

## OBSERVATIONS

By DON WATTS

Jan 15 Yellow-throated Warbler D. Watts & Group  
 Jan 15 Bald Eagle D. Watts & Group  
 Above sightings made at Cypress Gardens  
 Jan 15 Bald Eagle Mr. Desalvo  
 Sighting near Colony Dr., West Ashley  
 Jan 16 Bald Eagle D. Brown  
 Reports 3 mature Eagles, N. end Seabrook Isl.

This seems to be a prime time for Bald Eagle sightings; it is good to see more of them. Where are the Grosbeaks and Siskins? Give us a call. Leave message at 577-7100, or call Don Watts at 797-6783. Good Birding!!!

## TOUCHDOWN!

On stilt legs, a ghost crab  
 flashes across my path.  
 I run after him.  
 He stops, raises boxing glove claws.

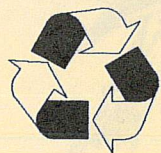
Stalk eyes latch on to mine.  
 Suddenly, in reverse, he bolts.  
 Eyes fixed on mine, he feints  
 this way and that  
 like a speeding halfback  
 going for a touchdown  
 backward.

Outwitting me with 360 degree vision,  
 he backs into his hole  
 and disappears.

Pat Leonard

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



HEART of the SWAMP, from page one

swamp waters. It died in my hands as I attempted to move it to high ground, to the horror of 30 first graders on the boardwalk. Bambi is not supposed to die, don't you know!

I once found the remains of an adult deer floating in a swamp lake. It had been eaten by an alligator. It should never have tried to swim the lake.

One frosty morning I saw a Hoary bat clinging low on the side of a tree. One of his wings was half unfolded to the side. I discovered that one of the finger bones that make up the supportive structure of his wings was broken. With a broken finger, the wing would not work, and without wings the bat could not fly, and without flight it could not seek shelter or food. The bat clearly did not want to be touched, so I left him. He died that freezing night.

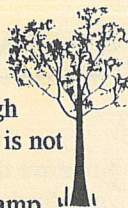
I once caught a small Yellow Bellied Turtle which had only two legs. Perhaps I should say he had two legs LEFT! The other two had perhaps been eaten off, by a small gator or a gar. Lucky for him, the remaining legs were on opposite sides, or I suppose he would have been doomed to a life of swimming in circles! He had survived this long, maybe he would grow up. So I left him.

Last spring I saw a cottonmouth swarmed by flies. Upon a closer look, (but not too close), I saw a quarter-sized wound in his side about one inch deep, infected and festering. Flies were crawling in and out. It was gross. Perhaps another snakes bite, or some other life and death struggle caused the wound. Regardless, I didn't think this snake was long for the world. So, I left him.

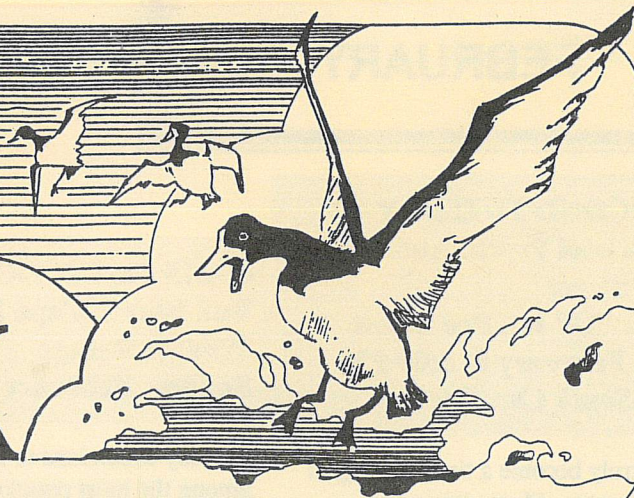
Years ago, not three feet from the boardwalk, I came across a raccoon suffering from what was probably distemper. His jaws had clamped shut on his protruded and swollen tongue, which had turned black. He clawed at his muzzle and writhed in obvious pain. It was truly pathetic. I thought that surely he would die soon. So I left him. But by days end, he was still going and I couldn't stand the thought of it. Lacking a gun to put him quickly out of his misery, I clubbed him on the head with a hammer. To this day, it sickens my stomach. Nature is rough...

I have gone a long way to say that we need to accept the biological world for what it is, in all its beauty, and all its gruesomeness. More often than not, life is built upon death. The Francis Beidler Forest offers the chance to see unsanitized, non-Disneyfied nature, the good, the bad, and the ugly. I hope you will take the opportunity to visit the swamp soon and see for yourself.

If you have any questions, please write Michael Dawson, The Swamp Genius, Francis Beidler Forest, 336 Sanctuary Road, Harleyville, SC 29448, or call 462-2150, or visit 9 - 5, Tues. - Sun.



# THE LESSER SQUAWK



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

### FROM THE HEART OF THE SWAMP

By MICHAEL DAWSON, Asst Sanctuary Mngr  
 FRANCIS BEIDLER FOREST



Do you remember the "World of Disney" TV show? Sunday nights at 7:00. I never missed it as a kid. I especially recall the wildlife stories. They were wonderfully filmed and choreographed, with narrations terribly anthropomorphized (a \$10 word meaning our propensity to credit animals with human thoughts and emotions). Do you remember how Bunnie J. Rabbit always got away from Wiley Fox? And Mr. Snake never was able to snag Mr. Frog before he hopped to safety. Nature according to Disney was pretty, safe, and clean. No pain, no mess, and evidently no food for half of the show's stars!

On the other hand, real nature is rough and bloody. Mother Nature is a harsh mistress. It's a "dog eat dog" world out there, or should I say a "snake eat frog" world! Animals suffer and animals die, even the cute ones. It's not good, it's not bad, it's just how it works. During my years working at the swamp I have had my share of grand and spectacular wildlife sightings, the Disney kind. I have also seen the cruel side of things, what I refer to as "Mother Nature and Mr. Hyde!" (Don't you love really bad metaphors?)

Several months ago I wrote about my experience with a fawn that was near death, lying half-submerged in the cold

### YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS, LIKE OTHER TOURISTS, VISIT CHARLESTON FOR A LITTLE ROMANCE AND SOME SEAFOOD

After several years of unnecessary, even laughable confrontation over City of Charleston attempts to discourage an annual nesting colony of Yellow-crowned Night Herons in Washington Park, the City has relented. It's probably true that the City was less influenced by the cogent arguments of CNHS and others than by the apparent total disregard of the Herons to the wacky means employed. Whatever the case, CNHS was delighted to receive the following promise from Mayor Riley. We wish to thank the Mayor and his park staff for coming to this enlightened decision.



City of Charleston  
 Joseph P. Riley, Jr.  
 Mayor

December 16, 1993

Mr. Don Watts  
 President, C.N.H.S.  
 9 Clarksville Lane  
 Goose Creek, SC 29445

Dear Mr. Watts:

Thank you very much for your letter and the very nice invitation.

Our plans for the coming year are not to put up any owls or other devices to try to keep the night herons away. We will do our normal pruning of the deadwood, which in a park like that, is the most responsible thing to do from a safety standpoint.

We have received a lot of advice over the years and are surprised that there is any advice offered that we didn't at least consider. If you know of anyone who would like to give the City advice on this matter, have them call Danny Burbage of our Parks Department.

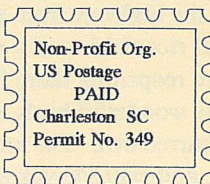
We love Washington Park very much and bemoan the fact that the night herons render it reasonably unusable by human beings for a part of the year. Our hope is that the night heron usage is cyclical and that eventually the numbers will be reduced, and that the park will not be so overrun with night herons that humans will not be able to enjoy it. But in any event, we are not planning any procedures this year.

Most sincerely yours,

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.  
 Mayor, City of Charleston

Please see SWAMP, page 6

FEBRUARY 1994



EXPIRES OCT94

MS. JANE E. LAREAU  
 2165 W RIVERS RD.  
 CHARLESTON SC 29412-2092



# FEBRUARY

**CNHS SECOND TUESDAY**  
**Medical School Psych. Auditorium**  
**President Street**  
**Park Free, "G" lot, Bee Street**  
**Tuesday, February 8, 8:00 PM**  
**Eagles in South Carolina**

Winter has truly become a time for Eagles in the Lowcountry. Please join us as endangered- species biologist Tom Murphy details the nesting pairs, distribution, habits, and hunting methods of local Bald Eagles.

As usual, if you need more specific directions to the meeting, call CNHS at 577-7100.

**CNHS FIELD TRIP**  
**Old Santee Canal State Park**  
**Saturday, February 19**

Have you ever seen a ship steaming its way up to Columbia? Well, you might have if the Santee Canal had been completed as planned. What remains of the canal and earth works have recently become the state's newest park, offering many opportunities for historical and nature observations.

Members of CNHS and their families are offered free admission all day Saturday, February 19. There will be guided walks at 10 AM & 2 PM. Coffee and refreshments are to be served, 12 to 2, at the interpretive center. We are free to use the beautiful 31/2 mile trail and its ten set observation sites. Please call the Park at 899-5200, for more information or directions.

**CNHS FIELD TRIP**  
**Bull Island, Cape Romain**  
**Wildlife Refuge**  
**Sunday, February 27, 8:00 AM**

The day excursions to Bull Island are among the most popular and rewarding of CNHS field trips. The boat ride alone is worth the price of admission. Three miles through pristine salt marsh offers close-ups of numerous wading birds (including a concentration of wintering Oyster Catchers), Eagles, Dolphin, and water fowl. On the island there's the potential for winter migrants of all kinds, shore birds, fresh and salt water ducks. Plus Wild Turkey, Horned Owls, and fabulous winter shelling on the beach. Red Wolves run freely on the island.

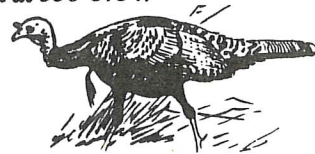
Prepare to be entirely self-contained for hiking and your lunch. Do not underestimate a cold wind over water. Space aboard the boat is limited, so call Lee Lowder, 723-3057, for reservations, \$15 per person. Last year we chartered a second boat to accommodate the response, but do call early. Meet the boat at Moore's Landing, 8:00 AM

**CNHS FIELD TRIP**  
**The Grove Plantation, ACE Basin**  
**Sunday, March 6**

Join Ann Shahid and Ed Blitch on a tour of this National Wildlife Refuge, part of the ACE Basin in Charleston County. This should be a transitional period for birds, with both lingering winter waterfowl and

early spring migrants found.

There will be easy walks of moderate distances. Bring a lunch. Meet in the parking lot of Shopper's Port, Hgy 17S & the Mark Clark, 7:00 AM. You may call Ann Shahid at 556-8734.



## BIRDING STUDY GROUP

This new group is open to anyone who would like to learn to identify those birds which are considered "difficult" or "confusing." Everyone is welcome. We will try various sites around the Lowcountry with specific birds in mind. The outings will last a couple of hours only, and we will vary the day and time somewhat to accommodate interested persons and the birds. Study groups for February and March are as follow:

SUNDAY, FEB. 13, 2:00 PM; At the Pitt Street Bridge, Mt. Pleasant --For Shorebirds

SATURDAY, FEB. 26, 1:00 PM; At Moore's Landing, Cape Romain -- For Shorebirds

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 8:00 AM; At the Pitt Street Bridge, Mt. Pleasant -- For Shorebirds

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, NOON; At Moore's Landing, Cape Romain -- For Shorebirds

For additional information, please call David Huff (886-6911) or Ed Blitch (795-5277).

## BACKYARD BIRDER

By BRUCE KRUCKE



Nothing like a good snow storm and record cold up north to improve the birding down here! I'm enjoying over a hundred goldfinches most of the time now. Of course it means spending more on birdseed, but I think it's worth it. (I'm not sure if niger seed is worth it's price!) Add three male tohees at once and you've got a great view. Cheryl Baskins has twenty or thirty house finches at her feeders, but we have only purple finches - about a dozen. Walter Swanson, who lives on Indigo Point, West Ashley, has trouble with huge flocks of blackbirds of all sorts, including crows, and cats from the neighbors.

Our downtown reporter, Scott Hall, saw a large flock of cedar waxwings on Jan. 13th. Scott Houston sighted an American kestrel in the old village of Mt. Pleasant Dec. 5th. It's surprising how many kestrels there are here in winter. Note the posture and the bobbing tail next time you see one and then be aware when you see a bird on a wire. Many people want to know why they see so many hawks lately. It's because they winter here and aren't here in the summer.

Hugh King, Mt. Pleasant, keeps me posted on the interesting birds he sees, such as over a hundred robins in early December, and a broad- winged hawk just before Thanksgiving. The latter should really be reported to Don Watts, 797-6783, since it's a rarity here. Another example would be the male painted bunting that Peter Schwartz had at his feeder on John's Island New Year's Eve. And the whistling ducks that Van Atkins sighted on private pond near the Clemson Experimental Station.

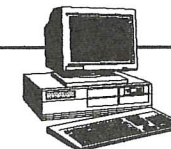
Nelson Taylor had his last hummingbird at the feeder on Nov. 14th, and Jim Martin had a very fat pair in Megget, also in early November. Arla Holroyd saw a hummer at the Heyward Washington House at Christmastime.

On January 11th, I took the Seabrook Island Natural History Group on a birding day at Middleton Place. We had some exciting sights-- the first being three otters. Then we were pleased to see the head of a bald eagle peeking over the rim of the nest. About an hour's observation there showed us the eagle flying in with a fish in it's talons, the tearing and feeding of it to the babies, wonderful poses of the two adults in clear view together on a branch, calling and then copulating, and then flying away, knocking a dead branch off a tree, bringing back branches a vines and weaving them into the nest, hovering over and finally landing on the ricefield dike. Since they had a successful nesting, we don't know why they were displaying such prenesting activities, but we certainly enjoyed the show! Then, after our picnic lunch, David Bolanger, of the new 3W Outfitters at Middleton, took us way into the back of the property across the highway from the Gardens and showed us where the original rice fields and a mill were, and the trails and canals that they are reopening there for environmental recreation and education. We saw wonderful birds, including cedar waxwings, meadowlarks, and a barred owl. The area will be a wonderful resource for birders, hikers, and canoe/kayak enthusiasts.

Feeding wild birds is now a \$2.4 billion industry! But it need not be expensive to enjoy. Nearly every bird that takes food from a feeder will also eat off the ground or a homemade platform. In the wild, most seed is found fairly near the ground anyway. For under \$35 you can get fifty pounds of white millet and black oil sunflower seed and you're in business. Don't forget water! Rake the ground feeding area weekly to help prevent avian disease. A piece of old plywood or carpet makes the viewing of ground feeding birds

better. If it becomes dominated by large unwanted species (read blackbirds and pigeons), put a Quonset hut of chicken wire over it that the little birds will go through. Then in the spring, let your own bird feeding patch grow by planting birdseed, ironweed, thistle, and all the composites in the daisy group. Then you can enjoy the color in the warm months too. Even if the feeder is covered with birds, when I walk out by our wildflower patch a huge flock of mostly sparrows flies out.

I apologize if what you report to me doesn't appear in the column. Sometimes the editor has to cut the article because of space restrictions, so please don't stop sending notes and calling. I really do appreciate every one! Surely this arctic express in mid January will bring some grosbeaks in -- let me know! Bruce W. Krucke, 7352 Toogoodoo Rd., Yorges Island, SC 29449. Phone: 889-6191.



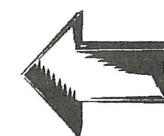
## ENVIRONMENT ON-LINE

For those of you who have computers and modems, there is away you can keep in touch with what is going on in the environmental community. By using your computer modem you can communicate with people right here in Charleston, in the state, or all over the country, on all kinds of environmental issues, many outdoor activities, political concerns. Best of all, it's free. By dialing The Earth Art BBS at 552-4389, the world is at your fingertips. For more information, call Don Watts at 797-6783.

## JUNK MAIL? DON'T RECYCLE IT, STOP IT!

**TO HAVE ALL YOUR UNWANTED JUNK MAIL STOPPED, SEND A WRITTEN REQUEST TO: MAIL PREFERENCE SERVICE, DIRECT MARKETING ASSOCIATION, 11 WEST 42ND ST., PO BOX 3861, NEW YORK, NY 10163-3861. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR COMPLETE NAME, (INCLUDING ALL VARIATIONS) AND ADDRESS. CHANGES ARE MADE QUARTERLY, SO ALLOW TIME FOR YOUR REQUEST TO BE PROCESSED.**

**REMEMBER, JUNK MAIL = TREE FARMS = LESS DIVERSE HABITAT, FEWER SPECIES.**



**CEDAR WAXWING**  
 BROWN BIRD WITH CREST,  
 LARGER THAN A SPARROW.  
 FLOCKS OF THESE BIRDS CAN  
 STRIP A TREE OF BERRIES  
 IN MINUTES.



## 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.

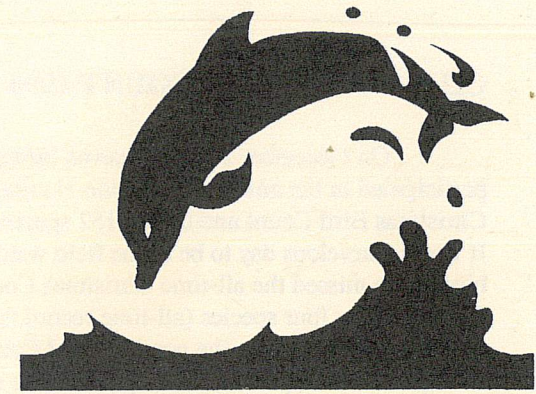
**OFFICERS:** CNHS Office phone (577-7100); President, Don Watts(797-6783), Vice-President, Hal Currey(883-9114), Secretary, Jan Snook(849-9485), Treasurer, Herbert Macmurphy(883-9252).

**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).



# FREE FLIPPER



The wait is almost over...

Thanks to all Audubon members who wrote to their Senators and Representatives, asking them to save South Carolina's ban on whales and dolphins in captivity. We have much to be grateful for, namely a strong contingent of Lowcountry legislators who led the fight to preserve the ban. Unfortunately, Anheiser Busch won the last round. There is one more round to go -- the Governor's veto.

In two critical votes on the first two days of the 1994 legislative session, we lost by breathtaking margins -- two votes would have done the trick in the first vote, four votes would have meant victory in the second. The votes would have allowed HB 3200 to be recalled, so the Senate could vote on it again. (HB 3200 is the bill that repeals our ban on captivity.) The bill was not recalled, so it now stands as passed last year. After it is ratified it will go to Gov. Carroll Campbell for either his signature or his veto.

We sorely missed the support of the following Lowcountry Senators, who **could have made the difference**: Sen. William Mescher (R-Berkeley/Colleton/Dorchester), Sen. Robert Ford (D-Charleston), who inexplicably attended the press conference supporting the ban, and Sen. McKinley Washington (D-Charleston).

Please thank the following Senators who did an outstanding job on behalf of Whale and Dolphin preservation: Sen. Holly Cork (R-Beaufort), Sen. Phil Leventis (D-Sumter), Sen. Glenn McConnell (R-Charleston), Sen. Yancy McGill (D-Williamsburg), Sen. Ernie Passailaigue (D-Charleston), Sen. Lawrence Richter (R-Charleston), and Sen. Mike Rose (R-Dorchester).

And of course, write the governor and tell him you want him to veto HB 3200. His address is: Gov. Carroll Campbell, Jr., P.O. Box 11369, Columbia, SC 29211.

LATE BREAKING NEWS

On the morning before this newsletter went to press, the following headline and lead appeared, page one, in the *Post and Courier*. Sweet victory. Close call.

## Governor kills bill allowing display of marine mammals

By SID GAULDEN  
Of The Post and Courier staff

COLUMBIA — Gov. Carroll A. Campbell Jr. used his veto power Monday to keep marine mammals from being put on display in South Carolina.



# CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 1993

On December 26, thirty-seven birders in thirteen parties participated in the annual Charleston Natural History Society's Christmas Bird Count and tallied 152 species, 27,188 birds in all. It was a marvelous day to be in the field watching and counting birds. We missed the all-time Christmas Count record for Charleston by four species (all-time record is 155). We added a possible four species to the possible Bird Count list, which stood at 190 species. The possible new species to be added are American White Pelican, Hummingbird Sp., Piping Plover, and Golden-crowned Sparrow.

Although we had an excellent count, we missed several species that we normally tally on the Christmas Counts, which, if seen would have taken to a new record high count. We were somewhat lucky in that eight species were represented by only one individual, and 14 other species were represented by three or less individuals.

We are trying to set a leader and co-leader in each of the established territories for the Christmas and Spring Counts so there will always be a group leader who is familiar with that territory. We have also endeavored to add three boating territories to the permanent agenda of the counts: one boat to cover the intercoastal waterway, one on the Wando River, and one covering the ocean fronts of Bull, Capers, and Dewees islands, thereby giving us maximum coverage in the count circle (circle is limited to a 15 mile diameter).

With your help in the future, we can grow and become one of the premier counts on the East Coast. Come join in on the fun next Christmas or this Spring. We would be delighted to have each of you as a regular member of the count teams.

Edwin L. Blitch III  
Chairman, Bird Counts

