



The Lesser Squawk

Newsletter of the Charleston Natural History Society

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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, Yonges 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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