



The Lesser Squawk

Newsletter of the Charleston Natural History Society

Vol. XLVII, No. 1

January 1997

Happy New Year!!

Education Corner

CNHS Plans Birding Program for Students

By Sarah Brunson

Last year, the Charleston Natural History Society (CNHS) lead an educational project for the seventh grade at Courtenay Middle School, adjacent to the Charleston Museum where we hold our meetings. The project consisted of four parts. As an introduction, the teachers used their classroom time to show the Eyewitness video "Birds."

Volunteers from CNHS went to speak to the students about various topics in birding including eggs and nests, feeding ecology, optics and their experiences with birds. The following week, volunteers took the students birding in Charleston city parks. The students were given specially designed field guides and lent binoculars. They counted the birds that they saw and later compiled their data for display at Spoleto. The project was a success. The students and teachers seemed to enjoy it, as did our volunteers.

In our second year of this project, our plans are a little grander. Our goal is to develop a format this year that can be repeated every year at Courtney and extended to include other schools in the coming years. We will again ask the teachers to show students the Eyewitness video. We hope to go into the classrooms twice with prepared lessons that any CNHS member can teach.

The first classroom lesson will be

an introduction to identifying birds in the area. The second lesson will introduce bird surveys and the use of binoculars. We are going to put up bird feeders made by Boy Scout Troop #108 around the school grounds to attract birds so that the students can learn how to use binoculars and become familiar with some birds before they go out to the field. A week or so after the classroom lectures, we will take the students to the city parks to identify birds and their habitats and conduct bird surveys. Teachers and students will compile the data in a uniform manner based on guidelines we have constructed. Students will then present results at one of our monthly meetings.

Quite obviously we need help with all phases of this project. We need people to help in the classrooms and the field. We need slides of local birds, materials for bird feeders and baths and expertise to help the Boy Scouts construct their bird feeders. We need bird seed donations to help attract the birds to Courtenay. Bird feeders will be built and put up in January, so if you can help, please let us know!

We would like to thank participating members from last year — without them, the project could never have been a success. Rose Mitchell, the former education

chairperson, organized the project with help from Karen McKenzie. Joel Carlin was instrumental in designing the field guides that we handed out to children. Carl Broadwell, Bob Chinn, John Cox, Dennis Forsythe, Don Jones, Polly Holden, Bobbin and David Huff, Maura Lake, Lee Lowder, Burton Moore III, Jane Quattrochi and Carol Weeks participated in various parts of the project. We would like to thank Jennifer Rezeli at Youth Services for her interest and input and her organization's financial contribution. We hope to work together, again. We would like to thank Brooke Holmon and all the teachers from Courtenay Middle School who helped organize the project and juggled their classroom time to participate, as well as the students, who were attentive and asked many great questions. We would like to encourage all these people and more to participate this year.

Contest Notice

We are holding a contest for a catchy name that will help us expand this educational project to other schools. The contest winner will receive a mystery prize and will be announced with the runners-up in the March issue of the Squawk! Deadline for entries is Feb. 15. Entries can be handed in at the next meeting or sent to Sarah Brunson at 7994 White Point Road, Yorges Island, SC 29449. The education committee will decide the winner.

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January Events

January Program: Cypress
Gardens Tuesday, Jan. 14, 7
p.m. Charleston Museum
360 Meeting Street
(Meeting and John streets)
Charleston

Come hear Ken Alfieri, Director of
Cypress Gardens for Berkeley County
give a lecture and slide show on the
wonderful wildlife and floral viewing
opportunities at Cypress Gardens and
plans for the future. Alfieri is a very
good speaker. Don't miss his talk.

January Field Trip,
Saturday, Jan. 18, 8:30 a.m.
Sewee Visitors Center
Awendaw

Meet at Gregorie's Texaco, at the
intersection of Hw. 17 North and
Route 41, Mount Pleasant, at 8:30
a.m. to carpool for a visit to the newly
opened Sewee Visitors Center, funded
by the U.S. Forest Service and the
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We
will view creative exhibits featuring
Lowcountry flora and fauna and view
a great film. Afterward, participants
will be invited to bird at nearby I'on
Swamp and Moores Landing.

Good News for Wetlands

By Bobbin Huff

Mac Blewer, Wetlands Campaign
Organizer for the National Audubon
Society, sent good news via the Internet.
On Dec. 14, he reported that the Army
Corps of Engineers will phase out a general
permit that authorizes the filling of up to
10 acres of isolated and head water
wetlands. The Nationwide Permit 26 will
be phased out within the next two years.

Environmental group representatives
have hailed the decision to phase out the
permit as a victory in the battle to protect
U.S. wetlands from further degradation.

Blewer reported that Michael Davis,
deputy assistant of the Army for civil

works, said that the corps will reissue
Nationwide Permit 26 for 24 to 28
months, said Davis. During that period,
the corps will evaluate data regarding the
types of projects the permit authorizes,
and develop a new set of activity based
general permits.

The size of projects eligible for
coverage under Nationwide Permit 26
would be narrowed under the final
proposal. The final permit would
authorize projects affecting one-third of
an acre to three acres. Currently the
permit covers activities affecting between
one and 10 acres of wetlands. The final
permit will also require individuals filling
between one-third and one acre of
wetlands to notify the corps of their
project.

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