

reader's turn

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



obituary

Florence Simpson Padgett, of Edisto Island, died on Saturday, March 18, in Chapel Hill, N.C., after suffering several strokes. At her request, her body was donated to the University of North Carolina Medical School.

Miss Padgett was born in Smoaks, June 4, 1914, the daughter of Louis C. Padgett and Minnie Jones Padgett. She graduated from Peabody College as a Home Economist and worked in that capacity with the Red Cross until returning to Walterboro to live with her mother and to operate the Home Print Shop. As her mother entered her eighties, always in search of ways to maintain the dignity of her life, Florence encouraged her to learn the art of hooking rugs. Mrs. Padgett completed 100 rugs before her death at age 89. In 1970, Miss Padgett moved to Edisto Island where she ran San Russ Point, a Fishing Camp and Camp Ground, for over ten years. She then retired to Fishing Creek where she enjoyed fishing, making shrimp nets, and occasionally baking "Sour Dough" Bread for Trinity Episcopal Church events.

Considering Miss Padgett's great interest in conservation and love of Edisto Island, the family suggests that memorials may be sent to the Edisto Turtle Program. Contributions will be accepted by the Charleston Natural History Society, P.O. Box 504, Charleston 29402.

Charleston Natural History Society
P O Box 504
Charleston, S C 29402

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

membership form

Check the membership you desire. All members receive Audubon magazine six times a year.

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Supporting/\$100.00	Student/\$18.00
Contributing/\$250.00	Senior Citizen/\$21.00
Senior Citizens Family/\$23.00	

Mail to:
Charleston Natural History Society
P. O. Box 504
Charleston, S.C. 29402

Make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.

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

audubon international youth camp in virginia environment as a window to the world

As recent media coverage so clearly portrays, environment links people together far and wide. National Audubon Society is pleased to announce a new environmental education youth camp which focuses on this global aspect of environmental concern and opens a window to the world.

Co-sponsored with Legacy International, the Audubon Youth Camp in Virginia gives young people ages 11-14 a special chance to learn about themselves, about nature, and how they relate to our natural environment by exploring both local environmental wonders and global relationships. Campers also "travel" to different countries of the world through exploration, discussions, and projects with our international staff and guests.

The expansive beauty of nature unfolds before our eyes as participants hike on the historic Appalachian Trail, observe pond creatures and stream life, and explore the famous Dixie Caverns.

We'll also discover how connected the nations of the world are through a closer look at how a chocolate bar is made, and how exhaust fumes from a car in New York City affect U.S. relations with Canada. Together we will develop planetary awareness, make lasting friendships, and most importantly, learn what each of us can do to preserve the natural environment. Evenings are filled with cultural festivals, star gazing, night hikes, and fun.

This experience will broaden horizons for camp graduates and illumine the course of their lives for years to come.

Dates: August 17-26, 1989

Cost: \$750

For information and applications write:
Audubon Ecology Camps & Workshops
National Audubon Society
613 Riversville Road
Greenwich, CT 06831

"Heretical as it may sound, some uses of virgin paper can be more damaging to wildlife than plastic substitutes."

see page 5

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THE Lesser SQUAWK

charleston natural history society



your national audubon chapter

comin' around again ... an adventure in recycling by cheryl phillips

I prefer the confines of my art studio. In accomplishing various tasks, however, I am often forced to venture into the REAL world. On these occasions I plan my routes carefully to save precious time and valuable fossil fuel.

Such was the case one morning in late March when I loaded the car with art and headed for a show in Beaufort. I was excited not so much about the show, but about the load of cereal boxes, cardboard, newspaper, plastic milk jugs, aluminum cans and glass that I had been actively collecting since January and had now packed among the art.

It began with a New Year's resolution. (The only way I seem to accomplish anything!) My

resolution for 1989 — RECYCLE!

In the laundry room of our new home (which was all my resolution for 1988), I placed 2 recycling boxes — one for cans, one for paper. I informed my husband and patrolled our garbage cans regularly until he was acclimated to our new, more environmentally conscientious lifestyle.

By March, "Box-O'-Cans" was bulging with crumpled Bud Lite and Diet Coke. "Box-O'-Paper" was overflowing with now-newsless Couriers and collapsed cereal boxes.

In the meantime, I had been reading, making phone calls, and talking with those "in-the-know", for whom recycling had long been a way of life. My

findings in a nut shell:

1—Many recyclers will accept aluminum cans.

2—Paper Stock Dealers on Braswell St. will recycle old newspapers, cardboard and some other paper products.

3—Nobody wants "tin" foil or cans (difficult and costly to recycle).

4—Al Mascaro at Port Royal Oil Co. in Beaufort (524-2082) is the **only** recycler in the area that will take glass and plastic milk jugs.

I found Al at the Oil Co. on Ribault Rd. He took my refuse and gave me \$3.57. I bought lunch with my \$3.57. I got a great feeling of satisfaction and self-worth from my recycling.

ed note: Perhaps Cheryl's combining her art trip with environmental concerns was rewarded - she won an award at the Beaufort Assoc. show for her woodcut, "Woods' Edge". Congratulations Cheryl!

Congratulations Cheryl!

what can you do?

by cheryl phillips

Like it or not, we are all consumers. We use what we need or like or want and discard the rest.

Americans are the most notorious "users" of all. This country was founded on the basis of freedom, opportunity and limitless wealth. Admirable in concept, this attitude has led to habitual wastefulness, an "eat, drink and be merry" syndrome, and "there's more where that came from" policy.

However, as we crowd our country (and earth) with more people, homes, automobiles, disposable diapers, fast food, etc., we are realizing our space, as boundless as it once seemed, is quickly filling to capacity. Many of our resources are, indeed, nonrenewable and our air and water are, sadly, turning on us for the disservice we have paid to them in this age of industrialization.

"Overwhelming!" I often think to myself. Then, I am reminded: "Think globally, act locally!" I cannot, with a wave of my hand, clean up the entire world, but I can clean up my own act. If everyone else would do the same, it wouldn't be heaven, but what a neater, cleaner place we would have!

Here's how to start:

1—Utilize reusable items to their fullest extent. In the kitchen, for example, use real glasses and dishes and terry cloth towels instead of paper ones. It may mean washing (recycling

water) more frequently, but that's the lesser of two evils!

2—In the grocery store, buy products in paper or glass containers rather than plastic or styrofoam when offered the option. Bypass the "handy, new and improved!" squeezable plastic ketchup, mustard, jelly and peanut butter containers for the recyclable glass ones. When you must buy disposable dinnerware, choose paper instead of plastic or styrofoam. If you can't find paper, ask the store manager. Educate him, if necessary, in the matter. If your pleas fall on deaf ears, find another grocer. Insist on paper or biodegradable plastic bags. If you have no alternative but to take a plastic bag, remember — it is reusable!

3—Voice your concern! Don't stop at the local level. Write letters to the corporate offices, as well as your elected representatives. Suggest to the grocers and fast food chains a whole advertising campaign from an ecological stand point. It would be a refreshing change of pace from the usual trash with which we're assaulted.

4—When you must buy plastic, reuse it if at all possible! Pimento cheese and cool whip containers have many talents! They can be used in packing lunches and keeping food in the fridge for instance, instead of nasty old saran wrap, aluminum foil and zip lock bags. Be creative!

5—Some fast food chains claim they use only "American Beef". Make sure it's North American Beef. Also, make a note of those who use more styrofoam. Develop a taste for those who don't. I often take my fast food paper products home and put them in my paper recycling box. For dessert — when you treat yourself to ice cream (or you yuppies enjoy the frozen yogurt,) indulge in a double scoop, dipped or sprinkled cone! Enjoy every last bite and don't worry about where to throw the cup!

6—Many "scraps" of paper and old envelopes can be reused for scratch paper, grocery lists, notes, etc. I have several cute and handy holders that I keep full of this scratch paper.

7—RECYCLE! Unfortunately, "tin" cans, glass and other disposables are not recyclable in our area but aluminum cans and paper can go back from whence they came! An acquaintance of mine recently got \$90.00 for his 2 year cache of beer cans!!! Recycle on a personal level. The impact will be greater, however, if you recycle with a group or neighborhood as a clean up/fund raiser project. Call city and county government offices. Inquire about a recycling program. Inform them of your interest in recycling glass as well as paper and aluminum. Make your voice heard!

8—Disposable diapers have created many

See Recycle, Page 5

volume xxx

cnhs 577-7100

no. 5 may 1989

address change

may's calendar

Tuesday, May 9, 1989
8:00 P.M.

MUSC Inst. of Psych. Bldg.
President St.
Enter Parking Lot G on Bee St.
Dr. William Harms
The Forested Wetlands of the
Southeast

Dr. Bill Harms of the U.S. Forest Service will speak on the many types of forested wetlands in the Southeast. Dr. Harms is the project leader at the Charleston Forestry Science Laboratory where research is conducted on the silviculture of coastal plain forest types. Wetland forests, the emphasis for several years, will continue to be studied.

A graduate of Penn State University, Dr. Harms received his Ph.D. from Duke. He has been with the Forest Service since 1956 and in Charleston since 1962.

DILL WILDLIFE PRESERVE

Saturday, May 20th

9:00 a.m., Riverland Dr.

The Charleston Museum is conducting tours of the Dill Wildlife Preserve during May. They have arranged for Dr. Julian Harrison to lead CNHS on a outing featuring the birds and other wildlife of the preserve. While there was a lot of controversy about other aspects of this property last year the Charleston Museum is making progress creating this preserve and making it available to the public. This will be an excellent chance to see this area and should be good birding. Meet at 9 a.m. at the entrance on Riverland Drive.

MEDWAY PLANTATION

Sunday, May 21st

8:00 a.m., Northwoods Mall

Join us for this unique opportunity to visit one of the most historic plantations in the Charleston area. Built in 1686 to produce bricks for building many of the other plantations and homes in Charleston, Medway now manages its 7000 acres primarily for timber. We will be lead by Robert Hortman, noted bird carver and manager of the plantation. Mr. Hortman will also give us an update on his acid rain monitoring at Medway. Meet at 8 a.m. in the Northwoods Mall parking lot at the Highway 52 end near Sears. Bring binoculars, field guides and insect repellent.

national audubon elections

The CNHS's Executive Committee will vote on chapter nominated candidates to the National Audubon Board of Directors at the June Board meeting.

If you want some input into the Committee's selections and would like information on the election, candidate biographies, etc. please call Terrence Larimer at 754-2212.

chapter elections in may

Annual chapter elections are scheduled for the May membership meeting, April 11th. The tentative slate of nominations which will be presented to the membership are as follows:

President — Terrence Larimer
Vice-President — Hayes Patterson
Secretary — Cindy McDougal
Treasurer — Hazel Johnson
Executive Committee —

Hal Curry
Wister Bjorksten
Eve Gentieu
Julian Harrison
Bobbin Huff
Rose Mitchell
Laura Moses
Dusty Rhodes

If you wish to make any additional nominations for these positions or suggestions for chapter committee positions please call Terrence Larimer at 745-2212.

Nominations will be accepted from the floor before the vote.



"I'm not sure what that was, but put it down as an endangered species."

COASTAL PROTECTION WORKSHOP

Join national, regional and state conservationists in a day-long workshop on proposed additions to the protective Coastal Barrier Resources System along North Carolina and the South Atlantic. The U.S. Congress will soon consider a proposal to add another 364,000 acres along the South Atlantic coast to the System, protecting coastal areas from taxpayer-funded development that destroys important wildlife and fisheries habitat, impairs water quality, and reduces public access to the coast. Hosted by the Coast Alliance, National Wildlife Federation, and the North Carolina Coastal Federation, the workshop will be from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 1989, at the Duke University Marine Lab in Beaufort, North Carolina. A \$10 registration fee covers the cost of lunch and all printed materials. For more information, contact Melissa Sagun, Coast Alliance, 1536 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (202/265-5518,) or Todd Miller, North Carolina Coastal Federation, 1832 J. Bell Lane (Ocean), Newport, NC 28570 (919/393-8185).

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the enigmatic sponge

by jean e. holmes

A strong nor'easter had washed the beaches and left behind the exposed skeletal remains of thousands of the sea's hidden creatures. Lying among the debris were the remains of some of the most misunderstood life forms in the sea. For centuries the sponges were an enigma to laymen and scientists alike.

The question is — are sponges plants or animals? Like a plant they grow fixed to one spot. They have no sense organs, no legs or antennae, and no animal-like internal organs. On the other hand, sponges feed in an animal-like manner. They propagate with a type of egg cell typical to animals and their method of development certainly belongs to the animal kingdom.

The ancient Greeks, credited with the discovery of the sponges, thought that they had the puzzle all worked out. Sponges, they said, were "zoofitons" — a word meaning half plant-half animal. The centuries came and went but still the quandary continued. It wasn't until 1825 that scientists were finally convinced of the true nature of sponges.

Sponges were finally placed in the wide world of the animal kingdom. They are classified as invertebrates — animals without a backbone. In effect, the sponge is like a great animated filtering system. Feeding and waste disposal take place by the exchange of water through almost microscopic pores covering the entire surface of the sponge. Plankton are taken in with the water and are digested by the enzymes within collar cells that line the internal channels of the sponge. Waste products are propelled out of the same collar cells. It is a simple but highly effective feeding system that allows the sponge to live a sessile (attached) existence.

Actually, during the larvae stage the sponge is capable of some self-propulsion. But once the adult stage is reached the animal attaches itself to the sea bottom or perhaps to another invertebrate such as a clam or oyster. There are some types of sponges that secrete tiny drops of acid that dissolve the hard shells of bivalves on the corals and limy rocks on the oceans bottom.

Sponges come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. They may live as a single animal or in a large colony. They cover almost the entire spectrum as far as color is concerned. Most sponges are perfectly harmless but some can be quite toxic and will produce severe stings. In general, be cautious of brightly colored sponges — reds and oranges.

Because they may vary greatly in appearance, even within the same species, sponges are difficult to identify. The only accurate way to determine the species of a sponge is through the use of a microscope. Classification is made according to skeletal structure, the shape of its minute spicules, or the structure of the canal system.

The next time you find a sponge washed up on the beach take the time to show it a bit of respect and appreciation. Though it might not look impressive, it is capable of doing a lot more than just washing the rings off the side of your tub!

plastic or paper bags???? the great debate

by Dr. Jan Beyea, a nuclear physicist, Audubon's senior policy scientist and author of 'the Audubon Energy Plan.'

Here is a test for environmentalists: You have just paid for your groceries at a supermarket and you are offered a choice between a plastic and a paper bag. Which one do you take?

If you picked plastic, you failed the test. As is well known to environmentalists, plastic bags are contaminating the oceans. They degrade very slowly, they are non-renewable, and their production results in pollution.

So is paper the answer? Nope. If you picked paper, you also failed the test. The brown paper bags used in most supermarkets are made from virgin paper, without contributions from recycled paper. Papermaking pollutes the water, releases dioxin, contributes to acid rain, and costs trees. Much of our paper comes from so-called "superior" trees grown with non-renewable fossil fuel fertilizers in intensively managed and sterile environments. All in all, it is not clear that papermaking as practiced today is even a sustainable enterprise.

Here's the correct answer: You pull out your personal carrier, just as consumers do in Europe, pack your groceries, and walk out the door. You have consumed neither a plastic nor a paper bag.

Although most of us concerned about the environment dislike plastic, we have a special responsibility to point out the dangers of wasteful uses of paper. Heretical as it may sound, some uses of virgin paper can be more damaging to wildlife than some plastic substitutes. As bans on plastic are proposed in more and more communities. Audubon members have a duty to be "a voice of reason," ensuring that such bans are carefully crafted so as to really help the environment, including the forest environment.

Here's the advice I give callers who are seeking guidance on how to choose between plastic and paper products: If the item is to be used near ocean coastlines and can be expected to enter the water, always choose the paper alternative. If inland, and information is available on plastic content, make a decision as follows: reject polyvinyl chloride (PVC) because of the high levels of pollution inherent in its manufacture. PVCs can often be identified by their uses: thick containers that are transparent and hold oils, such as salad dressing. "PET" plastics are also problematic for the same reasons as PVC. PET plastics are used for containers that need to hold carbonation, as in seltzer and pop bottles.

What about styrofoam, the most easily identified plastic? Reject it outright, at least until manufacturers have made good their promise to eliminate the use of ozone-depleting gases.

Of all the plastics, polyethylene has the least environmental impact. It is competitive with paper for many uses. Most thin plastics, including bags and baggies, are made of polyethylene or similar compounds. Most cheap-looking, translucent plastics, such as cold cups, also are made

of polyethylene.

In choosing between plastic and paper, it is important to know whether the product in question is likely to end up in an incinerator. Although polyethylene burns more cleanly than white (bleached) paper, PVC, polystyrene, and PET — with their more complex structures — do not. They have a high probability of releasing noxious compounds during combustion. Thus, if the product under discussion is to be burned after entering the waste stream, only polyethylene can compete with a paper alternative.

If the plastic substitute has not been ruled out so far, apply a weight test. With the exception of PVC plastic, and possibly PET, most consumer plastics have been produced with less pollution than paper on a per pound basis. Thus, to determine which product was manufactured with the least pollution, compare their weights, either from information provided on the labels or by weighing the packaging of the product directly. Choose the plastic alternative only if it weighs the same or less. In this way, it is almost sure to be the least polluting.

How does the weight test work out in practice in the supermarket? Styrofoam cups tend to weigh more than paper alternatives, so paper cups win the contest. For cold cups, the situation is different. Translucent polyethylene cups now being sold can be washed a few times, giving a decided advantage to them on a weight-per-use basis. As for plastic vs. paper shopping bags, ironically, the weight advantage goes to plastic. This last conclusion makes some of my callers very angry. Naturally, the choice is up to them, but, if they support virgin paper bags over plastic bags, they are implicitly supporting higher levels of pollution. If they opt for paper bags, they should at least be pressuring their supermarket to use recycled ones and pressuring their local governments to require them.

What about degradable plastics? Although the addition of corn starch into polyethylene bags allows them to degrade relatively quickly, we should be careful about supporting this new substance for widespread use until we know more about the degradation products. If environmentalists keep a critical eye on degradable plastics, refusing to accept the quickest and cheapest fix offered, chemists will, no doubt, rise to the challenge. For the moment, we should encourage experimentation to see how well the degradable versions perform, while supporting analysis of the degradation products.

Plastics are going to be with us for a long time. Even after oil and gas are exhausted as raw materials, plastics will still be made from trees and plants. Environmentalists need to pressure manufacturers to produce those kinds of plastics that have the least environmental impact. Audubon members need to promote the use of

personal grocery bags, lobby for content labeling of packaging, and take the lead in enacting legislation that will mandate use of recycled paper bags in supermarkets.

Meanwhile, we should:

- Encourage plastics recycling.
- Urge manufacturers to use less packaging.
- Use our consumer dollars to reward those companies that are conscientiously trying to market products and packaging that have the least environmental impact.
- Make sure that our own refuse is disposed of properly.

from an article in the audubon activist

Recycle, Cont. from Page 1

more problems than they will ever solve. They may be disposable but they are not biodegradable! Such convenience items serve a very "short-sighted" purpose. We don't need all the little glitzy, disposable trivia, manufacturers just want us to think we do. Its more money in their pockets.

9—REFUSE TO USE STYROFOAM!

We often forget, with our escalating human population, the effect that we have on the ecology of our planet. Each person, in the course of obtaining the requisites of existence, has a net negative impact on his environment. His need for food causes some of the simplification (and resulting destabilization) of ecological systems associated with the practice of agriculture. His needs for water, metals and fibers lead to the conversion of resources into waste; and the procedures of extraction, processing and waste disposal themselves have simplifying — and therefore adverse — effects on ecosystems. Of course, it may be judged that an individual's beneficial contribution to his culture outweighs his adverse contribution to the stability of the ecosystem. Unfortunately, society's level of culture will be of little consequence if the collective ecological impact exceeds the point of no recovery.

I realize that I have jumped on the recycling band wagon relatively late, that many others have been doing these things — and more! — for years. I take solice in that thought.

If you have any questions about any of my ideas or if you would like addresses, please call me, Cheryl Phillips, at 899-7635. Better yet, if you have any better suggestions, please share them.

ED. NOTE: A group of 13 people from Christ-St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Meggett, bagged 2085 (!!) pounds of trash in three hours from just two miles of the Toogoodoo roadside as part of the Community Pride Adopt-a-Highway Program on April 9th.

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 are returned to CNHS to cover operating expenses. The Lesser Squawk is the newsletter of CNHS. Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the National Audubon Society or CNHS.

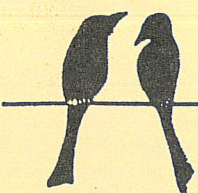
Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. at the MUSC Institute of Psychiatry Auditorium except June, July, August and December.

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

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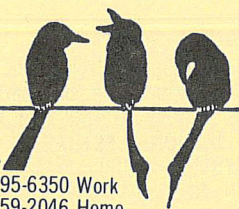


observations

by pete laurie

750 Copperhead Trail
Johns Island, SC 29455

Phone: 795-6350 Work
559-2046 Home



Mar. 10-11	4 Piping Plovers	Sullivan's Is.	T. Rivers
Mar. 11	1 Blue-gray Knatcatcher	Folly Beach	A. Goldstein
			D. Goldstein
Mar. 18	Parula Warblers**	Magnola Gardens	D. Forsythe
	Purple Martins	Magnola Gardens	D. Forsythe
Mar. 20	Parula Warblers	Ft. Johnson	P. Laurie
Mar. 21	American Avocet	S. Edisto River	B. McCord
			N. Jenkins
Mar. 23	albino Mockingbird*	Yonges Is.	M. Parker
Mar. 25	1 Golden Eagle*	Middleton Place	B. Krucke
			and party
			" " " "
	1 Seaside Sparrow	Middleton Place	
Mar. 28	1 Chuck-will's-widow**	Johns Is.	P. Laurie
Mar. 28	Rough-wg. Swallows**	Moore's Lnd.	D. Forsythe
	Barn Swallows**	Moore's Lnd.	D. Forsythe
	Red-eyed Vireos**	Moore's Lnd.	D. Forsythe
	Yellow-th. Vireos**	Moore's Lnd.	D. Forsythe
	1 Bachman's Sparrow	Santee Coastal Res.	D. Forsythe
Mar. 30	1 Ruby-th. Hummingbird**	Yonges Is.	B. Krucke
Mar. 31	2 Cabot's Terns	Folly Beach	D. Forsythe
	1 Black Scoter	Folly Beach	D. Clark
Apr. 2	Least Terns**	Huntington B. St. Pk.	D. Clark
	Wilson's Plovers	Huntington B. St. Pk.	D. Clark
	1 Great Cormorant	Huntington B. St. Pk.	D. Clark
Apr. 3	1 Ruby-th. Hummingbird	Johns Is.	M. Rawl
Apr. 4	1 Orchard Oriole**	Johns Is.	P. Laurie
Apr. 10	1 Indigo Bunting**	Yonges Is.	B. Krucke

**Indicates first observation of species for this season.

*albino Mockingbird — Mike Parker of DHEC observed and photographed an all white mockingbird on Yonges Island on March 23. He had first noticed it several days earlier. Following his directions I located the bird on March 28. The bird appeared smokey white with a tinge of gray on its head. The eyes and legs were normal color, so it was not a total albino. The bird appeared to be mated with a normal mockingbird.

*Golden Eagle — Brucke Krucke and members of her party, including several western birders familiar with golden eagles, observed this bird being harassed by the resident pair of bald eagles. They were able to distinctly see the golden coloration of the head and nape of neck, and to compare the bird's size and shape with that of the bald eagles.

Note: Anyone planning a trip to Florida might want to visit Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge where Denise Valko of Savannah reported a Cassin's kingbird on March 5. This western species had been in the area since Christmas and may still be there.

winter elk

by pat leonard

(In March the author took a snow coach into the interior of Yellowstone National Park to observe and photograph wildlife.)

In March of the winter of elk kill in Yellowstone National Park, I'm happy to see you alive and well, browsing the burnt earth, searching out grass unconsumed by the great fire, emblazer of the summer of '88.

Just as the antlers you shrugged off will be replaced, new growth will spring from the burn and your remaining years may be more fruitful because of that catastrophe. I wish you well, survivors of the wild.

field trip summary

bull's island

A beautiful early spring day, warm and perfect for lounging in the sun. Suddenly a loud shriek, followed by something that was many times taller, dancing a jig around. Terrified, it scurried for cover. Artfully dodging still more of the dancers until it finally found what seemed to be a safe haven in some dead leaves. It froze in order to blend in with the surroundings and avoid detection. It's dismay must have been excruciating when it found itself being lifted into the air by an unescapable grip. Being the center of attention, handled and closely observed were not in the plans. This small young water snakes' introduction to CNHS must certainly have added some unexpected excitement to Saturday morning. Suffice it to say that at this point everyone in our group was also wide awake.

The weather was near perfect. Not hot enough for the biting insects to be out in full force but warm enough not to need jackets. Spring seems to arrive much earlier on the barrier islands. We were greeted by songs of the Northern parula, the first that anyone had heard this year. Our leader, Mark Beven, proved to be an expert at distinguishing the many warblers by their songs. By the end of the day everyone knew the

difference between the songs of pine, yellow-throated, Northern parula and yellow-rumped warblers. We began our tour by walking out the Beach Road which cuts directly across from the ferry landing on the back of the island to the front beach. This gave us a quick overview of Bulls' from the mature maritime forest through the old sand dune ridges with wet sloughs in between to the stunted, windswept vegetation of the primary beachfront dunes. Through these varied areas we found a blue-gray gnatcatcher, Carolina wrens, a hermit thrush, common moorhens, double-crested comorant, the above mentioned warblers and one impressively large alligator.

Before reaching the beach we turned down Lighthouse Road and headed for the impoundment areas on the northern end of the island. During the recent Christmas Count these ponds were reported to have large numbers of waterfowl. Unfortunately the warm winter and early spring must have inspired them to migrate early. The photo blind at Moccasin Pond produced only a lone great egret. Jack's Creek Pool added American coot, swamp sparrows and red-winged blackbirds. We heard, but never saw, a pileated woodpecker. Through the tree cover overhead we caught a glimpse of turkey vultures and of a red-tailed hawk who was hotly pursued by a crow. This area was most memorable however for the snakes. In addition to the young water snake, a larger water snake (approx. 3') and a black racer (approx. 4') also took advantage of the warm day to sun themselves along the trail. Returning to the landing area for lunch we encountered a flock of cedar waxwings and a white-eyed vireo.

We decided to explore the Summerhouse Ponds area nature trail after lunch. Here our luck with waterfowl was slightly better, yielding blue-winged teal and lesser scaup. A tricolored heron, a belted kingfisher, boat-tailed grackles and morning doves were also seen here. Most impressive however were the alligators. Lots of them. Along the dike we found what was apparently the same alligator family we encountered on last year's Bulls Island trip. The only difference was the young gators are now about eighteen inches long. Further along the dike we came to what must be Gator Heaven as we counted eleven large alligators concentrated along a 100 yard stretch of shoreline. The nature trail ended back on the Beach Road so we took a quick trip to the beach to check out the shorebirds. The shorebirds were not plentiful but a red-throated loon, red-breasted merganser, brown pelicans and Forster's terns made it worthwhile.

As always the boat ride to and from Bulls Island through the extensive mud flats and marshes is an important part of the trip. Tide was high going to the island but low enough during the return trip to attract American oystercatchers, great blue herons, snowy egrets, sanderling, willet and a northern harrier. All told the boat trip was fun and lack of biting bugs made this an enjoyable trip. We seem to have caught the end of the winter seasons with the winter migrants already departed and yet too early for most spring/summer arrivals. Approximately forty five species were sighted with osprey, plovers, sandpipers, dunlins, chickadees, tufted titmice and juncos being noticeably absent. Perhaps they were all sleeping-in and nursing St. Patrick's Day hangovers.

by hayes patterson

conservation corner

COASTAL COUNCIL — In case you haven't heard, the Beachfront Management Act is in trouble in the State House. While the House of Representatives seems to be taking a cautious approach to changes, the Senate has moved the Waddell bill out of subcommittee. A more reasonable bill by Senator Hayes appears to be dead in the subcommittee. The Waddell bill eliminates virtually all state control on beachfront development. The word is that professional lobbyists for the developers are working overtime trying to influence our elected officials. If ever there was a good time to contact your state officials this is it. The Coastal Council and the Beachfront Management Act are the best and most effective tools we have for controlling irresponsible development in our coastal counties. A good example of this was the dry stack marina a developer wanted to build across from the Bear Island Wildlife Refuge last month. As a result of the opposition to the permit during the process the applicant negotiated with the state wildlife officials and amended the request to relocate the marina downstream away from the refuge. The Coastal Council Permitting Committee

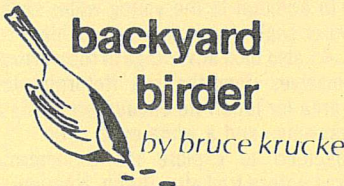
by hayes patterson

is scheduled to reconsider this request and also the City of Charleston's permit for the aquarium at its meeting on April 20th here in Charleston.

NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESERVE RESEARCH SYSTEM — Still more good news for Bear Island. The National Estuarine Reserve Research System is considering establishing two reserves here in South Carolina. One would be on St. Helena Sound just down river from Bear Island. This would be an area like Oregon's South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve highlighted in the article "Researching The Slough" in the March 1989 issue of *Audubon* magazine. These are areas established by the state using federal funding and managed for education and research. They are different from sanctuaries, in that existing uses of these areas is not curtailed (i.e. hunting, fishing, oystering, shrimping, etc.) making them more accessible to the public. I attended the first of a long series of public hearings on establishing this reserve on April 10th in Walterboro. This is an excellent opportunity for the state but based on the concerns expressed by the local residents the state will have to do a good bit of public education about this program. Most

are suspicious that this is just another example of "big brother" government coming in and taking over. The other proposed location is around the Bell Baruch Institute on Winyah Bay and the first public hearing on it will be sometime in May. We of course wholeheartedly support the establishment of both of these areas and hope that any misconceptions can be quickly ironed out.

DHEC — The permit requests for the Waste Management Sanitary Landfill in Dorchester County and the Bees Ferry Landfill in Charleston to allow disposal of incinerator ash from Charleston County's new incinerator are out for public comment. There will be a public hearing on Monday, May 8th, 7 p.m. at the Rawlings Elementary School Auditorium in Summerville for the Waste Management request. The Bees Ferry request will have a public hearing on Wednesday, May 10th, 7 p.m. at Old St. Andrews Parish Church on Highway 61. Watch your newspaper, this should be an interesting week! The outcome of these permits and the legal challenges to the county's user fee will have a significant impact not only on our local environment but also our county taxes.



Those of you still have the January Squawk please add the following couplet to the BLUE poem by Ms. Miranda, who recently wrote me saying that she had inadvertently left out these final two lines when she sent me the poem and she feels it is really necessary to complete the meaning.

BLUE
eyes and sky
ebbing tide

Here are a couple of tips from the newsletter of the Duncraft people in N.H. Always put a little sawdust in the bottom of wood duck and woodpecker houses — guess it makes them think they did some of the work. If woodpeckers are drilling on your house, hang heavy clear plastic (painter's drop) over the area. The birds can't get a grip on the slippery surface and will get discouraged. Leave it for at least two weeks. When you put out materials for birds to use for nesting, be sure to keep yarns, etc., under five inches in length for the birds' safety. If you put up a fruit feeder for orioles and other fruit eaters, locate it away from the regular feeders. The fruit eaters seem to prefer to eat at a distance from other birds.

June Gates had a great yard bird in early April. A mature bald eagle tried for the little Easter ducks on the pond at their condominium complex off Mathis Ferry Rd. in Mt. Pleasant. It dove for the ducks and sat in a pine not fifty feet from June's window — pretty exciting stuff! Charlie Walters has taken a job as foreman for the grounds crew of the 110 acre Magnolia Cemetery off Meeting St. in the northern part of downtown. Everyone knows that cemeteries are great birding locations so it's an ideal spot for him to work. In the first couple of weeks he has identified 91 species on the

property. The most exciting thing he's seen so far was a red tail take and eat three baby rabbits out of a nest under an azalea. It sat on a tombstone and tore them apart right in front of Charlie. To lighten this gory story, I'll add that I guess most of the people there don't bother the birds.

Robin Matthew out here on Tom Point Rd. noticed one broken and one whole egg beneath his bluebird box so decided to investigate since he hadn't checked the box in a few weeks. It had been empty in February. It was very full! He found nest made entirely out of pine straw. When he lifted that, he found a nest of mixed material with a broken egg in it. When he looked under that, he found a very neat nest made of very fine bark strips and clover. Sounds like there had been some serious competition for that particular box! A Carolina wren here has built a nest in a plastic trash can — it got in through the broken lid. This can is on the back porch against the German Shepherd's crate and under the eave so it regularly gets filled with water. I didn't see much activity there in a few days, so I figured the wrens had wised up, but a check yesterday revealed four eggs so I guess they were carrying on behind my back. Pat and Jack Garvin (who with their children and families were the "party" mentioned in the Observations column with whom I saw the golden eagle) have had a Carolina wren nest several times in the mouth of a large cooper statue of a frog that they have on their porch at Seabrook.

The redheaded woodpecker is still here. I've been able to determine the bird is a male by looking through a 40X scope out my bedroom window — the bird is about 30' from there, so I could see the very fine black line where the red of the face joins the white of the chest. I found out this hint from Davis Finch, the well known ornithologist from Wings Tours, world nature trip leaders. His specialty is South America, but he always does one trip in the South East every spring. I spent a wonderful morning with him and his group (from the Field Museum of Natural

History in Chicago) at Middleton Place. We didn't see any very unusual birds, but got a lot of nice views of the regulars. A real good look at an orange crowned warbler and, of course, the eagles were the highlights. Davis Finch can do a perfect screech owl imitation — much more effective than tapes. He says it's easy if you can just whistle and gargle at the same time. It's definitely something to practice in private!

You may have read in Lynne Langley's column that hummingbirds come back to the same place you had the feeder last year. She was right! Our first hummer of the season not only came back on the same day as last year, but hovered about eight inches below the hook the feeder hung on last year. I was sitting about six feet away at the next window and when he saw that the feeder wasn't there, he came and hovered in front of me as if to say, "Well?" I quickly boiled some sugar water in the microwave, cooled it with ice cubes and put it out. He came to sip from it almost immediately. The indigo bunting I reported to Pete is so brilliant that at first I thought it must be some tropical escapee. I guess I'd never seen one in his fresh breeding plumage, with an iridescent teal body and a bright blue head. He looked so great among the cowbirds! Pete says that the new breeding plumage of these showy birds gets beat up very quickly as they tangle with rivals in the spring.

May's trivia concerns endurance: Sooty terns simply sink if they land on the water, but they spend their lives at sea. Many do not breed until they are ten years old, so they probably fly continually for those ten years! Swifts of Europe are similar in that they don't stop flying until they return to breed, which is in their fourth year.

Continue feeding the birds through the spring. They need extra food during the hard work of building nests and then raising babies. Most plants don't go to seed until much later in the season. Don't the goldfinches look terrific in their wonderful breeding plumage?!

Let me hear from you. Bruce Krucke, 7352 Toogoodoo Rd., Yonkers Island, SC 29449. Phone 889-6191.