

*The Lesser Squawk*  
**Charleston Natural History Society**  
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**Charleston Natural History Society 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.*

**Annual Membership Meeting**  
**Tuesday, May 12, 1998**  
**Charleston Museum; 7:00 p.m.**

### *Chip Mills Chewing Up the Countryside*

Since the mid-1980's, 108 new chip mills have been constructed in the Southeast as the wood products industry has shifted from the Pacific Northwest. A typical chip mill, operated by only five employees, processes 8,000 acres of clear-cut forested woodlands a year. Forestry experts say that removal of pines throughout the Southeast exceeds growth now, and that at the present rate of cutting, within the next 10 years, removal of hardwoods will also exceed growth.

And then we wonder why birds are declining. All the forest destruction is not going on just in the tropics.

Come hear Danna Smith, network coordinator for the Dogwood Alliance, describe the phenomenon of chip mills, what they are doing to our woods, and what we can do about it. Danna, a native of Bluffton, SC, heads up the Dogwood Alliance which is a non profit coalition of 40 organizations working in 14 southeastern states to protect forests and local forest-dependent economies. As always, the meeting will be held at the Charleston Museum and starts at 7 p.m. Come early for the end-of-the-year reception prior to the meeting.

**May Outing**  
**Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**WASHOE RESERVE**  
*Meet at 7:30 a.m.*  
*Gregory's Texaco*  
*Hwy. 17N & 41*  
*Mt. Pleasant*

Bob Chinn will lead our final outing for the spring to the Washoe Reserve, above McClellanville. Bring yourselves, your binoculars, bug spray, water, snacks & join Bob for a delightful day at the Washoe Reserve. Perhaps due to the mild winter, there has been at least one very unusual observation this year (see Unusual Sightings) and who knows, maybe another will occur on this field trip. Come if you can. *(There is a rumor that Julian Harrison will be able to attend and take us all to South Tibwin as well.)*

*Call Bob for more info at 552-7884.*



# **The Lesser Squawk**

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## **Courtenay Middle School Program is for the Birds**

By Sarah Brunson

A gigantic "Thank You!!!" to everyone who helped with the Courtenay Middle School (CMS) Program. Van Atkins, Davy Chapman, Don Jones, Paul Norris, Eric Rose and Ben Smith went into the five classrooms of the 7th grade and taught them in two classroom sessions about how birds are adapted to flight and their environment and how to survey and identify birds.

Sticky Fingers of Mt. Pleasant provided plenty of chicken and pork bones so that the students could compare skeletal structures in birds and mammals! As always, we appreciate Kathie Livingston and the City of Charleston Parks Department for letting us use their parks for our field trip.

CNS volunteers, including Van Atkins, Hugh Austin, Karen Beshears, Molly Bruner, Davy Chapman, Bob Chinn,

Cornelia Gibbs, Bobbin Huff, Jane Lareau, Paul Norris, Eric Rose, Ben Smith, Genny Smoak and Charlie Walters, were each stationed in one of four city parks to take small groups of 7th graders birding. The weather was beautiful, birds were flying and a good time was had by all! The students saw a Pine Warbler, Loggerhead Shrike and Carolina Wrens at Hampton Park; Willets, Snowy Egrets and dolphins at Waterfront Park; Black Skimmers, Osprey, and Marsh Wrens at Brittlebank Park; and Pelicans, Least Terns and the famous Yellow-crowned Night Herons at White Point Gardens! To learn more of what the students saw come to the May 12th meeting. Two or three 7th graders will be discussing the material that they learned in class and presenting their bird surveys.

If you would like to support the CMS project there are many ways in which you can help. Financially, you can help by donating bird seed the fill the feeders at CMS or writing a check to the Charleston Natural History Society, noting the money is to go to the CMS project and the general education fund. We always need volunteers to help copy handouts and organize classroom packets, to teach classes, and to take the students birding in the city parks. No experience required. Next year we would like to start a mentoring program so that those students who become interested in birds from the CMS program have a way to get out and bird in new places. Call me, Sarah Brunson, at 889-8198 if you would like to help - any help would be greatly appreciated!

## **May is Wetlands Month - Celebrate at Beidler Forest on May 16th**

All of us in the Lowcountry have heard a lot about wetlands - now we will be able to explore wetlands for ourselves at Beidler Forest with guides who will explain all its various inhabitants to us. On Saturday, May 16th, between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon Beidler offers a Boardwalk Wetlands Tour led by Norm Brunswig, one of our Board members and Director of Beidler Forest. He and his assistant, Mike, will lead small groups on the Boardwalk discussing wetlands and their value. For those of us who prefer "hands on" experience (or more precisely "feet on"), Mark Purcell will lead an "Off the Boardwalk Wetlands Tour" taking us directly into that vast wetland known as Beidler Forest. Should be quite a tour. Local officials will be invited to come and participate, so encourage your representatives, mayors, etc. to come and learn more about wetlands. At the lake there will be cane poles for fishing - all fish caught we will weighed, measured and thrown back. Inside there will be an aquarium exhibiting all of those lovely bottom dwellers we never see. This is especially good for those who don't want to take the Off Boardwalk Tour. Call them @ 843-462-2150 for more info and directions.



## Backyard Birder

By Van Atkins



So far it has been a slow time at my feeders here at our house. This past week we have had Indigo Buntings, and still have White-throated Sparrows, also a Song Sparrow, and still a few Goldfinches in great color. Have Downey, Red-headed and Red-bellied Woodpeckers at my feeders and a Pileated Woodpecker in one of my dead trees.

I received an e-mail from Bruce Krucke, of Yorges Island, telling of seeing an eye boggling bunch of birds while eating her lunch. They included, in one view, 2 Indigo Buntings, a Painted Bunting, a Blue Grosbeak, 6 Goldfinches and 3 male Cardinals. She said it was great. Bob Chinn saw a Painted Bunting, Orchard Oriole and his Mississippi Kites are back in his North Charleston neighborhood. There have been several reports of Painted Buntings at feeders. I love that bird. Bob has observed Least Terns nesting on the roof of a building on Cross County Road. Speaking of that, Mark Dodd with SCDNR in Georgetown is soliciting information about nesting Least Terns on roof tops. His address is: Mark Dodd, SCDNR, 420 Dirleton Road, Georgetown, SC 29440; phone: (843) 546-3226; e-mail: [mdodd@pop.scdnr.state.sc.us](mailto:mdodd@pop.scdnr.state.sc.us). If you know of any roofs on which Least Terns are nesting, let him know. Also while we are getting help, if anyone knows of any Mississippi Kite nest please let me know. I'm helping in locating and banding the young this year. Ben Smith has seen about the same birds as everyone else, but he has located nests in his yard of Thrasher, Titmouse, Downey, Great Crested and Cardinals. Charlie Walters and Giff Beaton went to Huntington Beach State Park and saw the White Wagtail that was there for about a week. Wynema, Ben Smith and myself went up twice to find it, missed it by 30 minutes the first day, then on Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> we were there all day with no luck. We did see about 50 Northern Gannets diving close to the north jetties; they were so graceful in their flying, then tucking in their wings and plunging into the water from a height of 75-100' over and over again.

Don't forget to put out several Hummingbird feeders and plenty of clean water for the birds. Call me with your sightings. Good Birding! [Vatkins@awod.com](mailto:Vatkins@awod.com), 766-7000 or 556-1592 (fax)

### 1998-1999 Board Nominations:

Karen Beshears; Sarah Brunson; Norm Brunswig; Joe Cockrell, Jeff Dennis, Robert Donato, Cornelia Gibbs, Julian Harrison, Jeremy James, Maura Lake, Jane Lareau, Arch McCallum, Sharon Richardson and Sue Wallace. Officers: Jane Lareau, Pres.; Sharon Richardson, V. Pres.; Maura Lake, Sec.; and Cornelia Gibbs, Treas.

Voting at May 12<sup>th</sup> membership meeting. Please see the back page for further information.

## Unusual Sightings

By Bob Chinn

There are confirmed sightings of a White Wagtail at Huntington Beach State Park. This is the first sighting of a White Wagtail on the East Coast and only the 4<sup>th</sup> sighting in the lower 48 states, as the Wagtail is from western Alaska. It was first sighted by a 15-year-old boy from Pennsylvania (those tourists sure can be useful, can't they?) Someone reportedly has pictures. *Wouldn't it be great if they brought them to the May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting? (Yes, that is a hint).*

Other more usual Unusual Sightings include a Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a Painted Bunting at a feeder in Otranto.

### Our Thanks to Ed Blitch

We want to express special thanks to Ed Blitch who headed up both the Winter and Spring Bird Counts. This is a major operation. Just counting the birds is just the beginning - you have compile all the lists and report the numbers to National Audubon and many other tedious details. These bird counts are utilized by ornithologists and others in making estimation of bird populations.

## Thank you!

By Jane Lareau

And so we end an Audubon year. For the next three months we won't have monthly meetings, outings or a newsletter. We'll gather you all together in September again and share what we've seen and done over the summer. In closing out my first year as president I would like to thank some people for the work they've done to make the Society vibrant. I'd also like to ask for some things.

Thank you to Maura Lake who brings us *The Squawk* each month, on time and full of news on sightings, outings, programs and more. This is, I believe, one of the toughest jobs in the Society. She does it without complaint and in style. Maura also organized the bird seed sale, and helped enormously with the successful winter Oyster Roast. She's my all purpose backup and I'd be lost without her.

Thank you to Sharon Richardson who has tirelessly run down information and carried out important tasks associated with receiving the Wannamaker Property in Calhoun County. From reviewing the wills and other legal documents to arranging for site inspections of property, Sharon has seen to the small and large details the come with owning land. Helping her along have been Norm Brunswig, Arch McCallum and Richard Watkins. I cannot overemphasize how important this work is, and I'm comforted to know it is in good hands. I also would especially like to thank T. Heyward Carter, Jr., who helped us through the legal process of inheriting land. We were in good hands.

Thank you to Cornelia Gibbs who took over the books and keeps us financially solvent. Cornelia pays the bills, monitors our spending, makes recommendations on the budget and other needs and goes way, way beyond her given duties. Her advice and sharp attention to detail are deeply appreciated by me, especially at times when I can't pay as close attention to things as I should.

Thank you to Sarah Brunson, who took out a little time to have a baby, but came roaring back as a team player and head of our education program. Her work with Courtney Middle School reminds of the really important work we do with children - guiding them in the ways of the natural world and helping raise a generation who will protect our resources when those of us who are old and tired go to take a rest.

Thank you to Bob Chinn for arranging a year's worth of outings, and thoughtfully planning where we can go to enjoy this marvelous land. Bob has led a large number of these outings himself, and arranged for others to do the same. We'll miss him next year as he moves over to let someone else take on this job.

Thank you to Jeff Dennis who is working with Don Watts to manage the McAlhany Sanctuary in upper Dorchester County. This beloved property receives a lot of use, and together Don and Jeff are making sure visitors have a safe, fun and educational time enjoying Mrs. Cleo McAlhany's gift to us.

Thank you to Karen Beshears who quietly and steadily manages the membership details for the society and makes sure you get what's coming to you as a member of CNHS. Thanks to Julian Harrison (number 2 field trip leader), Jeremy



James and Robert Donato for variously leading outings, hawking auction items, giving legal advice and otherwise acting as friends and counselors to me as I try to figure out what this Society can and should be. Special and fond thanks to Annemarie Donato for her big helping hand with the birdseed sale. (Annemarie, I hereby formally ask you to handle the whole thing next year!) and to Bobbin Huff for organizing the Oyster Roast. I love this team. As you will note, the nominating committee has kept the whole board on board, and added new names to it. I am delighted they have chosen to do this, as we are just getting good as a team.

Now for the ask: These good people need help. As they say in the advertising world, people don't begin to hear what you are saying until you have repeated it a dozen times. I think I've only said this six times, so you will have to hear it six more: We need you! We need a conservation chairperson, we need someone to take over outings, we need someone to assemble great programs, do publicity, help with fund raising, and on and on.

Please call me or any of the board members. We're having a lot of fun. Come join us. 'Til then, see you in September.