

The Lesser Squawk
Charleston Natural History Society
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The Lesser Squawk

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February 1998

Shade Grown Coffee: Improve your coffee while protecting the winter habitat of songbirds

By Jane Lareau

I really do exist. I apologize that I have not made one of our meetings since the first one in September. My work with the SC Coastal Conservation League takes me out of town (it appears) every 2nd Tuesday. (Okay, one time was for Elton John.)

I hated to miss the talk by Fred Houk about shade-grown coffee. I understand we had a great crowd and that Fred's presentation was fascinating. I don't want the enthusiasm to die down. I would like for us to take this on as a project for CNHS. Atlanta Audubon has done the same thing. They developed an incredibly beautiful warbler T-shirt to promote shade-grown coffee. (I'll have a sample available at the February meeting. You can order one for yourself, or we could buy a bunch and sell them as a fundraiser for us.) Atlanta Audubon has formed a special committee just to promote shade-grown coffee. I'd like us to do adopt this project too. The T-shirts and coffee can raise funds for us. But that's just a bonus. The main goal is to promote protection of song birds.

If you have an interest in heading up this project, please let me know and I'll

hand over my information. Local civic groups and garden clubs always need speakers. It would be great if a representative of the Natural History Society could go to these groups and give this talk. We can equip you with the information and the slides.

In the meantime, there are things each of us can be doing today to protect tropical birds.

1. Buy only shade-grown coffee yourself. You can order it from Fred Houk at Counter-Culture Coffee by calling them at 1-888-238-JAVA (5282). Have your VISA or MasterCard ready.

2. Ask local coffee shops and groceries to carry shade-grown coffee. Tell them that if they carry it, you will buy it from them. Start with EarthFare, at the Windemere Shopping Center. This grocery store specializes in organic and healthy foods. They should be receptive to carrying a line of shade-grown coffee, especially if a lot of their customers ask for it.

3. When you go into a specialty coffee shop, Gourmet Blend, Port City Java, Starbucks or Bogato's, for example, tell them you want them to carry shade-

grown coffee. If you contact me, I will send you literature that you can give them. Tell them that until they carry it locally, you will be buying your coffee from a mail order company. (And mean it.)

4. If you want to read more about this subject, there are some Web sites you can go to on your computer. Start with Atlanta Audubon's at www.hitt.com/~jhitt/audubon.html. Other shade-grown coffee lines on the Internet include: Thanksgiving Coffee Company at www.songbirdcoffee.com and ECO-O.K. Coffee Project at www.rainforest-alliance.org.

CNHS Mission Statement:

The Charleston Natural History Society is a nonprofit environmental organization and chapter of the National Audubon Society that actively promotes awareness, appreciation and conservation of the natural environment through educational programs, field trips, conservation projects, sponsored research and social activities.

They can't take that away from me ... or can they?

February Meeting

Tues., Feb. 10th at 7:00 pm
Charleston Museum
360 Meeting Street

The Takings Bill -- or better termed -- the Burden Bill, is now officially in the South Carolina Senate. Our Senators will vote on it in the next few months. As crazy as this bill is, it may become law in this state. That's how bad laws get made. Good people sit back and think someone else will take care of it. In this case, you are the only one who can stop this terrible legislation. Don't be one of those good people who does nothing. Come to the February meeting and hear a hair-raising tale from Harold Koon, president of the Mazyk-Wraggsboro Neighborhood Association. Harold has researched this bill. Come here the horror stories of what will happen to you



as a homeowner, as an environmentalist, and worst of all, as a taxpayer. This is an issue you (literally) cannot afford to ignore. Come join us. We'll have refreshments, sell more good shade-grown coffee and neat T-shirts, share good fellowship, and give you the information you need to kill the Burden Bill.

JOIN THE CHARLESTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

*If you join the National
Audubon Society for \$20 per
year you will automatically
become a member of CNHS.*

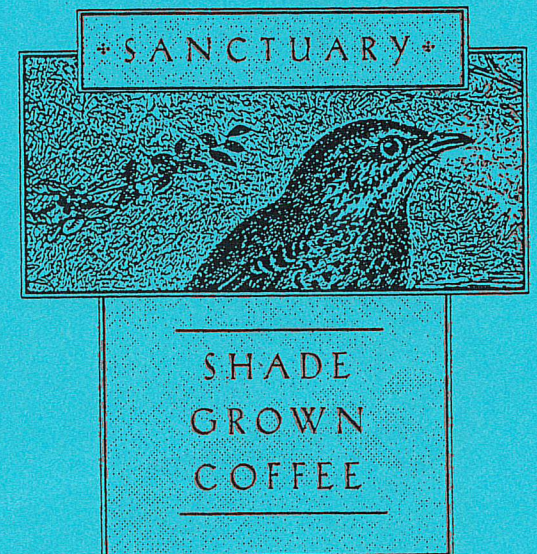
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Backyard Birder

By Van Atkins



Contact Van Atkins with your
backyard sightings at 766-7000
or fax 556-1592 or e-mail
vatkina@awod.com.

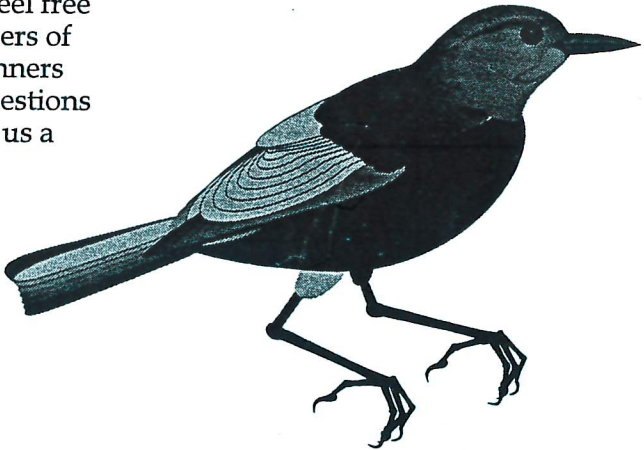
We have Birds at last! Dennis Forsythe had 2 American Goldfinches at his feeder on James Island. Charlie Walters had 6 Screech Owls in a tree at his West Ashley home the other night; since then he has seen 2 more on different nights. Ben Smith says things are slow at his feeders but he has a Bald Eagle back in a tree by the pond behind his house.

I have been blessed with a good variety of birds in my yard lately; nothing special, just a lot. Several White Throated Sparrows, 15+ Cardinals, Downey and Red Bellied Woodpeckers, White Breasted Nuthatch, Titmice, Wrens, Thrashers, Chickadees, Doves, House Finches, Chipping and Song Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and, of course, Black Birds, Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds.

I was on Wampler Drive the other day and saw a Hummingbird, which appeared to be a Rufous. After checking my e-mail there was a letter from Mr. Sargent in Arkansas saying he and his wife were coming to the Carolinas to band Hummers, and wanted any info on recent sightings. I sent mine. If any of you know of any hummers around let me know and I will e-mail it to them.

For the new birders out there with questions about birds in your back yard feel free to call me or other members of CNHS. We were all beginners at one time and asked questions then and still do. So give us a call.

Good Birding!



Shade-Grown Coffee

(Cont'd from Page 1)

5. There are some non-coffee things you can also be doing to preserve tropical birds. These should be second nature to bird lovers, but it never hurts to repeat them:

- ♦ don't buy tropical wood. For furniture, for floors, for anything, unless it is organically certified by a reputable organization such as Forest Stewardship Council.
- ♦ don't own a tropical bird. No one can guarantee you the bird didn't come from the tropics, even though pet shops will swear they are locally bred. Every time you purchase a bird, you

perpetuate a terrible market which is wiping out entire species of tropical birds worldwide. Besides, these are colonial birds that should never be kept isolated. No animal belongs in a cage, especially not one with wings.

♦ Lots of tropical forests are bulldozed and burned for crops. To ensure that the food you eat causes the least disruption to tropical forests, try to buy food that is grown locally and with organic methods. Start with the Green Grocer, an organic farm on Wadmalaw/John's Island. Contact Celeste Fort at 856-0396 for organic veggies.

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or call 889-3415 or fax 723-6243

FEBRUARY OUTINGS:

Sat., Feb. 7th at 8:00 am MARRINGTON PLANTATION BIRDING

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Burger King at the corner of Redbank Road and North Rhett near the Naval Weapons Station.

We will be walking approximately 4 miles of trails and boardwalks in search of wintering birds and waterfowl, so bring your hiking boots, lunch, binoculars, camera, etc. For more information call Don Watts at 797-6783.

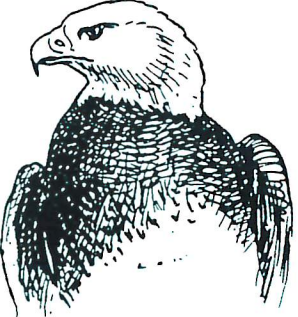
Sat., Feb. 21st at 8:00 am BREAKFAST AND BIRDING AT THE McALHANY SANCTUARY

Eggs to order, bacon, biscuits, grits and coffee (shade-grown, of course). Come enjoy a hearty breakfast and a day of birding and relaxing in the country. \$2 covers the cost of breakfast. Call Don Watts at 797-6783 by February 19th to confirm or for more info.

Sustainable Agriculture Conference "Building a Link to Consumers"

8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.,
Saturday, Feb. 21

The S.C. Sustainable Agriculture Network will hold its annual meeting on Feb. 21 at the Farm Bureau Offices at 724 Knox Abbott Dr., Cayce (just across the bridge from the Carolina Coliseum in Columbia). This is a good organization which tries to promote sustainable and organic agriculture in South Carolina. South Carolina has only 3 organic farms in the whole state. This is pitiful. If you are interested in this subject, this is a good, one-day meeting to get information. For agenda, or more information, call 786-7115 and ask for Julia Sibly.



Sat., Feb. 28th 7:45 am ANNUAL OUTING TO BULL'S ISLAND

One of our most popular trips. Join us for a day of exploring one of the most unique habitats of the Lowcountry. The boat will leave Moore's Landing at 8:00 a.m. and return at 3:00 p.m. Cost of trip is \$15. Meet at Moore's Landing at 7:45 a.m.

This is a day trip, so bring your food, water, binoculars, bug spray, walking shoes, etc. There are sanitary facilities on the Island, but that's about it.

Call Don Watts at 797-6783 to reserve your spot by February 14th.

Unusual Sightings

By Bob Chinn

While boating on the Intracoastal Waterway, Ray Ann Osborne saw a Bald Eagle take a Double-Breasted Cormorant and fly off towards Moore's Landing

Ann Shahid spotted a pair of Wood Ducks courting at Magnolia Gardens. She was about 10-15' from them and watched them for 45 minutes or so; they were so enthused with their courting they never noticed her!

Call Bob Chinn with your Unusual Sightings at 552-7884