

UNUSUAL OBSERVATIONS

by Pete Laurie

25 Jan	1 Bald Eagle, Charleston AFB
1 Mar	1 Peregrine Falcon, Cooper River Bridge
9 Mar	1 Parula Warbler, Moore's Landing
15 Mar	1 Bl.-throated Green Warbler, "
	1 Merlin, Santee Coastal Reserve
16 Mar	1 Western Tanager*, Goose Creek
20 Mar	1 Whip-poor-will**, Johns Is.
28 Mar	1 Orchard Oriole, James Is.
	1 Bl.-throated Green Warb., Wadmalaw Is.
29 Mar.	1 Bald Eagle, West Ashley
	1 Hummingbird, James Is.
3 Apr	50+ Hooded Mergansers, N. Santee River
7 Apr	6 Swallow-tailed Kites, Santee Delta
	1 Bald Eagle***, Mark Clark Exp.
	2 Indigo Buntings, Mt. Pleasant
11 Apr	8 Swallow-tailed Kites, Francis Marion
12 Apr	1 Indigo Bunting, Mt. Pleasant

* The male Western Tanager remained at Don Watts feeder throughout the winter and was singing in early March.

** I heard a Whip-poor-will sing briefly at dawn on several days between 21 March and 28 March on Johns Is.

*** Several people have reported an adult Bald Eagle sitting in a dead tree on the western end of the Mark Clark Expressway bridge over the Ashley River.

Pete Laurie, 750 Copperhead Trail, Johns Is., SC 29455.
Home: 559-2046, Office: 762-5076.

RECYCLING REMINDER

by Cheryl Philips

REDUCING AND REUSING -- Refuse to use disposable utensils: Keep a reusable coffee cup or drinking glass in your office or car. For group events, ask everyone to bring their own placematting instead of leaving a pile of trash in the aftermath.

With summer coming, remember: polystyrene meat trays make great picnic tableware. They're more sturdy than paper or plastic plates, come in many festive colors, they're free, and REUSABLE!

Buy produce "naked" (sans polystyrene and plastic). Use plastic mesh bags (that come with apples and oranges) to hold loose fruits and vegetables. Let the president of your supermarket chain know that this is the only way you will purchase it, and the only way it should be offered!

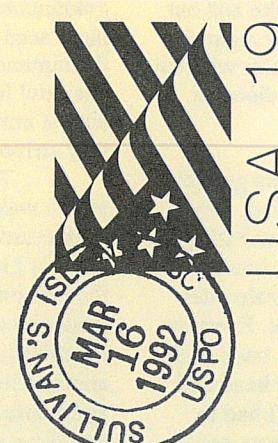
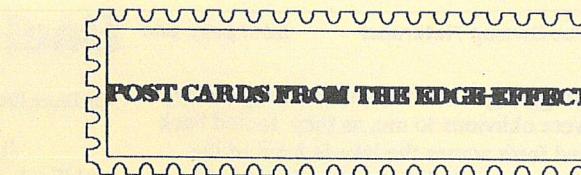
Got any great, new, creative recycling ideas? SHARE THEM!

P.O. Box 364, Moncks Corner, SC 29461

Charleston Natural History Society
P.O. Box 504
Charleston, SC 29402

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

CINDY WALTERS
1700 WHIPPLE RD #10D
MT PLEASANT, SC 29464

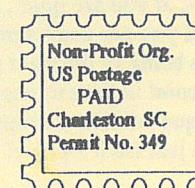


USA 10

29 25
18 20 Jon Anne
Sullivan's Island
South Carolina 29482

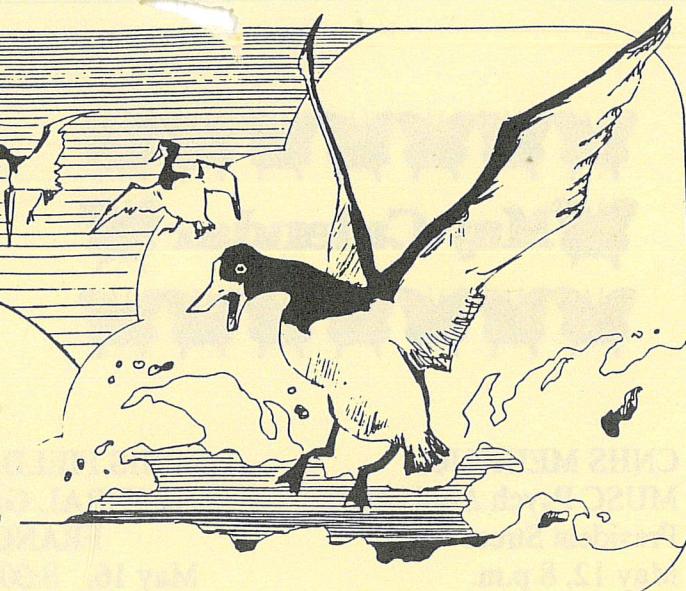
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CNHS Members are, as a group, among the most traveled in Charleston. By using this new feature, members can share their encounters with Nature! History polemically in a timely manner. Please use black ink on plain card stock and share with simple line art. If possible, write on the post marked side. Send to:



May 1992

THE LESSER SQUAWK



Newsletter of The Charleston Natural History Society
Chapter, National Audubon Society

FOUR HOLES SWAMP NATURALIST
by Michael Dawson, Beidler Forest Asst Manager

I think that I will dispense with the ongoing study of Swampology for this month, to allow you to recover from my relentless attack on your pre-conceived notions of swamps (buggy, snaky, smelly, etc.). Rather, I would like to take a chance to share with you another interesting wildlife encounter experienced here at the Francis Beidler Forest. My time here has been full of memorable sights, and it is really quite challenging to chose the best ones!

Several years ago, I was walking along the boardwalk, on the leg that leads to Goodson Lake. Ahead of me, from the edge of the lake, I could hear what sounded like a cross between a giant frog choking and the "squeaking" call of a Great Blue Heron. Kind of like this..."urrrr-ahhhhh!", done in a deep gravelly, basso profundo sort of way. Obviously, it was difficult to describe. At any rate, as I reached the platform at the lake, I saw tumbling into the water, a River Otter. It was not more than 20 feet from me. It swam in front of the platform, spasmodically rolling from side to side and every few seconds, rearing its head straight up to let out this horrific sound. My first thought was, "This otter is choking to death on a fish, and I'm watching it go through its death throes!" Not the wildlife encounter I had hoped for as I continued to observe it however, I began to realize that this was not an IT, but a THEM! It was actually two otters, grabbing onto each other, sloshing from side to side, and

Birdathon May 17

The 1992 Audubon Birdathon will be held on Sunday, May 17th. This year's edition promises to be one of the best ever. From modest beginnings about ten years ago, the Birdathon has grown to be Audubon's best fundraiser, generating over \$1.3 million last year, as well as untold fun and excitement.

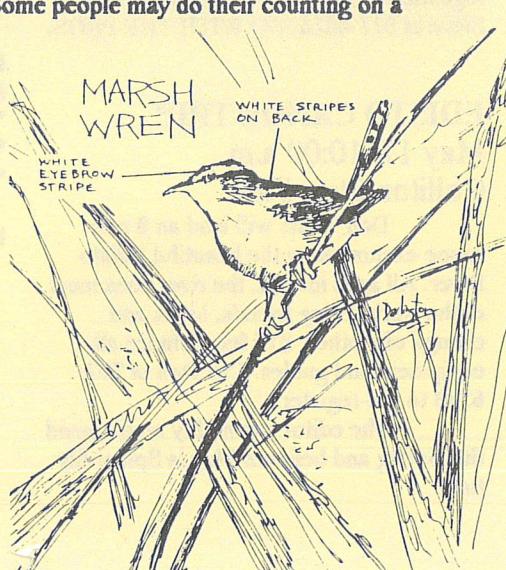
The way it works is simple. Birders, both the old-timers and greenhorn novices, volunteer to spend a day in the field counting birds. These folks, the counters, ask their families, neighbors, friends, co-workers, and anyone else they can think of, to sponsor their day in the field with a pledge of so-much for every species of bird that they will see. Later they let their sponsors know how many birds they saw and how much fun they had, and the money comes rolling in.

The money is put to excellent use. Half of it is used right here. We are hoping to support Audubon Adventurers in over 100 local classrooms with our share. The other half will go to Audubon for work on wetlands protection in South Carolina.

Birdathons take many forms. Some tender souls simply take pledges for all the species they can count from their sitting room window (species usually coming to visit well-stocked feeders). Others have taken pledges for all the species they can see from their boat during a day on the water. Some people may do their counting on a different day. This year one group plans to see just how many birds they can find on one of the local islands.

Everyone can participate and join in on the fun. If you want some help, we will assist you with getting pledges, planning your birding day, even providing guides and spotters if needed. If actually getting out and watching birds seems too much, then be a sponsor! Just give us a call and we will tell you all about it, answer your questions, get you some literature and sign you up if you agree.

Just call Jeremy James, 849-9450, or Jan Conway, 849-9485, or drop a line to BIRDATHON, P.O. Box 504, Charleston, SC 29402.





May Calendar

CNHS MEETING
MUSC Psych Auditorium
President Street
May 12, 8 p.m.

Red-cockaded Woodpeckers
in "The Marion"

Craig Watson, biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, will discuss research being conducted on the population of endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers inhabiting the Francis Marion National Forest. His comments will include the impact of Hurricane Hugo and how the Forest Service has been an integral part in the survival of this species at Francis Marion.

NOTE: The regular May CNHS general meeting is also the Annual Business Meeting, at which officers and Executive Committee members are elected.

SPRING BIRD COUNT

May 3, 6:30 a.m.
Texaco Station, Hwy 41 & 17 N

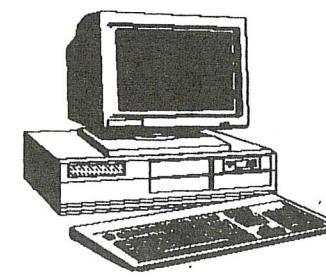
Join Steve Compton and other CNHS birding enthusiasts for this prime migratory and nesting bird event. An annual scientific survey, The Spring Count notes and monitors changes in bird populations over time and is recorded by the Carolina Bird Club. No fee or registration. For more information, call Steve at 577-4816. GO WITH THE PROS.

EDISTO CANOE TRIP

May 17, 10:00 a.m.
Colliton State Park

Don Watts will lead an 8 mile canoe excursion on the beautiful Edisto River. All ages invited, the river does most of the work. Bring friends, lunch and change of clothes. \$15 fee includes all equipment and guides. Call Don at 797-6783 to pre-register.

The editor can highly recommend this outing and believes May is Spider lily time.



NOTE
FROM
THE
EDITOR

CNHS FIELD TRIP NATURAL GARDEN of the FRANCIS MARION

May 16, 8:00 a.m.
Texaco Station, Hwy 41&17N

Botanist Dr. Richard Porcher leads us to sites of rare and endangered plants, including Pond Berry. Also featured are plans to maintain and expand the diversity of plant life in the Francis Marion National Forest. Bring lunch. For info call 883-9252

MAGNOLIA GARDENS

Magnolia Plantation offers guided walks on its 500 acre grounds every Saturday morning at 8:15. Perry Nugent or Magnolia's staff will lead walks, which encompass the old ricefields and marsh, woodlands and the Audubon Swamp Garden. Refreshments are served and reservations are requested. Admission is \$8.00. Call Betsy Veronee (571-1266)

BACKPACK the FOOTHILLS TRAIL MAY 23-25, Leader Don Watts

Beautiful views, wildflowers and birds are found on this legendary upstate S.C. trail, rated Moderate to Strenuous. Some equipment available. Call Don at 797-6783.

REMINDER: OBServ Birding Tours

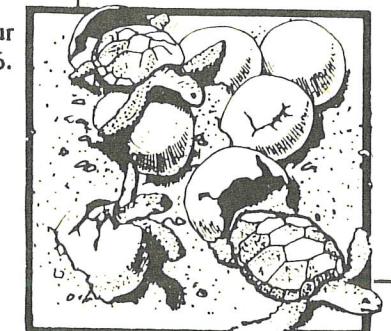
Dr. Dennis Forsythe will lead the following birding tours this spring & summer.

*Lake Erie Migrant Trap, May 14-17

*Southeastern Arizona Fiesta, July 9-18

*Chan Chich Lodge, Belize, Aug 1-8

You will not see these birds at your feeder. Please call Dennis at 795-3996.



The Swamp Naturalist from page one

Backyard Birder

By Bruce Krucke

This is more like it with the goldfinches! The feeders were more interesting to watch in late March and early April than they were all winter. What a treat to see the summer plumage on the goldfinches! I decided to take down the niger seed feeder on March 23 and put up the hummingbird feeder in its place. Five beautiful fully yellow goldfinches arrived almost immediately. The hummers, by the way arrived on March 27, their usual day.

Evidently, before otters get down to the business of actually mating, they engage in a sort of pre-nuptial wrestling match that can actually last for hours! What I was witnessing was a male otter clinging to the back of a female. Every so often, he would bite her on the back of the neck, precipitating the uplifted head and the painful "urrrrrr-aahhhht!" If I had to guess, I would say the female was not too thrilled with the Neanderthalian approach to relationships pursued by the male. But then...I'm not an otter.

This happened to me 10-12 years ago. In the course of those years I have seen dozens of otters; swimming, snorting, playing, sliding, and poking their doglike heads high up out of the water to curiously investigate me, but I have not seen that mating ritual again. In retrospect, I guess that's OK. It will make that rare moment and the luck of being in the right place at the right ten minutes all the more special to me. I hope you will take the time some day to come visit the sanctuary. I won't promise a spectacular wildlife show. I can't! The Beidler Forest is not a zoo, it will not be a packaged flower and wildlife show. The wildlife here is truly wild, and the wilderness sets its own terms for your visit. But...if you are quiet, if you are patient, if you are persistent, you might just luck into being in the right place at the precise point in time to experience your own unique wildlife moment! The Beidler Forest is just such a place!

The distinct call of a White-breasted Nuthatch yesterday got me all excited because we have never spotted them on our property. Further investigation led me to a very good Mockingbird who was alternating the nuthatch with perfect Cardinal and Titmouse calls. Question is, of course, if the moher has lived in my yard all his life, where did he learn nuthatch?

The Gilberts in Melrose are enjoying bird feeding for the first time. They mentioned trouble with crows, but they might be Boat-tailed Grackles instead which are more likely in such numbers. A pair of Pileated Woodpeckers has been hanging around. Hopefully there are some dead trees for them to drill a hole in to nest.

Lang Foster reports a dove nesting in a camellia and Pileateds pecking at a dead (from Hugo) branch on an oak. Lang also sent a review of a book that gives a clear case for the need to protect habitat and reevaluate some long held beliefs about wildlife and forest management. (Lang is a retired forester.) The book is called "Where Have All the Birds Gone?" and is by J. Terbrough, published by the Princeton Press.



Conservation Corner

by Hayes Patterson

S.C. COASTAL COUNCIL - The Management Committee decided against reconsidering their approval of the Chambers Oakridge Landfill permit in Four Holes Swamp at their March meeting. This permit would allow them to fill nine acres of wetlands in the swamp to increase their storage capacity. Four Holes Swamp empties into the Edisto River approximately 1/2 mile upstream of the water intake for Charleston's drinking water. Reconsidering an approved permit at the committee level would have been a damaging precedent. Fortunately this case has forced the Council to implement an administrative appeals process for Management Committee decisions. Previously the only alternative has been a legal battle in the courts. Now management Committee decisions can be appealed to the Council like Permitting Committee decisions have been. The Permitting Committee processes permits for which Council has direct permitting authority (i.e. critical areas such as beachfront and tidal wetlands). The Management Committee handles other areas where the Council only has certifying authority, primarily Corps of Engineers permits for freshwater wetlands. Since the Coastal Council did not certify the Corps Nationwide Permit No. 26 within the coastal zone, the Management Committee is a major avenue for public input in the protection of freshwater wetlands. This Nationwide Permit routinely grants permits for projects that impact wetlands of ten acres or less. The Corps gives considerable weight to comments/ certifications of state and federal agencies for projects that fall under these Nationwide Permits, thus the Management Committee approval process provides a significant opportunity for public input. The ability to administratively appeal the Committee decisions is a major improvement in this process. CNHS was represented by President Herbert Macmurphy at both the March Coastal Council meeting at Hilton Head and at a mediated attempt at compromise held by litigants in this matter. A public hearing will now be held and then the permit approval will be reconsidered by the full Council. CNHS will follow this case to its resolution.