'll come around "my" ponds.

(More to come.)

TEDDY MUCKENFUSS

#### INNATE AND LEARNED BEHAVIOR

Behavior is defined as what an animal does and how it responds to its surroundings. Another way to describe behavior is to ask questions. Why does a bird perform a certain behavior? Is it responding from experience and practice? Or, is it innate to the species? By innate I mean born with the instinctive capability to perform a particular task.

With this definition and these questions one can begin to study behavior. However, there are three prerequisites for the successful study of behavior. The first is intense observation. Only by careful and objective observation can an action which one observes be determined as innate or learned behavior. Secondly, patience is essential because behavior is not rapidly understood. Oftentimes repeated observations under unpleasant circumstances must be tolerated to obtain results that can be interpreted with certainty. An easier way of saying this is: how willing are you to stand in plough mud in thick *Spartina* for several hours with biting insects just to observe the behavior of a Wilson's plover feeding or a Little Blue Heron fishing? It is not always this difficult. At times it can be easy and enjoyable. But it is time consuming. Thirdly, you must remain objective in interpreting your observations. No matter how it appears in human terms, the bird's behavior is not human. It is avian behavior often specific to a particular species. Interpreting behavior in human terms is known as anthropomorphism, and we are easily tricked into thinking for the animal. This is not to say that we cannot appreciate the infinite beauty in nature. More often, when we perceive behavior as learned or instinctive it often enhances our appreciation of an entire species.

The instinctive or innate behavior is genetically inherited. The behavior associated with it occurs in Fixed Action Patterns which are released internally. Upon receiving the motivation via hormones or neurosensory responses, a bird or animal has a releasing stimulus from a particular signal.