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Newsletter of the Charleston Natural History Society

April 1997

I'm delighted that Rudy Mancke has agreed to be our speaker at the next member's meeting. This meeting will also serve as a membership drive for the chapter.

We not only need more understanding, caring members, we also need more active members. There are roughly 1000 people in this chapter, yet all the projects, functions and planning are handled by roughly 8 people. This is not healthy for an organization.

Beidler Forest Appeal

In it's fight against a proposed stock car racetrack adjacent to Four Holes Swamp and the Francis Beidler Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, sanctuary manager Norman Brunswig is making an appeal for more donations. In spite of legal setbacks, sanctuary proponents have taken their case back to civil court where they are continuing the fight to steer the speedway to a more suitable location. If you would like to make a donation, send it to the National Audubon Society, Francis Beidler Forest, 336 Sanctuary Road, Harleyville, SC 29448.

Courtenay Middle School Project Set

Bird feeders made by Boy Scout troop #108 were put up at Courtenay Middle School by students with the help of Karen Beshears, Carl Broadwell, Cornelia Gibbs and Don Jones. Their help was much appreciated. The bird feeders were filled with birdseed donated by Polly Holden and The Audubon Shop and Jennifer Brasch. Polly donated 80 pounds of seed!

I will be setting up Charleston Natural History Society information tables at the Charleston County Recreation and Park Commission's (April 19) and MUSC's (April 22) Earth Day festivals. If you would like to help me staff these events, please call!

Access to a Xerox
Flat folders for 8x10 paper
Lamination paper
Birdseed to refill feeders at Courtenay
Middle School

Modeling clay

Pipe cleaners
Styrofoam
one pack straws
32 pairs of chopsticks
24 pairs of pliers

- 16 large slotted spoons
- 24 small strainers
- 24 small fishnets
- 8 small logs
- 8 6x6" plastic containers
- 8 10x10" plastic containers
- 16 plastic containers — approximately 12x10x10"

8 tall thin vases
Fake rubber worms
String

The nominations for members of the Executive Board and officers of the Charleston Natural History Society for the upcoming year are:

Backyard Birder

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and poison ivy (unless you are allergic) are all recommended weeds for attracting and benefiting birds. Seems like the best thing would be to just let it all go!

Let's have lots of reports for my next and last article. Bruce W. Krucke, 7352 Toogoodoo Road, Yonges Island, SC 29449. Phone: 889-6191



Become a Member of CNHS (U51)

All you have to do is subscribe to Audubon Magazine (\$20 for a year). Your membership in CNHS is automatic.

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Mail to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data
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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 the month preceding publication. Send submissions to:

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April CNHS Events

Open House At McAlhany Sunday, April 13 Gate opens at 8:30 a.m.

Come enjoy spring at the McAlhany Sanctuary April 13. Special features include an oxbow lake, hiking trails, and a cabin which provides facilities. To get to the McAlhany Sanctuary, take highway 61 North to U.S. Highway 15, turn right (North). Follow 15 to Grover, SC. In Grover, turn left onto Highway 19. Just past intersection of Highway 19 and county road 26, you'll cross Cattle Creek. The entrance to McAlhany will be on the left side of the road. McAlhany is about 8 miles from Grover.

Earth Day Celebration: Spring At McAlhany Boating, Camping Trip April 19-20

Members of CNHS will be joined by Sierra Club members for a camp-out and boat excursion at McAlhany Nature Preserve. Participants are invited to camp out Saturday night and bring canoes and kayaks for a boat trip on Sunday morning. Boaters will put in at the Rt. 321 Bridge (5 or 6 miles up river) and take out at the McAlhany property. (This is a one to two-hour trip.) Those who want to just come up for the boat trip are welcome to arrive Sunday morning. Plan to meet for carpooling early Saturday afternoon for the trip up. Call Mac MacMurphy for the meeting time and place at 883-9252.

Spring Bird Count
Sunday, April 27, 6:30 am
at Gregorie's Texaco. Intersection of Highways 41 and 17 North in Mt. Pleasant. All interested parties should contact Lee Lowder at 769-4186 or the count coordinator Ed Blitch at 795-5277, or just meet us there!

Trip to "Little Eden" Dixie Plantation Saturday, April 20 7:30 a.m.

Dixie Plantation, the former home of bird painter and world traveler, John Henry Dick, will be our destination on Sunday, April 20. Dixie, with its magnificent avenue of oaks, maritime forest and marshfront areas offers a rich array of habitats for warblers, waders and other wildlife. Dick called it, appropriately, his "Little Eden." Dick willed the plantation to the College of Charleston with the goal of preserving the natural state of the land and providing a wonderful natural laboratory for science faculty and students from the College. Meet to carpool at 7:30 a.m. at The Pantry, John's Island turnoff on Highway 17 South. The trip will be led by Julian Harrison.

Rudy Mancke to Speak April 8 at 7 p.m. Charleston Museum 360 Meeting Street Charleston

Naturalist Rudy Mancke, star and producer of *Nature Scene*, the award-winning show on South Carolina Educational TV, will speak on "Connectivity in the Natural World" on Tuesday, April 8, at 7 p.m. at the Charleston Museum, 360 Meeting Street. Mancke has taken his crew to all parts of the world to film his *Nature Scene* program. He is an engaging and entertaining speaker. Don't miss it!



Backyard Birder

By Bruce Krucke

New Zealand was quite spectacular! We "O-D ed" on scenery. We did pretty much everything you're supposed to do, except bungee jumping, and we did watch that. (A touring Black Watch pipe band from Scotland was jumping so we know now what they wear under their kilts!)

Several aspects of nature there surprised me. New Zealand has no native mammals (except for one bat) and all the introduced ones (Australian possums, rabbits, rats, mice, ferrets, shoats, wild pigs and deer) cause problems in the destruction of native bush and flightless birds. Of the 220 birds offered in their guide book, 80 are sea birds, 30 are migrating shore birds, and of the other 110, only 50 are native and many of them are found only on the small, neighboring islands, such as Chatham, Bounty, Auckland, Campbell, MacQuarie, Pitt, and Stewart. We went to Stewart, which is the only place to see Kiwi in the wild, but it turns out that we should have reserved a spot on the boat to see them when we made our lodge reservation in October. One goes by boat at night to the other side of the island and looks by moonlight, if it's not raining, from the boat to see the kiwi come out on the beach to forage in the seaweed. The people we talked to said they were pretty sure they saw one.

We did see kiwi's in captivity. We went to Ulva Island also which is a preserve from which they've eradicated all the introduced plants and animals. There, weka, another flightless bird very similar to the kiwi, but not nocturnal, walked around our feet as if we weren't even there. Other native birds we enjoyed seeing and hearing were the tui, bellbird, grey warbler, tomtit, fantail, rifleman, silvereye, New Zealand kingfisher, yellow-crowned parakeet, Kaka, (the keas were still at higher elevations

than we got to) New Zealand pigeon, several shags (cormorants), and many gulls and sea birds. It seemed strange to see wild turkey in the fields with cows and sheep, California quail, myna birds, magpies, and English house sparrows everywhere, even way out in the country in huge flocks like bob-o-links in the fields.

The other thing we particularly enjoyed were our hikes in the temperate rain forests. I had always thought rain forests were a tropical thing. The ferns, especially the tree ferns, were magnificent. The country is a hiker's paradise. They call it tracking and there are wonderful trails everywhere. You almost look out of place without a backpack. It's a very informal country. We took only one carry-on suitcase and could have taken much less in it than we did. Please feel free to call me if you're thinking about going to New Zealand.

There haven't been any purple martins here yet, but the Acklins on John's Island spotted them on March 13. It was a big two days with an eagle, a male painted bunting, and a solitary vireo too. Hugh King in Mt. Pleasant had a mockingbird drinking

from his hummingbird feeder. Both these reporters seemed to think the goldfinches were leaving early. There was very little snow in the northeast this year for a change. Judy Hines saw two ospreys over the Ashley near The Citadel, also on March 13. This is the first time she'd seem them there.

Your hummingbird feeders should definitely be out now. They have always arrived in March in past years. Many birds are nesting too. In the houses, the all-pine-straw, very round nests belong to bluebirds. The nests made with mostly mosses and hair, tightly packed, are built by chickadees, and similar nests, but with varied things such as small leaves, snake skin bits, and grass are constructed by titmice.

Much as you may hate them, dandelions are indispensable to birds because they are most prolific in the very early spring and are therefore some of the earliest plants to bear seeds. Mullein, pokeweed, bittersweet nightshade, chicory, smilax, panic grass, thistle, goldenrod, knotweed,

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Observations

Feb. 12	Pair common eiders	Folly Beach near	Don Jones
		near Coast Guard Station	
Feb. 20	1 Rough-legged hawk	Bear Island	Nathan Diaz, Burton Moore
Mar. 17	12 Northern rough-winged swallows	Magnolia Gardens	Bob & Billie Chinn
Mar 18	1 Rose-breasted grosbeak	Mount Pleasant	Carol Boone
March	Great-horned owl babies	Atop SCE&G poles*	Thousands driving
	Osprey pair building nest	Mt. Pleasant side	from Isle of Palms
		Rt. 526 leading to	to Mount Pleasant
		Isle of Palms	

*SC Electric and Gas Co. erected another, taller pole to accommodate the ospreys who failed to dislodge the nesting owls.

The Observations column includes unusual sightings, birds not usually found in this area, or seen at an unseasonal time. To report unusual sightings, call or write Bob Chinn at 552-7884, 7666 Chippendale Road, North Charleston, SC 29420.