

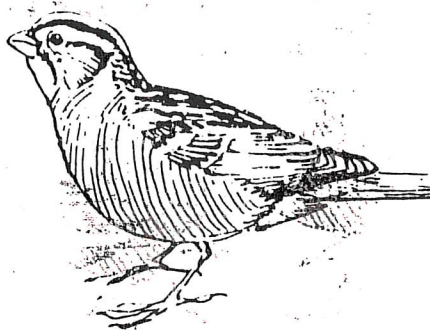
NEWSLETTER OF THE CHARLESTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

CHAPTER,
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

BACKYARD BIRDER By BRUCE KRUCKE



There were lots of phone calls this month. Unfortunately, most of them weren't my department and I wasn't able to offer much help. Peter Schwartz called about a dead white-throated sparrow with a huge tick by its eye. I recommended that he freeze the bird with good data about where and when the bird was found and take it to the museum for Will Post. Van Atkins and Charlie Walters saw a goshawk near the Mount Nebo Church on Hgy 17 North, by the Francis Marion Forest. Van also reported glossy ibis among the many species of wading birds at the Pitt Street Causeway in Mt. Pleasant.



Cherry Sneed had eight towhees at her feeder at one time in February. The downtown reports I got were from Walter Swanson, who described a huge flock of robins on Queen Street, and from Lois Basquet, who saw a huge flock of cedar waxwings at Colonial Lake. Ann Kent said there were robins and waxwings all over Seabrook as well. She has all the "regulars" at the feeders and bluebirds

checking out the boxes on the small trail of boxes that they began last year.

There were eagles sighted at Seabrook this winter as well as last. A group and I had great sightings of the eagles at Middleton in early March – two young active on the edge of the nest – and a magnificent adult.

The birding tip for the month is to be a quieter, stiller, more cautious observer. Sit quietly in a spot you've known to be productive and let the birds come to you. They'll soon become used to you and resume their activities.

If you're putting up boxes for woodpeckers, try filling them with sawdust so the birds will have to "excavate" the cavity. Having suet available attracts woodpeckers also. Here are a couple of recipes for summer suet: Combine crunchy peanut butter, oatmeal, cornmeal, lard, flour and raisins. Or the same thing with a half cup of sugar instead of the raisins. The amount of lard, flour, and peanut butter match and the oat and corn meal are twice that.

If you have a mockingbird that has become territorial with your feeders, probably the best thing to do is put feeders on other sides of your house so the mockingbird can't defend everything all the time.

Remember to keep your birdbaths clean and full as the weather gets warmer. Singing birds require water to cool themselves and also keep the nestlings from overheating by rubbing them with their wet belly feathers. Birdbaths have an almost magical ability to attract birds. It can be as simple as an upside-down garbage can lid or as fancy as an elaborate three tiered

waterfall. Sprays, drips, in fact any movement of the water, is irresistible to birds. Locate your bath under the tree canopy so passing hawks can't get a clear shot at the vulnerable bathers.

Keep those cards, calls, and letters coming! Bruce W. Krucke, 7352 Toogoodoo Rd., Yorges Island, SC 29449. Phone 889-6191.



A BOOK REVIEW By DON WATTS

I was recently asked by the Charleston Clean City Commission to review a book that was published by them. *The Story Of Clara, Charleston's Clean City Pelican* is written and illustrated by Charleston's own Celia Childress. It is a story for all ages, with a great theme and message for us all on the problem of litter.

The story begins with a pelican caught in Hurricane Hugo. After sustaining serious injuries, she is nursed back to health by a young boy and is taught the difference between litter and fish. Clara recovers fully and takes up the mission of picking up trash all over the city. She sings songs to the people, telling them that they should stop littering and help keep the city clean. But the job is too big for Clara, so she enlists the help of the boy and his schoolmates to spread the word and clean up the city.

I highly recommend that parents obtain a copy of this book -- for themselves and their children. It contains a great message that we can all benefit from. My compliments to the author for the story, the wonderful illustrations, and entertaining facts about nature. *The Story Of Clara* is available at Chapter Two Bookstore.

APRIL 1995

CNHS FIELD TRIP
Saturday, April 15, 7:30 AM
Medway Plantation

There is a feature of Charleston's historical relationship to the surrounding lowcountry that becomes less obvious each year. The river roads no longer pass through long tracts of forested land, punctuated here and there by a brick gate or an unmarked sandy driveway. The very nature of these river roads and their infrequent access roads spoke of the plantation houses deep through the woods, down by the rivers. Now, with each new housing development, strip center, factory, you forget the plantations and all they implied for the land, the economy, society.

One notable exception is the destination of our April 15 field trip. Medway Plantation, on the Back River, a tributary of the Cooper, has remained generally intact for centuries, and though hard pressed by surrounding development, is now protected as an environmental trust. 6800 acres of wood and wetlands, Medway harbors a diversity of characteristic lowcountry ecosystems -- including stands of longleaf pine (with Red-cockaded Woodpeckers) and old rice fields -- and the wealth of flora and fauna typical of these rich ecosystems. The archeology of Medway traces the history of the Lowcountry from prehistoric Indian artifacts, through the era of rice planting, to the present. The house is the oldest masonry house in South Carolina.

We must strictly limit the size of our group,

so please call Herbert Macmurphy, 883-9252, to make reservations and learn of directions and meeting site.



CNHS FIELD TRIP
Saturday, April 22
Earth Day At The McAlhany
Nature Preserve

This April 22 marks the 25th anniversary of Earth Day, a day that has evolved to now punctuate concern for the state of our planet and refresh our resolve to act in the planet's best interest. It has never been hard to find one issue or another to promote on Earth Day, but, in light of the new, anti-environmental mood in Congress, this Earth Day seems particularly important. This is truly a time to join hands with like-minded citizens and present a solid front to those forces who would strip away the hard-won environmental protections that have enjoyed public favor and the force of law over these last twenty-five years.

So, it is with in part a political motivation and in part the call of the river that we invited members of the Sierra Club to join us for Earth Day at our McAlhany Nature Preserve. This weekend will be oriented to the Edisto River, with canoes and kayaks, maybe a half-day river run, surely boating on the ox-bow swamp lake. There's plenty to do upland too. Long nature hikes through all sorts of habitat filled with spring wild

flowers, the best birding, butterflies, reptiles. The best time of day is at sunset when sounds of the swamp take on an entirely different character. Night around a small cabin in a large swamp.

Plan to camp overnight if you like. You'll be glad you did when the alligators and owls start calling. And you'll be in perfect position for fabulous birding at first light. Of course, you should be entirely prepared with your own boat, camping gear, and food. There is a cabin for relaxation and dining if you like-- cold running water for clean-up or bathing, and a toilet. Bring your own drinking water.

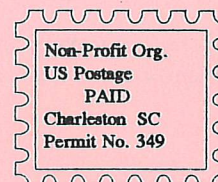
The McAlhany is a great place to be in the spring. We hope you will join us and our Sierra Club friends. We will convoy from Charleston to the river above St. George. Meet in the parking lot of the Aviation Ave. Theater at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, April 22. If you know the way, the gates to The McAlhany will be open by 12 noon. For more information, or directions, call Herbert

CNHS SPRING COUNT
Sunday, April 30

Bird Count Committee Chairman Ed Blitch announces that this year's Spring Count will take place in our usual count circle on Sunday, April 30. Just as each Christmas we tally the species and numbers of birds wintering or migrating through our area, so do we in the Spring. All birders are welcome. Team captains will receive their maps in the mail. Everyone interested in the best of spring birding should meet at the Gregory Texaco Station, Hwy 17 North & Hwy 41, at 7:00 AM.

Charleston Natural History Society
P.O. Box 504
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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