

Backyard Birder

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addition to the bird list of the State Park at Edisto — an avocet. The McMurphys are enjoying a barred owl on the Sullivan's Island Coast Guard house and an eagle has been seen at Fort Moultrie.

We hear a lot about the economic impact of birdwatching and bird feeding. Now one-third of all American adults feed wild birds in their yards.

A new report from the U.S. Forest Service, says that deer may be partly responsible for the recent declines in some migratory songbirds. Their munching on low tree leaves and low-growing plants thins out the canopy — literally eating the birds out of house and home. As soon as the deer population reaches eight per square kilometer, many species disappear from the area.

The brains of chickadees actually grow in the fall when they begin having to work harder for feed.

They need to remember here they've put food. These renewable cells of the brain are discarded in the spring when food become easier to find so the birds don't add any permanent weight. Caged birds whose food was furnished didn't have this brain expansion.

You're probably sick of me preaching against ordinary mixed bird seed, but there is more evidence that it's not the best thing to use. Birds have their favorite seed and they will push the unwanted types onto the ground where it will rot, mildew, and

become contaminated by bird droppings and then be eaten by other ground-feeding birds. This expert recommends putting different types of seeds in separate feeders. She also says that offering water all year will double the number of birds in your yard.

I'm enjoying hearing from you again. For new readers — Bruce is a woman. Write or call: Bruce W. Krucke, 7352 Toogoodoo Road, Yorges Island, SC 29449. Phone: 889-6191.

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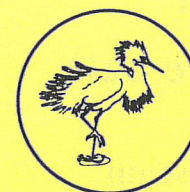
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October 1995

Wildlife under attack in Congress

By Jane Lareau

Now that Congress is back in session after the August recess, there has been furious activity by anti-environmental forces to repeal or fatally weaken the environmental laws that protect us. The assaults are so many, and coming so fast, everything that I write is old news as soon as it is printed.

Full scale attacks are now underway on the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, EPA's budget and even National Parks and Monuments (Congress wants to sell a few). The attacks come in many forms. For example, new bills in the House and Senate would kill the Endangered Species

Act. But attacks on EPA, the Arctic and the Clean Water Act come in the form of budget cuts.

What can concerned Audubon members do?

It is very important to write Senator Ernest Hollings — who will be a critical vote on most of the issues — and your local representative, Mark Sanford. I've included both their addresses and phone numbers. Pick one issue that matters to you and ask them to

cast their votes in protection of Endangered Species or Clean Water, or whatever. You can write more than one letter, but focus on only one issue per letter. (There are so many assaults that environmentalist are having to write a letter a day.)

If you are like me, you are getting Special Alerts on each of these issues from National Audubon and other national environmental organizations. Use these to help

(See Wildlife, Page 2)

President's Eye-View

Couple misses point

Allow me to recount a sad birding tale from my year as an Audubon intern. While operating the information desk at Francis Beidler Forest, I had an encounter of the most bizarre kind. They arrived just after I unlocked the visitor center doors. A middle-of-life, khaki couple equipped from toe to beak with cameras, binoculars and a half dozen field guides. "Do you have any interesting birds here?" the khaki man asked. Proudly, I replied, "Oh, yes sir! We've

got prothonotary warblers nesting in hollow cypress knees and yellow-crowned night herons in the tupelos. There are herons, egrets and ibis. And you don't want to miss our baby barred owls just 10 feet off the boardwalk! There's also a nest of pileated..." Interrupting, the khaki man's coordinated wife asked, "Is that all?" "All?" I replied.

"Well, we've seen all (See Birding, page 3)

**Bird Seed Order
Form Inside**



**October Field Trip
Laurel Hill Plantation
Oct. 14, 1995
8 a.m.**

Laurel Hill Plantation is an excellent birding site which is on Highway 41, one mile past the junction of Route 17 and 41. All participants should meet at the gate at 8 a.m. for an enjoyable day of birdwatching. Bring a lunch, and insect repellent.

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Programs: Lee Lowder 769-4186
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**October Program
Curator tracks rare bats
Oct. 10 8 p.m.
The Charleston Museum**

Mary Kay Clark, Curator of Mammals for the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, will present the program on Oct. 10 at 8 p.m. in The Charleston Museum. Clark will share her bat-tracking experiences in Four Holes Swamp.

It was a grant from the Charleston Natural History Society that allowed her to begin her research on bats in the swamp. As a result, she has discovered some rare bats in Four Holes and has received outside funding for further study.

**Wildlife under attack in Congress
(Continued from page 1)**

you compose your letters. I will be happy to give you bill numbers, timing on when a vote is expected, and that sort of thing. Call me at (work) 723-8035 or (home) 795-2150.

However, I should emphasize that, while it is important for you to get the bill number straight, and be reasonably informed about the issue — you don't have to be an expert. Don't feel like you can't write a letter about EPA budget cuts because you aren't sure about terminology or which committee is marking it up in which House.

What is most important is that Senator Hollings and Congressmen Sanford know how many of us value the strong environmental laws that have been carefully crafted over two decades, and that are working well. We encourage them to vote for bills that construct careful solutions to well-identified problems with

any of our environmental laws. But the sham solutions that are being offered now are dangerous to our health, our environment and all the creatures that share this world with us.

Write to:

Senator Ernest F. Hollings
125 Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-4002
Local office # 727-4525
DC Office # 1-202-224-6121

Mark Sanford
U.S. House of Representatives
1223 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 29515
Local office #727-4175
DC Office #1-202-225-3176

Raptor count update

The coastal hawk migration survey is underway. The survey is sanctioned by the Hawk Migration Association of North America. Call Van Atkins, 766-7000, for details.

**Birding couple misses the point
(Continued from page 1)**

those birds before," she said with a brush of her hand. "Don't you have anything interesting? We were hoping for something more exotic." "Exotic? You mean non-native: cattle egrets, starlings, pigeons..." "No, no, no!" the man blurted, "it can be native, just interesting, something unusual, rare, threatened."

Fumbling for something to say, I countered with, "I understand you've seen all of these birds before, but I'm sure you haven't seen these exact birds, our birds, here, today. Thousands of birds reacting to an environment in constant flux. Avian morality plays of birth, life and death, acted out in this primeval forest and in backyards across the country! All birds, even dull common ones, have a story to tell! Although the characters may seem familiar and the stage unremarkable, each performance is precious, distinctive and revealing!"

I'd love to tell you the couple stayed, had a wonderful time and enjoyed my theater metaphors. They did not. They stared at me, shocked, maybe frightened. Hesitantly the man

asked, "How do you get to Cape Romain from here?"

Please don't get me wrong. I, too, have a bird list, but in the margins beside the mockingbird, red-tailed hawk and barred owl entries are performance notes: "April 7th -- 6-foot rat snakes driven out of tree by mockingbirds, triumphant birds then turn on each other." If the aforementioned couple had stayed and observed the owlets, they would have marveled at this klutzy, downy bird, gingerly stepping around forest tent caterpillars and occasionally picking them off his feet and dropping them into the black water below.

One can't help but wonder how much time this couple actually spent watching birds as opposed to needlessly burning earth-warming fuels in search of the elusive, exotic, (but native), interesting bird. What a tragedy, that one's heart doesn't pound at the flight of a great blue heron or a smile not appear at the sight of a belted-kingfisher's deft flying. The world is a stage; it belongs to the birds. Admission is free.

Lee Lowder

Upcoming Sierra Club field trips

Some of our members may want to join members of our sister group, the Sierra Club, on their field trips.

Oct. 15: Canoe trip on the Great Pee Dee River and

Jerico Creek. Call Bill Turner at 571-3503.

Oct. 21: Tour of Dewees Island by developer John Knott. Call Sandy Quick at 881-7066.



**Backyard
Birder**

A few goldfinches have been showing up around the area. Phyllis Crabbe had one in Otranto on Aug. 26. Maybe it was the same one we had here on the 23rd and Van Atkins had at his house on Sept. 3rd. On the same day as the goldfinch, I had a new record at the feeders. In the pouring rain there were 25 cardinals at once! They were color balanced by six blue jays and a robin.

Mary Evans, in Mount Pleasant, has tried the pepper stuff to make birdseed unattractive to squirrels. She got it at a prominent nursery there in Mount Pleasant. It requires one tablespoon for four pounds of seed and Mary feels that it's working. Our old friend the white mockingbird of Toogoodoo Road was spotted in late July by Cherie Pittillo. A little further out, Bud and Bonnie Doty, working on their land on Russell Creek, Edisto, had great purple martins and an eagle family.

An interesting call from Chris Johnson told of her recent visit to her home in Illinois, just across the Mississippi from St. Louis. Growing up there, she had never seen an egret in the marshes along the river. The area is very industrial and polluted, so she was fascinated to see hundreds of egrets and herons of all sorts — even a bittern. All the open fields in the area were covered with cattle egrets. The birds appeared for the first time last year, people told Chris, and stayed the whole summer. We wonder where they used to go and why did they change and how are they coping with the factories, etc.? Any theories?

Keep you hummingbird feeders filled until a week after you see the last hummingbird. That should be about mid-October. The hummers are so cute and fat now. There are 300 varieties of hummingbirds — only 20 of which breed in the U.S.

Marilyn Lacerna reports an