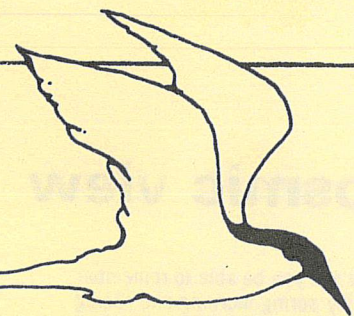


## reader's turn

p.o. box 504  
chas'n s.c. 29402  
charlestonnaturalhistorysociety



### southeast regional audubon conference

The National Audubon Society Southeastern Regional Conference has been scheduled for June 5-8, 1986. The conference will be held at Kanuga, an Episcopal conference center. Located in western North Carolina's scenic Blue Ridge Mountains near Hendersonville, Kanuga's extensive conference center and camp facilities are situated on 12,000 acres of woodland, criss-crossed by streams, ridges, and valleys.

Registration information and an agenda will be sent to all Southeastern Audubon members in early April.

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(Please use this form for new addresses, also, include old zip code)

Name (please print)

Address

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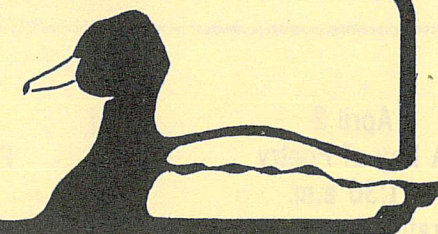
CHARLESTON AUD. SOC.

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7XCH

address change

# THE Lesser SQUAWK



charleston natural history society



your national audubon chapter

## birdathon '86

by virginia beach

Dear CNHS Member:

As Roger Tory Peterson has said, the birds are the great indicators of the health of our environment. One who watches birds can't help but become a watchdog of the environment.

Like the Christmas Count, the Audubon Birdathon watches birds. But it goes a step further. Birdathon simultaneously raises money for regional and local conservation projects, projects that safeguard our environment. Teachers and students remember well the Birdathon-sponsored "Birds in the Classroom" program last Spring and Fall that brought live birds into the classroom and brought classrooms out to the Charleston Museum Banding Station. The children's enthusiasm and many questions as they touched and looked at birds up close, demonstrated a heightened appreciation of the natural world around them, and possibly hope for the future of our environment.

The AUDUBON BIRDATHON is the National Audubon Society's annual fund-raising event for chapters and affiliated organizations. The BIRDATHON is similar to a walk-a-thon or bike-a-thon only instead of obtaining pledges of money for each mile you walk or bike, counters (birders)

recruit sponsors who agree to pledge a specific amount for each bird species the counter identifies in one 24-hour period. The suggested minimum pledge is 10¢ per species although pledges can be in any amount. Each counter gives their sponsors some idea of how many species they expect to identify (sponsors may stipulate a

maximum contribution). Counters then go birding with their local Audubon chapter or on their own, and keep a detailed field checklist, noting each species. After the BIRDATHON, counters call on each sponsor as soon as possible to report on their birding and to collect pledges.

Last year, we collectively saw 150 species of  
(more page 4)

## Be a part of Birdathon

Yes, I will sponsor\*: \_\_\_\_\_

at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per species.

Yes, I will be a counter (check box). ☐

Please send me the forms I need. ☐

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Whom to sponsor? Sponsor yourself or a friend or one or more of the following counties: (their Birdathon species average follows their names) Perry Nugent (138), Bruce Krucke (115), Jean Wattley (102), Ricky Bell (78), Peggy Eppig (112), Sally Newell (56), Charlie Walters (138), Cheryl Phillips (114), Helen Richardson (84), Betty O'Connor (54), Virginia & Dana Beach (104).

Clip and send to:  
CNHS Birdathon, P.O. Box 504, Chas., S.C. 29402

## april at a glance

April 2 — A Day of Poetry  
April 8 — CNHS Meeting, Dr. John Bull  
April 8 — Superfund, USC, Columbia  
April 12 — Francis Beidler Bird Count  
April 13 — Woodsbay Field Trip  
April 19 — Birdathon  
April 19 — Cypress Gardens Birding  
April 27 — Charleston Spring Bird Count

Boldface denotes CNHS sponsorship

volume xxxvii

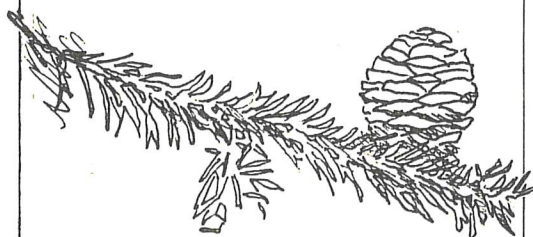
cnhs 577-7100

no. 4 april 1986



National Audubon's Leslie Dach will be in Columbia to talk on Superfund and the overview of the Resource Conservation Recovery Act. The program is co-sponsored by the Columbia Audubon Chapter, USC College of Health Sciences, League of Women Voters, Energy Research Foundation, SC Wildlife Federation and others. It will be held at 7:30, Gambrell Hall, Room 153. Call Reeser Manly at 797-3158 for further information.

Woodsbay State Park, located near Olanta, is a prime example of a Carolina bay. As always, we will be studying every aspect of the area. In particular, we will be focusing on the natural history of a Carolina bay. Bring lunch, dress for the field and plan for a day of fun!



Not to compete with CNHS Birdathon and because of preplanned conflicting dates, Cypress Gardens will have a special bird walk on April 19. Come for coffee and donuts. Birding will begin at 8 a.m. Participants (especially novices) are encouraged to include Cypress Gardens in their Birdathon even if their only sponsor is themselves! Species to look for will be parula, prothonotary, yellow throated and hooded warblers, red eyed and white eyed vireos, summer tanagers, wood ducks and, as always, the unexpected. Call 553-0515 for reservations.

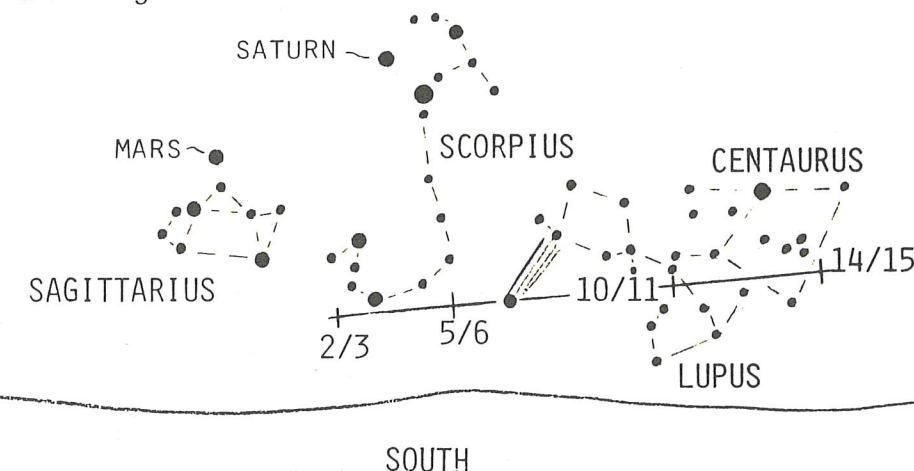
- APRIL**
- 2 Georgetown's Plantation Heritage  
7:00-9:00 p.m., BI
- 3 Hobcaw Barony Tour, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.,  
BNC
- 10 Hobcaw Barony Tour, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.,  
BNC
- 15 Landscape Painting with Oils, 7:00-9:00 p.m.,  
BI
- 16 Swamp Nightlife, 7:00-9:00 p.m., BNC
- 17 Hobcaw Barony Tour, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.,  
BNC
- 19 Landscape Painting with Oils, 9:00 a.m.-  
12:00 p.m., BI
- 24 Hobcaw Barony Tour, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.,  
BNC
- 24 Francis Marion National Forest, 9:00 a.m.-  
9:00 p.m., BI
- 26 Landscape Painting with Oils, 9:00 a.m.

Birding with a cause! (See related story and Birdathon form in this issue)

Join us for the rites of Spring. This count is always a high one for us with migration usually at its peak. Small groups will be assigned areas within the count range. If you've never missed a count or if you've never attended one, join us for this one. Call count co-ordinator Steve Compton at 577-4816 for further information.

by dr. bill kubinec  
the college of charleston

Ursa Major the Great Bear rides high over the pole star Polaris as darkness arrives. Most of us recognize the Big Dipper which is only about one-quarter of the Bear. The Dipper will be upside down, pouring its contents onto the Little Bear (Ursa Minor which contains Polaris) and the tail of Draco. Following the arch of the handle of the Big Dipper leads you to Arcturus and then onto Spica. These bright stars are members of Bootes the Herdsman and Virgo the Virgin, respectively, which are new additions to our evening sky show. Virgo is a backyard astronomer's dream because it is chuck full of bright galaxies. This is not a quirk of nature. Here resides the famous Virgo Cluster of galaxies. It is the nearest (65 million light years



Venus continues to rise higher and brighter in the evening skies. It will dominate the western skies until October achieving its best in June. An interesting project is to monitor the shape and size of Venus over this period. Currently it is

As usual our chapter volunteers made the series possible. Our chapters work enables almost 3500 students to see and hear the Audubon message. Many thanks to volunteers Bud Pollock, Brucke Krucke, Bob Grayson, Nancy Swan and Peggy Schachte.

Classes covering a broad spectrum of nature interests will be offered May 29-June 1, 1986. Contact: Mrs. Jeanette K. Hancock, Reistrar, 2419 Surrey Road, Birmingham, Ala. 35223 (205) 879-6072.

**The Lesser Squawk** is published ten times annually by the **Charleston Natural History Society, Inc.** Editor: Cheryl Phillips (899-7635), Circulation: Mary Neale Berkaw (556-7510), Membership: Donna Clark (795-3996), Conservation: Jeremy James

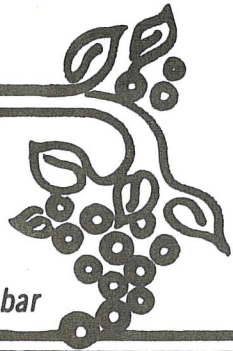
**The Charleston Natural History Society** assumed no responsibility for injuries, personal or otherwise, you may incur while attending Society sponsored activities and will not be held liable for such accidents. You attend at your own risk. Be sure to bring lunch and binoculars on all field trips. No pets or collecting allowed.



## focus on:

### spleenworts

by lin dunbar



The Charleston area is rich in evergreen plants, and the diminutive ebony spleenwort, *Asplenium platyneuron*, is one of them. Its shining dark stems prominently stand out through the undergrowth of fields and woods, and the fern will often create a soft silhouette against rocks and roots—its favorite habitat. Ebony spleenwort also grows well in pinelands, thickets and roadbanks, and is a common fern of Charlestowne Landing and Palmetto Islands County Park.

Ebony spleenwort is a graceful fern, yet the brown-blackness and rigidity of its stem create a feeling of endurance and strength. The fronds prefer facing the sun, and will twist their stems in order to do so.

As ferns go, *Asplenium platyneuron* is a little plant. It can reach a height of 18 inches, but because its leaves are slender and arching and it often grows in small colonies, the fern appears much tinier. Leaflets appear alternate on the stipe, are finely toothed and oblong in shape. The sterile fronds are recumbent and surround the erect fertile frond. Fruitdots are also oblong, grow nearer the midvein than the margin, and are covered with a silvery indusium which withers upon maturity.

*Asplenium*, a Greek word meaning spleen, was named by Linnaeus in 1753. Some authorities claim the name comes from the shape of the leaflets, and others, like the 16th century herbalist, Gerard, ascribe healing properties to a decoction of the fern in cases of enlarged spleens or obstructions of the spleen or liver.

*Asplenium platyneuron* can be grown in a fern garden or on the windowsill, though a soil rich in nutrients will kill the plant. The willowy, gently curving stems also add a special enchantment to a hanging basket.

There are two other spleenworts which grow in our area, but these are rare and very difficult to find.

*Asplenium resiliens*, or blackstem spleenwort, is smaller than *A. platyneuron*, and only reaches a height of 2 to 12 inches. The leaflets are opposite on the stipe, and the leaf margins are shallowly toothed, giving the leaflet an undulating appearance. This fern grows on marl and limestone outcrops, and several colonies have been found by Dr. Richard Porcher in Berkeley and Charleston counties.

*Asplenium heteroresiliens* is similar in size and habitat to blackstem spleenwort, except that the leaflets are more sharply toothed and appear only on the upper surface on the leaflet. Distinguishing between *resiliens* and *heteroresiliens* is left to the

taxonomists who must count number and distinguish shapes of the spores to be certain of species. These two ferns frequently hybridize within the *Asplenium* family, which makes identification even more difficult.

When a fern foray has you trying to distinguish between these three species, look first to see if the leaflets are alternate or opposite on the wirey,

dark stem. If they are alternate, you can be fairly confident you've got *platyneuron*. If the leaflets are opposite and the habitat is limestone, please call me (571-1379). We are still recording the appearance and frequency of *A. resiliens* and *A. heteroresiliens*.

Thanks always for your help and interest.

50th Anniversary

## Audubon Camps and Ecology Workshops

### Come join us in a celebration of nature ...

... as we embark on Audubon's 50th year of excellence in environmental education and field natural history studies.

The magic has been working now since the founding of the first Audubon Camp in Maine in 1936.

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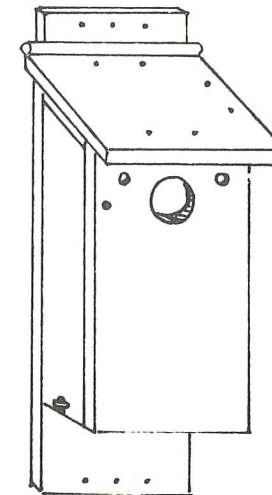
## conservation

### vanishing habitat

by morgan mcclure

Many of us read the article on old growth forest in the recent *Audubon* — "The Decadent Forest." These stately forests are coming under the ax, and as a result critical habitat is disappearing. The northern spotted owl, Puerto Rican parrot, and our own red-cockaded woodpecker all require these old growth forests for their very survival.

Express your concern about old growth forest. Write Senator John Chafee, (R. RI) and request that he hold a hearing to investigate the environmental effects of timbering these critical habitats. Remember, excessive cutting of old growth bottomland hardwoods early this century caused the demise of the ivory-billed woodpecker. Please don't let this happen again.



### bluebirds across america

**CORRECTION:** The price of the bluebird boxes, as printed in the March *Squawk*, is incorrect. The price should have read: \$8 per box plus \$2 for shipping. You'll agree, however, that even at \$10, it's a great deal. You can still get yours in time for the nesting season. To obtain your box(es), send your request and \$10 per box to: Bluebirds Across America, National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1268, Charleston, SC 29402.

### state park jeopardy

by terrence larimer

As some of you know, a recent Supreme Court decision regarding payment for any overtime by state employees has put a severe strain on South Carolina's state park budget. Such a strain that some parks have closed for two days a week and others have reduced their hours of operation. Until now, the daily operation of 40 state parks has been dependent on a 56-hour average work week for the park employees. The cut back to 40 hours, or variations that require overtime pay, cannot be accomplished without additional money for park personnel.

To keep the park system's properties and 75,000 acres open to the public year-round, 71 additional park employees and funds for seasonal employees are needed at a total cost of

\$1,533,045. This is the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism's number one budget request for the general assembly for 1986-1987. If the request fails to be approved, PRT will be forced to take more drastic actions in terms of imposing further state park closings and reduced hours and services throughout the state park system. You, the park user, will be the one to suffer as well as the parks themselves.

If this situation causes you and your fellow chapter members concern, you should contact your state legislators. Urge them to support increased funding for our state park system. If your legislators don't hear from you they may just assume that parks aren't important to enough people to warrant increased funding. If your

representative is on the House Ways and Means Committee, it is especially important for you to contact them within the next week and a half. This committee is the first hurdle that increased funding must clear on its way to approval by the general assembly.

Robert R. Woods (D)  
Box 2217, Chas., S.C. 29403  
W-723-9929 H-577-2687  
Robert L. Helmly (D)  
Drawer 1194  
Moncks Corner, SC 29461  
Drawdy N. Holt (D)  
Box 70093, N. Chas., S.C. 29406  
W-744-2592 H-747-1779

### santee canal

— a true sanctuary

by cheryl phillips

Many thanks to Jerry Stafford of Santee Cooper for securing boats and having enough water released from the dam to carry those boats through the Santee Canal Sanctuary. The sanctuary, owned by Santee Cooper but not yet open to the public, is a jewel to be preserved and revered for many generations. On March 16, three boat loads of CNHS "field-trippers" had the opportunity to see this diamond in the rough.

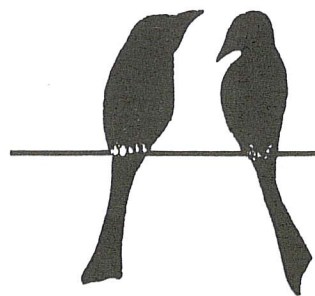
Possibilities are endless for this area. The historic! Stoney Landing site (proposed interpretive center) will be equipped to accommodate

road and river traffic. From there, visitors can depart to explore the 18th Century reclaimed canal from miles of walking trails and boardwalks (a la Francis Beidler Forest).

The highlight of our trip was a slow ride through Biggins Creek dodging cypress knees, listening to spring's first white eyed vireos and parula warblers and watching a pair of osprey at their nest.

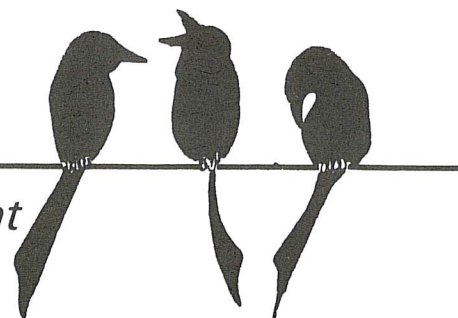
An impressive time was had by all. It isn't often that we get the VIP treatment.





## observations

by perry nugent



DATE	OBSERVATION	LOCATION	OBSERVERS	DATE	OBSERVATION	LOCATION	OBSERVERS
1/20	1 Great White Heron	Rochelle Plantation, N. Santee River	Tommy Graham	2/22	**1 Piping Plover	Huntington Beach St. Pk.	Many Observers
2/8	1 Spotted Sandpiper	McClellanville	" "	20 Purple Sandpipers	" "	" "	" "
2/15	100 Evening Grosbeaks	" "	" "	150 Bonaparte's Gulls	" "	" "	" "
	Many Redthroated Loons	Folly Beach	" "	5 Glossy Ibis	Santee Delta, US 17	P. Nugent, C. Walters	" "
	Many Common Loons	" "	" "	1 Barn Owl	2260 Dallerton Cr.	P. Nugent	" "
	35 Northern Gannets	" "	" "	25 Pine Siskins	" "	" "	" "
	15,000+ Lesser Scaup	" "	" "	100+ Purple Finches	" "	" "	" "
	35 Bonaparte's Gulls	" "	" "	5000+ American Coots	Bluff Plantation	Many Observers	" "
	**1 White Winged Scoter	" "	Perry Nugent, C. Walters	25 Golden Crowned Kinglets	" "	" "	" "
	**1 i.m. Common Eider	" "	P. Nugent, C. Walters, B. Pollock, J. Poe	2 Hermit Thrushes	" "	P. Nugent, C. Walters	" "
2/22	Many Redthroated Loons	Huntington Beach St. Pk.	Many Observers	75 Evening Grosbeaks	Cypress Gardens	P. Nugent, E. Lowndes	" "
	Many Common Loons	" "	" "	1 Bald Eagle	" "	C. Phillips, J. Hughes	" "
	75 Northern Gannets	" "	" "	1 Brown Creeper	Cooper River	C. Phillips, M. Hilton	" "
				2 Osprey	Berkeley Country Club Estates	C. & E. Phillips	" "
				6 Wild Turkeys		C. Phillips	" "

\*\*—rare or uncommon

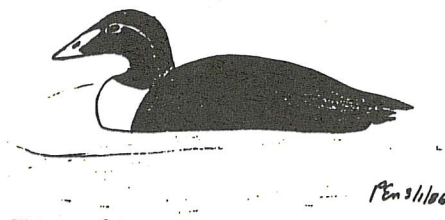
### comments by perry

**Common Eider** — On 2/15/86 in good sunlight from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Perry Nugent, Charlie Walters, Bud Pollock and Jeff Poe watched an eider feeding with 58 buffleheads around a rock groin near the last boardwalk over the dunes near the Coast Guard Station at Folly Beach, S.C. This large duck had a dark chocolate colored head and body. Its breast was white and the buffy pink bill with large frontal shield extending toward the eye. We studied this rare bird through 15-25X spotting scopes while reading 3 field guides for about 2 hours. This bird was last seen 2/20/86. The following is a drawing of this immature male Common Eider.

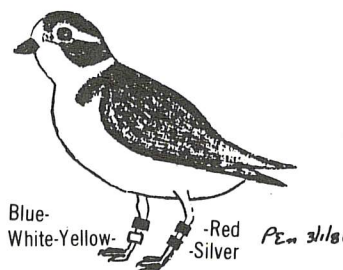
**Corrections:** for the March Lesser Squawk column  
1/25 — Pomarine Falcon should be Pomarine Jaeger.  
Colorbanded semipalmated plover should read colorbanded piping plover. This bird was still at Huntington Beach State Park on 2/22. The following is a drawing of that bird showing the bands.

12/26 should be 1 not 10 Northern (Baltimore) Oriole, also 1 Northern Harrig 1/12

As I write this report spring migration is starting therefore I expect to receive more sighting next month. Send yours to Perry Nugent, 2260 Dallerton Circle, Charleston, S.C. 29407.



Immature male Common Eider  
2/15/86, Folly Beach, SC



Color banded Piping Plover 1/4 and 1/22/86  
Huntington Beach State Park, SC

### ... birdathon

(from page 1)

birds and raised approximately \$3,000. The year before, we raised just under a thousand dollars. Won't you help us continue to top the year past by sponsoring one of the birders listed in the pledge form? Or by obtaining pledges and being a counter yourself the weekend of April 19 & 20, or any 24 hr. period before May 1st. It's great fun and so worthwhile. Contact Virginia Beach, Birdathon Chairman, 683 Folly Rd., Charleston, SC 29412, tel. # 762-1947 for sponsor forms and more information.

**Birdathon Field Trip**—Sat. April 19, 1986. Meet at East Cooper Plaza at 7 a.m. Bring bag lunch. Virginia & Dana Beach will lead. Beginner Birdathoners are encouraged, as well as the old hats!



## backyard birder

by bruce krucke

All the notes and calls from readers are very encouraging for me. The Harders reported a flock of 12 evening grosbeaks at the Van Vrenken's in Pimlico throughout February. We've had a few (occasionally as many as a dozen) every day. After saying there were so few pine siskins this year, I got several calls from people in Summerville who have hordes of siskins—the Scoggins and Wilsons among them. The Crocketts in Kings Grant have common yellow throats at their suet feeder. The Suttons had a very brief visit by a scarlet tanager (!) in mid-February at their Ashborough feeder. A rewarding note from Miriam and Tom Herbert proves persistence pays off. They've been putting seed out at their downtown Church Street home for ten years and finally have both gold and purple finches! The Dunbars had to quickly put up their bluebird box when they noticed a pair investigating their squirrel box. I have to brag on Kings Grant. Chad Freeman, the young Eagle Scout who put up 26 bluebird boxes in our green areas last year, has cleaned and de-bugged them for us this year—above and beyond the call. Ac-

tually when you read this, it'll be time to put out your hummingbird feeders. Wash them thoroughly with a mild bleach solution to be sure there's no mildew and use a four-to-one water and sugar solution. If there are red flowers near the feeder, the hummers will discover it sooner.

A feeder suggestion from the RSPB of England has proved successful. I filled a mesh bag with unsalted peanuts and hung it where squirrels couldn't get at it. For the first few days, it was ignored, but now the titmouses (that still sounds awkward!), chickadees, and pine warblers are clinging to the mesh and packing at the peanuts. You can almost see their glee when occasionally a whole peanut comes through the netting! It's supposed to attract woodpeckers, too. A more permanent and squirrel resistant peanut feeder can be made from a cylinder of quarter-inch hardware cloth stapled to a wooden base with a mayo jar or similar top.

The object of this month's trivia is (hopefully) not a backyard bird, but one we all see often: the turkey vulture. It's such a successful scavenger

that it can maintain itself in the greatest variety of habitats and enjoys a larger geographic range than any other kind of vulture. Turkey vultures do a good job of cleaning up road kills for us and in the early days were seen all over Charleston streets, quite boldly, cleaning up the garbage. Too bad we can't teach them to do something with the fast food containers that people must throw along our roadsides.

In answer to those who have wondered, I am a she-Bruce. It's my middle name, but what I've always been called.

Start watching now for pairing and nesting in your yards and let me know what you see. In Steve Mazlowski's film which he showed recently to the seventh grade in Charleston County, one of the most interesting segments was about arobins and cardinals sharing a nest underneath a suburban Cincinnati side porch. They fledged seven young between them!

Bruce Krucke, 101 Old Tavern, Summerville, S.C. 29483.

## bird movements in april

### arrivals

Date	Species
1	Solitary Sandpiper
	Swainson's Warbler
	Yellow Warbler
	Blackpoll Warbler
3	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
4	Cliff Swallow
	Indigo Bunting
6	Blue Grosbeak
7	Worm-eating Warbler
	Kentucky Warbler
8	Sandwich Tern
10	Purple Gallinule Bobolink
12	Black-throated Blue Warbler
13	Gray-cheeked Thrush
15	Cape May Warbler
	American Redstart
17	Magnolia Warbler
18	Blue-winged Warbler
19	Gray Kingbird
21	Swainson's Thrush
22	Red Phalarope
23	Black-billed Cuckoo
24	Chestnut-sided Warbler
27	Kirkland's Warbler
	Bank Swallow
Early	Scarlet Tanager
Mid	Gull-billed Tern

The following are rare birds seen during April: White-tail Kite, Black-necked Stilt, Golden-winged Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Dickcissel, Larkbunting and Lapland Longspur.

### departures

Date	Species
2	Whistling Swan
3	Old Squaw
5	Virginia Rail
6	Glaucous Gull
7	Rough-legged Hawk
9	Golden Crowned Kinglet
11	Northern Oriole
13	Henslow's Sparrow
14	Brown Creeper
	Phoebe
16	Common Merganser
18	Canvasback
20	Common Goldeneye
21	Pine Siskin
22	Water Pipit
24	Bufflehead
	Winter Wren
26	Blue Goose
	Parasitic Jaeger
	Louisiana Waterthrush
27	Broadwinged Hawk
	Solitary Vireo
	Purple Finch
28	Whip-poor-will
	Red-breasted Nuthatch
	Palm Warbler
29	Rusty Blackbird
30	Pintail
	Blue-winged Warbler
Early	Great Scoter
Late	Short-eared Owl

## yucca

by pat leonard

Spanish Bayonet, its common name, sounds like a threat, but, oh! when the blossoms came, rising out of the center three feet high, creamy bell buds reaching for the sky, searching for Heaven with splendid accord so that some have called them Candles of the Lord.

from *Seashells and Laughing Gulls - Songs of a Sea Island* Winston - Derek Publishers, Inc., 1984

### vacation with credit

Dr. Dennis Forsythe, ornithologist at The Citadel is offering his Advanced Field Ecology Course to the deserts of the southwest. The course will be offered during the second summer session July 14-August 15 with travel time from July 20-August 9.

The focus of the trip will be the birdlife of the southwest desert-mountain region. The course offers 5 hours of graduate or undergraduate credit and is a must for any birder who has dreamed of seeing coppery tailed trogons, vermilion flycatchers and red faced warblers. Call Dennis Forsythe at 792-7877 for further information.

