

The Lesser Squawk
The Charleston Natural History Society
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Charleston, SC 29402

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EXPIRES 11/1/2002
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*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.*



## Visit McAlhany Nature Preserve April 7th

Jeff Dennis will lead a walk along the bluff to look for wildflowers at the McAlhany open house, **Sunday, April 7**, starting at **9:30 a.m.**

Directions: Take Hwy. 61 to Cannadys Crossroads and turn right onto Hwy. 15. When you reach the

small community of Grover, take the first left onto Wire Rd. Go over I-95 and across a small creek. Look for our sign on the left side of the road. Questions? Call Jeff at 577-8890.

## Mark Your Calendars

**May 14**—Sally Murphy, SC Department of Natural Resources, will speak on sea turtles.

**May 11 & 12**—International Migratory Bird Day events.

**May 18**—Outing to Burnet Maybank's Point of Pines Plantation.

**May 26**—Outing to Congaree National Monument.

**Early June**—Outing to Hampton Plantation and Wambaw Creek to see Mississippi and swallow-tailed kites.

## Recruit New Members!

CNHS / National Audubon Society membership  
(First Time Members)  
Regular- \$20    Sr. Citizens/Students -\$15

Name \_\_\_\_\_

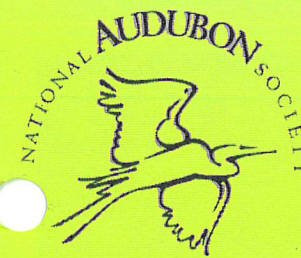
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Mail to this coupon and check to:

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Make checks payable to National Audubon Society  
Write **Chapter Code U-51** on your check.    7XCH



# THE LESSER SQUAWK

Newsletter of the Charleston Natural History Society / local chapter of The National Audubon Society

Founded 1905

NAS Affiliation 1970

Volume XLVIV No. 3

April 2002

## Silver Bluff Audubon Sanctuary April 9

Dan Connolly, director of Silver Bluff Plantation Audubon Sanctuary, will speak at the **Tuesday, April 9** CNHS meeting at the Charleston Museum. Reception begins at **6:30 pm**, followed by the program at **7 pm**.

Connolly will present the history of Silver Bluff, a 3150 acre Audubon Sanctuary on the Savannah River near Aiken, S.C. Before colonial times, the property was the site of a Native American settlement. During the mid to late 1700s (1750-1790) it became a trading post

and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Silver Bluff was the site of a Civil War battle, and later became the cotton plantation of S.C. Governor James Henry Hammond.

Dan will also talk about the ecology of the Sanctuary, which includes the Kathwood Wood Stork Foraging Ponds and a variety of habitats from fire maintained pine forests to riverine bottomlands. We will also learn about the ongoing sustainable, multiple use forest management demonstration project and the new Audubon Center they are developing.

## Visit Our Wannamaker Nature Preserve April 6

Join field trip leader Morgan McClure on **Saturday, April 6** for an all-day outing to CNHS' Wannamaker Nature Preserve near St. Matthews in Calhoun County.

The Preserve's 480 acres include 213 acres of old fields undergoing secondary succession and 267 acres of mixed deciduous woods. A part of the property is bisected by Lyons Creek, a fast moving stream containing diverse mollusks (snails and clams), aquatic insects and crayfishes, fishes, salamanders, frogs, and turtles.

In the northeastern corner of the Preserve there is a steep, north-facing bluff with a rich, mixed hardwood forest featuring beech trees and Mountain Laurel. There are a series of springs and seepages at the base. This bluff is probably the most outstanding natural feature of the Preserve. Mountain Laurel may be in bloom at the time of our visit. CNHS is engaged in a long-term inventory of the Preserve's biota, so we'll probably have a chance to add to our lists of the fauna and flora.

Meet Morgan at **7:30 am** at the Walmart parking lot in Summerville, SC. He'll be in the corner of the lot nearest the first entrance off US Hwy 17A from I26 at the 199 exit. Bring lunch and/or snacks, water, and field guides.

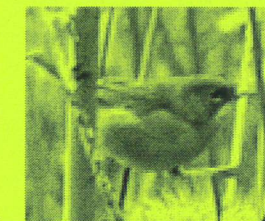
There are no restroom facilities but we'll make a stop at St. Matthews before reaching the Preserve. Please note: parking space is a problem so it will be helpful for us to carpool as much as possible.

## Annual Birding at Power Lines April 20

Join chapter president Bob Chinn for a morning trip along a large set of power lines in N. Charleston, off Ashley Phosphate Rd., on **Saturday April 20**. The area features cleared/weedy habitat under the power lines, mixed woodland on the edge, some swampy areas and perhaps a shallow pond, depending on rainfall.

More than 120 species of birds have been seen here over the last three or four years. Some notable ones include; painted bunting, turkey, king rail, osprey, sedge wren, bobolinks, white ibis, wood stork, prothonotary warbler, Mississippi kite and pileated woodpecker. Bobcat, fox, deer and raccoons also inhabit the area. If there is sufficient water, river otters may also be present. This is pretty amazing, considering the area lies between two large sub-divisions and right off one of the busiest roads in the state.

Meet Bob at the Festival Center at Ashley Phosphate & Dorchester Rds. at **7:30 am**. Bob will be in the parking lot behind the Bank of America, which is on Ashley Phosphate. Bring water, snacks/lunch, binoculars, field guides and bug repellent.



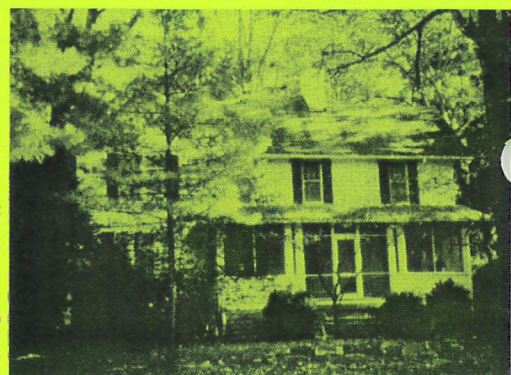


## Choice of Dates in 2002 Auction of Spacious House in Flat Rock, NC

This year bidders in a sealed bid auction will have a choice of four different weeks to spend in the mountains of North Carolina. The minimum bid is \$600 for the one-week rental of this spacious house that rents for \$1,200 a week. The available weeks are June 2-9, September 8-15, Sept. 15-22, or Sept. 22-29. Burnet Maybank has graciously offered CNHS his house for this fundraiser. The

Flat Rock, NC, house is located on a point jutting into a large lake full of fish. It features five bedrooms, four baths, kitchen, pantry, dining room, back and front porches (pictured to right). In the back is a small house with a double bed, bath and porch.

Pick one of the four weeks and mailed your bid to CNHS, PO Box 504, Charleston, SC 29402. The highest bid



for the one-week rental on the date of their choice will be announced at the May 14 meeting.

## Use Less Fuel and Save Birds by Garrett Budds

Imagine a Carolina morning without the festive flight and coaxing call of our native avian representative, the wren: an animated, friendly little bird, familiar to us whether strolling our neighborhoods or exploring our coastal woodlands. The absence of the Carolina Wren may seem inconceivable but our confidence may be misguided. Ours is an age of environmental exploitation to avoid compromising creature comforts.

We are all guilty. Poorly planned errands and overbooked schedules are typical excesses of vehicular use "fueled" by our busy lifestyles. Moreover, it would be difficult to find an area not affected by the rise in average temperature across the United States, a result of greenhouse gas emissions. The United States represents only 300 million of the planet's six trillion people: yet we are responsible for twenty five percent of the greenhouse gas emissions, — a gross imbalance. Consequently, migratory patterns of birds in North America are being affected. *The New York Times* reported that seven state birds are threatened, from California's valley quail to Georgia's brown thrasher, to New Hampshire's purple finch.

Government policy could make or break our steamy future. When the Bush Administration abandoned the Kyoto treaty on global warming last year, many cities, such as Seattle, re-

sponded by trying to meet the treaty's goals via local initiatives and incentives for reduced auto use; a viable option to consider in South Carolina. Increasing fuel standards would save more fuel than the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge would provide. Just last week the Senate voted down a proposition that would require the minimum fuel standard increased to 36 mpg by 2015. Progressive measures are on the table; the time has come to act.

Contact your senators and make them aware of your support for more stringent fuel standards, the benefits thereof, and the high cost of ignoring the warning signs. In addition, make the White House aware of the importance of the Kyoto treaty and a sensible national climate plan. Next time try walking to the store or combining your errands using a little foresight. And if biking is an option, the compound benefits of good health and reduced fuel use are bound to make you smile. Every bit we do helps, but we cannot rely solely on individual concentrated efforts to overcome such a task. It will take government fortification of realistic standards to really cool us off. Get out there and make your voice heard...for the birds' sake.

## Meet Earth Stewards

For the past several years, CNHS has given financial support to the Sewee Earth Stewards environmental program sponsored by the SEWEE Association and its partners, Cape Romain NWR, Sewee Visitor and Education Center, and Francis Marion National Forest.

The Sewee Earth Stewards are 350 fifth-graders from seven public and private schools in Charleston and Berkeley counties as well as 20 home-schoolers from the East Cooper area. The program is a nine-week cross-curriculum program on freshwater wetlands that integrates science, math, reading, writing and journaling into a hands-on learning experience.

Several Sewee Earth Stewards students will have a display of their work and be available for questions during the receptions at the April and May meetings.



**Capers Island Caper** Photo by Steve Bleezarde

## Cats Kill 400,000,000 Birds Annually!

by Bob Chinn

Scientists estimate that free-roaming cats (owned, stray, and feral) kill hundreds of millions of birds in the U.S. each year.

Cats kill not only birds that frequent our backyards, such as the eastern towhee, American goldfinch, and song sparrow, but also Watch List species such as the snowy plover, wood thrush, and black-throated blue warbler, and endangered species such as the least tern and piping plover.

Not only are birds and other wildlife at risk, but cats who roam free often lead short and painful lives, living on average less than 5 years, whereas indoor cats often live to 17 or more years of age.

There are over 73 million pet cats in the U.S., making them the most



popular pet in the country. There may be an additional 60 - 100 million stray and feral cats in the U.S.

Unaltered cats are prolific breeders. In states with warm climates, a female cat can have up to three litters per year, with four to eight kittens per litter.

Cats are the most common carriers of rabies among domestic animals. What can YOU do?

If you own a cat: keep it indoors or on a leash when outside (Charleston County ordinance is same for cats as dogs as far as restraint of animals when outside own property). There are several items that keep cats in your yard (fences, cages etc.) and a collar attachment that prevents cats from catching wildlife ([www.catgoods.com](http://www.catgoods.com)).

Have your cat neutered! If neighbors or feral cats are the problem, you can get a trap from John Ancrum, SPCA, (Charleston County, deposit required) catch the cat/cats, and call them. They will come get the cat, and if tagged will notify owner. Otherwise it is treated as dogs are (kept for a few days, then put up for adoption or euthanized). Encourage local officials to enforce the ordinances.

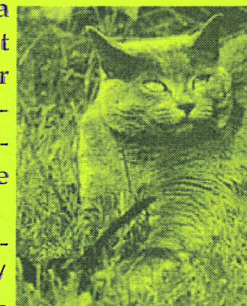
Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR)/managed colonies are another problem. There are many groups encouraging TNR/managed colonies as ways to control feral/stray cats, but it does not work. A grad student in Florida did his Masters thesis on colonies in Miami and the conclusion was that the TNR just does not work. To see his work go to [www.fiu.edu/~clarkea/students/castillo/](http://www.fiu.edu/~clarkea/students/castillo/)

The U.S. Navy has a new directive (CNO policy letter of 10 Jan 2002) that ends the Trap-Neuter-Release type control, and requires installations to remove feral/stray animals and educate residents on animal control.

Speaking of "Trap-Neuter-Release," here is an excerpt from the March 7, 2002, Raleigh News & Observer on *Operation Catnip*: "The ASPCA is also supportive. It recently teamed with Clorox Corp., a maker of cat litter, to give Operation Catnip a \$20,000 grant. The group plans to use some of the money to send cats to veterinarians who charge a small fee.

"The purpose of the Catnip Connection program will be to do up to 600 additional cats through the program," Cappelson said. Although the program already sterilizes and vaccinates 1,800 to 2,400 cats a year, it should have no problem finding patients. The SPCA of Wake County estimates that as of two years ago, there were 86,000 feral cats roaming Wake County."

I am not a rocket scientist, but even I



can see that neutering 2,400 cats/year out of 86,000 is like shoveling sand against a tsunami.

Cats Indoors is a campaign of the American Bird Conservancy, which attempts to educate cat owners of the advantages of keeping their cats indoors. The ABC web address is [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org).

## Need Help With Spring Bird Count

CNHS's Spring Bird Count will be held on **Sunday, April 28**. Meet Count compiler Bob Chinn at the Kentucky Fried Chicken parking lot at 7 am at US 17N and SC HWY 41 North of Mt. Pleasant for area assignments.

We need many participants to ensure adequate coverage of the count circle. There is no charge for the Spring Count. You don't have to be an expert birder to help out. Questions? Call Bob at 552-7884 or e-mail at [rchinn@awod.com](mailto:rchinn@awod.com).

## Roadless Rule

Conservationists nationwide are rounding up support for legislation to reinstate the rule banning logging and road building in roadless areas of our national forests. The ban was overturned by the Bush Administration despite the fact that there were more than two million supportive comments from the public.

To help pass this legislation now being drafted, contact your representative in Congress to urge full implementation of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. Call 1-800-648-3516.

### VISIT OUR WEBPAGE

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