

Wildlife Biologist Has Good News, Bad News

Wildlife biologist Mark Dodd, our speaker for the March meeting, gave an informative and entertaining report on wading bird populations in the state. He had good news and bad news.

Woodstorks, which never nested in South Carolina until 1981, are having phenomenal success. The birds formerly nested predominately in the Everglades in South Florida. Over the past 10 years, the nests there failed due to a decrease in habitat. In 1981, there were 12 nests in the South Carolina. Last year, over 1,000 nesting pairs were counted.

Likewise, cattle egrets didn't

move into South Carolina until the 1950s. Now there are 750 nesting pairs.

Biologists are concerned about white ibis and little blue herons. The population of ibises is down to 50,000. These birds are nomads and nest where they find abundant food, so they do move around quite a bit. The little blue

heron colonies have declined, largely due to a 20 percent decrease in freshwater wetlands in the state.

Birds are very sensitive to changes and are accurate indicators of environmental problems, said Dodd. The decline of the woodstorks in Florida was a tip-off that there were serious problems.

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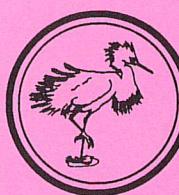
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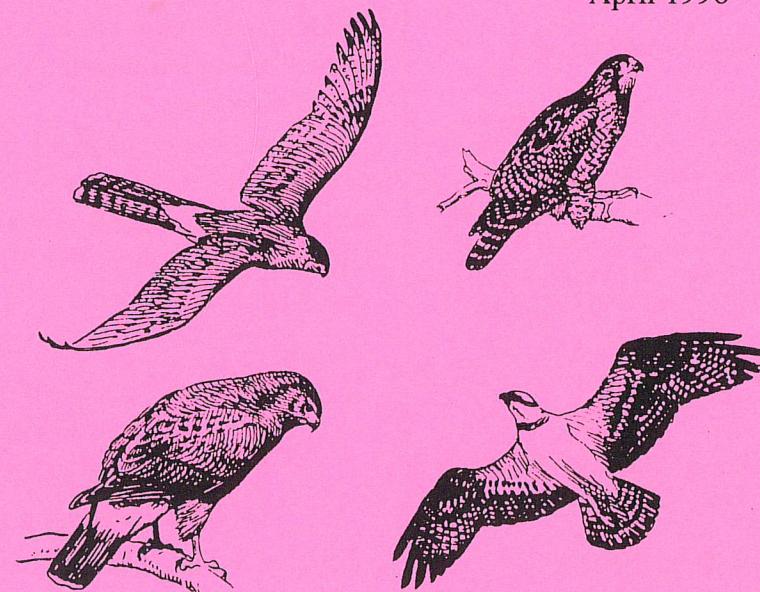
Hawk Expert Plans Visit

Special Evening To Feature Pete Dunne

The Charleston Natural History Society, The South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, and The Charleston Raptor Center are delighted to sponsor a visit to Charleston by hawk expert Pete Dunne. Dunne is a nationally recognized authority on hawks and is a much sought-after speaker. An "Evening With Pete Dunne" is scheduled for Saturday, June 1. Other events are planned, so keep your calendars free for this exciting birding event.

Observations Column

Any member who sees a rare bird, one that usually is not found in this area, or that is here at an unseasonal time, should contact Bob Chinn. Bob will be writing a new "Observations" column to share reports. To report unusual sightings, call or write Bob at 552-7884, 7666 Chippendale Road, North Charleston, SC 29420. Bruce Krucke will continue to report species observed at area bird feeders in her column, "Backyard Birder."



CNHS President Lobbies Senators

At the invitation of Marilyn England, grassroots organizer for Audubon's Living Oceans Program, CNHS president Lee Lowder met with several senators and staff persons regarding the reauthorization of the Magnuson Act. On March 4 and 5, Lowder visited the offices of Atlantic and Gulf Coast senators, hoping to enlighten them on this important fisheries protection act. Of primary concern is the amount of by-catch and habitat degradation, as well as the potential loss of jobs should our fisheries industries fail. Lowder will have a full report in the May issue of The Lesser Squawk.

CNHS Plans Sessions at School

Volunteers Needed for Introductory Birding Program
Our chapter has been presented with an excellent opportunity to help develop an introductory birding program in a Charleston County school. We need about 20 volunteers to help children, in groups of five, identify and record birds in several downtown Charleston locations. Education is what we're all about! If you can help, please call Lee Lowder at 769-4186, or just call if you need more information.

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The Lesser Squawk, newsletter of the Charleston Natural History Society, is published monthly except for the months of June, July and August. The deadline for copy is the 10th of each month.

Sky Watch

Watch for an upcoming feature on the latest meteor showers, constellations and other astronomical events of note.

April Program
Dr. Richard Porcher
April 9, 1996

7 p.m. (Please Note Time Change.)

Charleston Museum
360 Meeting Street

Botanist, Author and Citadel Professor Richard Porcher will give a slide presentation on his recently published book, "Wildflowers of the Carolina Lowcountry and Lower Pee Dee," and his latest research projects.

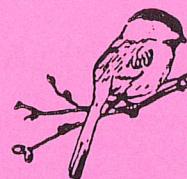
Porcher's book is a guide which identifies more than 400 native and naturalized wildflowers that flourish in South Carolina's inner and outer coastal plain. Flowers are grouped according to the natural habitats where they are most likely to be found.

April Field Trip
Saturday, April 13
Wildflower Trip
Francis Marion National Forest
8 a.m. to noon

Meet at 8 a.m. at Gregorie's Texaco Station, Highway 17 North and 41. Botanist, Author and Citadel Professor, Dr. Richard Porcher, will take us to several different habitats to find spring wildflowers. Richard likes to move off the beaten track in search of botanical finds, so dress accordingly. This trip will last until noon. Bring a picnic lunch for afterward. Join us!

Aubudon Mountain Workshop Set

The 19th annual Mountain Workshop, sponsored by the Alabama Audubon Council, is set for May 16-19 at Camp Alpine on Lookout Mountain near Mentone, Alabama. The workshop is staffed by experts in their fields from college campuses throughout Alabama. Sessions are limited to 12 and a program for children will be directed by David Holloway of the Chattanooga Nature Center and Sara Bright of Birmingham. Subjects of classes include animal ecology, beginning and advanced bird identification, wildflowers, trees and shrubs, edible plants, ferns, stream biology, mammals, insects, reptiles and amphibians, rocks and fossils, minerals, canoeing and mountain crafts. The goal of the workshop is to promote a better understanding of the natural history and ecology of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. For more information, call or write Mrs. Kap Garmon, registrar, 356 Lucerne Boulevard, Birmingham, Ala. 35209, (205) 871-4875.



By Bruce Krucke

This will be an abbreviated article since my husband had open heart surgery on the day it was supposed to be written. He's doing magnificently well, thank goodness.

The goldfinches have pretty well moved on, but we will see them again probably in late April or early May. I doubt that they will be the same birds, but rather, some coming through from further away. The great thing is that they'll be in full breeding plumage and really look like goldfinches. Scott Hall had goldfinches this year for the second time in the 18 years he's lived on Lamboll Street downtown. He got a new niger seed feeder for Christmas and said it looked just like the illustration in the catalog with the finches all over it.

It's so nice to wake up in the morning and hear all the bird noises and songs — a real sign of spring.

Charlie Walters, Ben Smith, and often Van Atkins go out birding to someplace interesting nearly every Saturday. Give them a ring if you'd like to go along. Some of their good sightings recently have been Ross's goose, Brewer's blackbird and rusty blackbird in Owen, SC, near Laurens, and arctic loon at Botany Bay.

Here are some new figures on

Backyard Birder

the domestic cat impact on small wildlife, including migratory and non-migratory birds. There are between 50 and 60 million domestic cats in homes in the US. The estimate of feral cats is about the same. It is figured that each cat, except for ones which are entirely indoors, kills about two birds a month. I'll let you do the math.

Diane Barber had a male painted bunting this winter at her feeder in Summerville and Marge Del Bene reported a white headed robin in Mount Pleasant. A friend in Greer called to tell me about an albino squirrel at her feeder. It had the pink eyes and nose of a true albino, not like the white squirrels we have out here on Yonges Island, which have black eyes, etc.

South Carolina leads the nation in the number of backyards certified as wildlife habitats by the National Wildlife Federation. To register your yard, write to SC Wildlife Federation, 715 Woodrow Street, Columbia, SC. All you need to have is water, food and shelter.

Here's the recipe for what is supposed to be the best glop mixture there is: Melt 1 cup crunchy peanut butter and 1 cup lard (no substitutes)

together. Stir in 2 cups of quick oats, 1 cup flour, 2 cups cornmeal, and 1/3 cup sugar. Pour into containers about 1 and 1/2 inches deep and cool. Cut into squares and store in the freezer. Personally, I don't think the sugar, flour and oatmeal are necessary. The birds really love it and it handles the heat well.

Who has purple martins?
Bruce W. Krucke, 7352
Toogoodoo Road, Yonges
Island, SC 29449. Phone 889-
6191.

Beidler Canoe Trips

For a great way to enjoy spring, try canoeing in the National Audubon Society's Francis Beidler Forest. The Beidler Forest offers canoe trips which take visitors through the still blackwater among towering ancient cypress trees. Canoes, paddles, life jackets and a guide are provided. Regular trips lasting four hours are set for Friday afternoons and Saturday and Sunday mornings throughout spring. For families with younger children, Francis Beidler offers abbreviated canoe trips. To make reservations, call (803) 462-2150.