

Winey in Summerville have had a fall bird all summer -- a house finch. This would indicate that they're breeding in the area, which means we'll all soon be fighting them to keep interesting birds at the feeders. There is a new feeder out to combat house finches. It's like a Droll Yankee except that the perch is above the seed hole rather than below, so that the bird has to hang rather than perch to eat. Apparently the house finch and black birds of various sorts are the only ones who can't handle this. Sounds like a good idea!

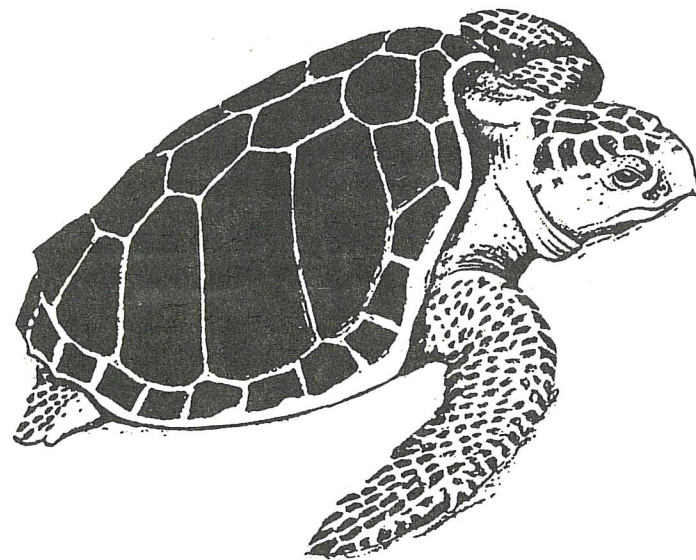
A recent article on what-to-feed-birds research finds that chopped almonds is the absolute favorite and that a mixture of hulled sunflower seeds (or chips) and pecans or peanut bits was extremely popular. The author said the birds' reaction to this mixture was phenomenal. The birds ignored everything else until the seed/nut mixture was gone. He still stands by black oily sunflower seed and white millet as the best foods for the biggest variety of birds.

Keep your hummingbird feeders up until at least the middle of October, and call me with your sightings. Bruce W. Krucke, 7352 Toogoodoo Rd., Yorges Island, SC

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

We are currently updating all of the membership records. You can now find your expiration date printed on the mailing address label. This is just a reminder to you and should be helpful when you receive renewal notices from National Audubon. National sends these notices out pretty early and repeats the mailing until you respond. To avoid the annoyance and obvious waste of paper, please return your first renewal notice right away. Even after our local chapter, CNHS, is notified that you have not renewed for another year, we will continue to mail *The Lesser Squawk* for two months. If you have questions or problems, please call Don Watts at 797-6783. You can call the National Audubon Society at 1-800-274-4201 to check on your membership status, or call 1-800-289-9875, to report an address change.

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS YEAR'S
LOGGERHEAD TURTLE PROJECT,
PLEASE SEND \$5 TO;
CNHS TURTLE FUND, PO BOX 504
CHARLESTON, SC 29402



DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

I planted periwinkles in a row
In my garden bed.
They did not choose that place to grow
And so they fled.
Spring came and went; summer too;
The other flowers grew and grew.
And from a crack in the concrete drive,
A row of purple periwinkles thrive!

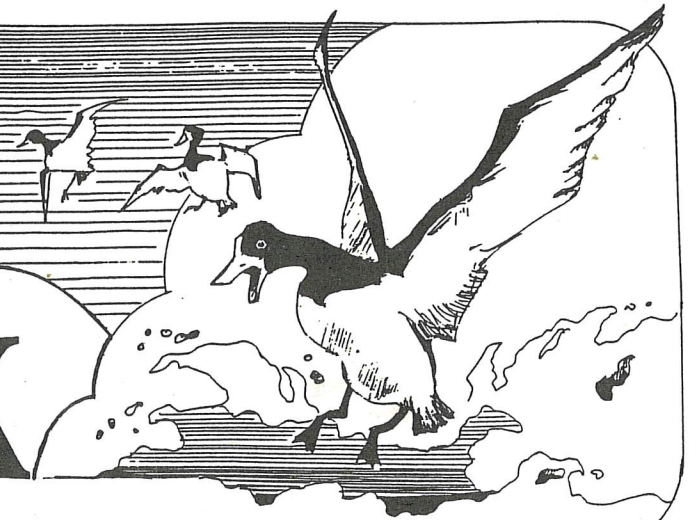
Pat Leonard

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



THE LESSER SQUAWK



NEWSLETTER OF THE CHARLESTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
CHAPTER, NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

SWAMP GENIUS INSULTS STATE FARMERS

From The Heart Of The Swamp

By Michael Dawson, Asst. Sanctuary Manager
Francis Beidler Forest

"Just what exactly ARE those pointy, knobby things sticking up all over your swamp?" is a question I am frequently asked by visitors. I can forgive their ignorance, in that they are from upstate, up North, or anyplace on earth outside of the Southeast for that matter. With swamps being such a part of the region's landscape and heritage, it seems odd to me that so many Southerners haven't a clue as to what they are! How cypress knees fell through the educational loophole is beyond me. But allow me to right this cultural wrong with what I will refer to as A Primer on Cypress Knees, or Cypress Knees: What's The Point?

For those of you unfamiliar with the term cypress knees, they are the conical shaped, vertical projections growing up from the roots of Baldcypress trees. They can be anything from a mere nubbin to 10 feet tall, depending upon the depth of flooding, and they can grow as thick as four feet. The swamp forest floor is literally scattered with hundreds and thousands of knees poking up above the water's surface. Cypress knees are NOT new trees coming up, nor are they old rotted stumps from

trees that died. The real question isn't "What are those things?", but, "What exactly do those things do?"

This is where it gets tricky! Frankly, no one knows for sure just what purpose cypress knees serve, but there are

"the...function of knees is to make... heavily lacquered Clemson Tiger wall clocks."

three popular theories. Some would have you believe that the principle function of knees is to make lamp stands and heavily lacquered Clemson Tiger wall clocks. For sure, this is an interesting theory, but I'm afraid it doesn't hold up to scientific scrutiny. Cypress knees pre-date both Clemson AND electricity by many million years!

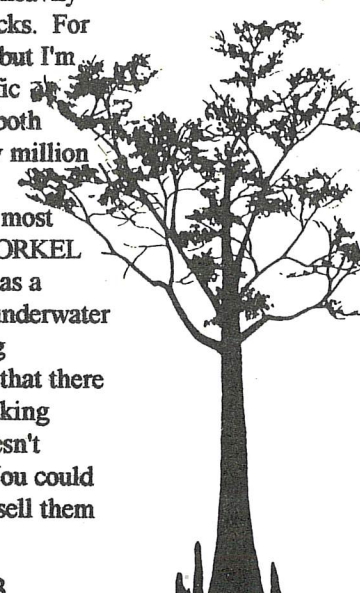
The oldest and probably most widely held idea is the ROOT SNORKEL theory. Some say the knees serve as a means of getting air down to the underwater roots of the parent tree, preventing drowning. Scientists have shown that there is in fact a degree of respiration taking place through the knees, but it doesn't appear to be a critical function. You could cut down all of a tree's knees and sell them

to northern tourists in Florida, and the tree would not die. It can survive without them. Doesn't sound like much of a theory to me!

The second knee theory is that they act as ROOT BANKS. Researchers have discovered that the tissue in cypress knees is very high in starch (food manufactured by the tree and used for growth). They may function as a "food storage vessel," kind of swamp tupperware. Why the need to get the starch above the soil is unclear.

Last is my personal favorite, the ROOT ANCHOR theory. Cypress trees are big, fat, top-heavy trees standing in sandy,

wet soils in hurricane country. During Hugo, hundreds of trees of other species were blown down, but, along the 1 1/2 mile boardwalk at Beidler Forest, only one cypress tree was uprooted. *Something* must be helping the Cypress stay put when all others near them are falling. Some scientists suggest that the vertical knees growing up at right



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OCTOBER

CNHS 2ND TUESDAY
MUSC Psych. Auditorium
President Street
Park in "G" Lot, Bee Street
Tuesday, October 12, 8:00 PM

Norman Brunswig, Asst. Director for National Audubon Sanctuaries and Manager of the Francis Beidler Forest, will address The Society on current concerns and positions held by the National Audubon Society.

FALL MIGRATION at BEIDLER FOREST
Saturday, October 16, 9:00 AM

CNHS President Don Watts leads novice and expert birders on boardwalk survey of Fall migrants in the Francis Beidler Forest. This is prime Fall birding. Meet at the Beidler giftshop. Half price admission, \$2.00. Call Don (797-6783) for directions.

BIRDING at HUNTINGTON BEACH STATE PARK
Sunday, October 17, 7:00 AM

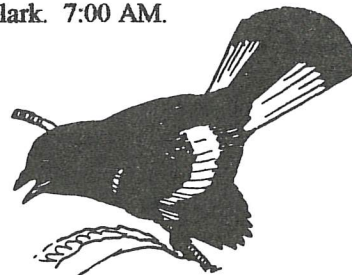
Ed Blitch, Chairman of CNHS Bird Counts, will lead this trip up to Huntington Beach, one of the premier birding sites in the Lowcountry. With a mix of habitat and easy access, this park always produces rewarding days in the field. There are sure to be numerous shore birds and probably a variety of ducks. Meet at the Texaco station, Hgwy 17N & Hgwy 41. 7:00 AM. Bring a lunch. Return early afternoon.

SWAMP STOMP into BEIDLER FOREST
Saturday, October 23

Asst. Sanctuary Manager, Mike Dawson, AKA, The Swamp Genius, leads a "get some on you" tour of the Baldcypress swamp in the Francis Beidler Forest, a National Audubon property just west of Charleston. If you have read Mike's *Heart of the Swamp* articles in this newsletter for the past year, you're probably anxious to follow Mike waist deep into this beautiful, pristine ecosystem. Don't bother with your rubber boots; wear old sneakers and long pants...you'll get wet and muddy. Group size is limited. Call Don Watts (797-6783) to reserve space. Regular admission, \$4.00

BIRDING at BEAR ISLAND, ACE BASIN
Saturday, October 30, 7:00 AM

Nathan Dias will lead this tour to Bear Island Wildlife Management Area in the ACE Basin. The most striking feature of Bear Island is the extensive rice field impoundments that are state managed for wading birds, ducks, and the birds of prey that follow their migration. The group will also get into the varied habitat of the surrounding area. Meet in Shoppers Port Shopping Center lot, Hgwy 17S & the Mark Clark. 7:00 AM.



THE CHARLESTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, FOUNDED 1905,

is a chapter of The National Audubon Society. Members of The NAS who live in the Trident area automatically become members of The Charleston Natural History Society. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, September through May, at 8:00pm, in the auditorium of The Psychiatric Institute on the campus of The Medical University of South Carolina. Field trips are held each month (except summer) and there are numerous special events.

MEMBERSHIP Membership dues for NEW MEMBERS is \$20. Members receive six bimonthly issues of National AUDUBON MAGAZINE and monthly issues (except summer) of THE LESSER SQUAWK, the CNHS newsletter. For information or a membership form, please call Herbert Macmurphy at 883-9252. To RENEW your yearly membership, please use the form mailed to you by National Audubon.

OFFICERS: CNHS Office phone (577-7100); President, Don Watts(797-6783), Vice-President, Hal Currey(883-9114), Secretary, Jan Snook(849-9485), Treasurer, Herbert Macmurphy(883-9252).

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Ed Blitch, Nathan Dias, Jose Escobar, Patricia Giddens, Sid Goff, Polly Holden, David Huff, Jeremy James, Jane Lareau, Terrence Larimer, Lee Lowder, Rose Mitchell, Hayes Patterson, Ann Shahid.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: MEMBERSHIP, Patricia Giddens (883-3937); CONSERVATION, Jane Lareau (795-2150); PROGRAMS, Lee Lowder (723-3057); BIRD COUNTS, Ed Blitch (795-5277); BIRD SEED, Rose Mitchell (723-7459), Patricia Giddens (883-3937); BIRD-A-THON, Jeremy James (886-5254); NEWSLETTER EDITOR, Herbert Macmurphy(883-9252).

HEART of the SWAMP, from page 1

angles to the tangled horizontal roots act to interlock the root systems so firmly, that, for all intents and purposes it is impossible to uproot a cypress! Personally, I think Hugo lent credence to this theory.

Whether they act as snorkels, banks, anchors, or wall clocks is still a mystery. One thing is for sure, they definitely add a lot of character to the swamp. Frankly, I don't care if we never know exactly what they do. Their one-of-a-kind forms are just weird enough to be really interesting to observe. Some people like seeing things in clouds. I enjoy visualizing the shapes of animals and people in the knees. Kind of a swamp Rorschach test, I suppose.

I hope you'll consider coming to Beidler Forest and checking out all those pointy' knobby things sticking up out of the swamp. Perhaps you can come up with your own cypress knee theory. It can't possibly be worse than the the lampstand idea! If you have any questions, please write Michael Dawson, The Knobby Kneed Swamp Genius, Francis Beidler Forest, 336 Sanctuary Road, Harleyville, SC 29448, or call 462-2150, or visit, 9 -5, Tues. - Sun.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Swamp Genius did not write the offending headline. This editor, a Gamecock fan, could not help himself.

SLIDES NEEDED
DON WATTS IS PUTTING TOGETHER A SLIDE PRESENTATION FOR USE IN SPEAKING TO OTHER GROUPS INTERESTED IN BIRDING. IF YOU HAVE SOME GOOD SLIDES OF COMMON BIRDS THAT YOU COULD DONATE OR THAT COULD BE USED TO MAKE COPIES, PLEASE CALL DON (797-

NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS

By NATHAN DIAS

16 Aug	1 Reddish Egret	Hutington Beach State Park	J. Peachy
21 Aug	1 Lark Sparrow	Folly Bch.(old USCG Station)	N. Dias, P. Nugent
22 Aug	1 Wilson's Phalarope	Huntington Beach State Park	N. Dias, B. Ward, P. Nugent
"	1 Lesser-Golden Plover	"	"
28 Aug	12+ Upland Sandpipers	Super Sod Farm (Orangeburg)	N. Dias & CBC Field Trip
"	40+ Pectoral Sandpipers	"	"
"	9 Horned Larks	"	"
"	1 Worm-eating Warbler	Congaree Swamp Nat Monument	"
"	1 Swainson's Warbler	"	"
"	1 Willow/Adler Flycatcher	"	"
29 Aug	1 Coyote*	Bear Island WMA	N. Dias, F. Smith
"	200+ Black Terns	"	"
30 Aug	1 Piping Plover	Sullivan's Island Sta 26	J. Cox
9 Sept	1 Long-billed Curlew	Cape Romain NWR	J. Cox
11 Sept	4 Lesser-Golden Plovers	Super Sod Farm (Orangeburg)	CNHS Field Trip
"	2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers	"	"
"	2 Horned Larks	"	"
"	2 Upland Sandpipers	"	"
"	30+ Pectoral Sandpipers	"	"
"	1 Olive-sided Flycatcher	Congaree Swamp Nat. Monument	"
11 Sept	1 Yellow-shafted Ficker **	30 miles at sea, east of Chas.	H. Macmurphy

— Don Watts reports a Reddish Egret on Seabrook Isl. this summer, often feeding in Capt. Sam's Inlet
 * Coyotes are definitely present in the SC coastal counties. I have heard reports of Coyotes in Colleton, Beaufort, & Jasper counties; it's only a matter of time before they appear in suburban Charleston County (if they haven't already done so).
 ** EDITOR'S NOTE.. This bird was headed toward land on the bottom edge of a fast moving high pressure system.
 SEND REPORTS of unusual birds or animals to: Nathan Dias, 1642 McClain St., Charleston, 29407; Phone 556-4792

BACKYARD BIRDER

By BRUCE KRUCKE

Sorry I missed last month. I hadn't been back from Africa long enough to make the deadline. The Africa trip was wonderful as always, with great animal viewing and inspiration for painting. Some of the highlights were: getting our vehicle stuck in a pit at night and having to walk out thinking there were no lion, elephant, rhino, or hippo in the area, but hearing lion in the distance; learning that a lioness killed a guest three weeks before on the very path we took several times a day from the lodge to our cabin; and adding 25 birds to my life list. The most interesting birds were the goliath heron (like a great blue, but bigger and with some maroon plumage), the paradise wydah (like a red-winged blackbird with a 29 inch tail), and the gymnogene (a cross between a hawk and a vulture that uses its feet to pull eggs and baby birds out of nests in cavities).

Francis Leopold on John's Island had the pleasure of watching crows "anting". One crow even picked the ants up and placed them among its feathers. Mary Evans had a green heron at her bird bath in the old village of Mt. Pleasant.

Swallow-tailed kites have been seen a lot this summer. Dot Glover and her daughter saw one at Martin's Landing on the Edisto, Marilyn Lucerna saw two in Ravenel, and Van Atkins saw several along with Mississippi kites in the Santee Delta. Many people have also seen wood storks. A lot have been feeding on the Church Creek Flats and in the marshes south of Little Britton Road out here. It's thought that some even nested in that area.

A single female goldfinch spent all day on my sunflower feeder on August 18th. A single male in gorgeous yellow plumage visited Jewel Puckett's feeder in Hollywood the first week in September.

On one of their outings in late August the Atkins saw a group of 62 killdeer and another group of 35 mockingbirds eating berries together. They also saw a Cooper's hawk and observed a red-eyed vireo feeding a cow youth. They had a downy woodpecker at their hummingbird feeder.

The Kushubars had a chickadee using theirs and I was there to see the prothornotary warbler feeding at their peanut butter stick all through August. Alma Holroyd had lots of doves in her yard in Mt. Pleasant -- ten hatched through the year in one of her hanging baskets and six more in a nearby bush. Alma also observed a wren bending itself way back, apparently to sun its breast. There are lots of cardinals around the feeder now and I've noticed one that has quite a deformed bill, but seems to eat okay. One of our squirrels has a completely cloudy right eye and I'm able to get quite close to him as long as I'm quiet.

The Fall is bringing new birds again. I've noticed tree, bank, and barn swallows, flickers, and several tanagers. Carol Bremer, Fairfield Ocean Ridge, has had an ovenbird and a black and white warbler. The Fosters and Roberta

