

The Lesser Squawk
The Charleston Natural History Society
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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 Feb. 3rd

It will be a clean-up day at the McAlhany open house, **Sunday, Feb. 3.** Come help! From St. George in Dorchester County, turn from US 78 onto Road No. 26 (Maple Branch Rd.) and follow

Rd. No. 26 to Rd. No. 19 (Wire Rd.). Turn right onto 19. Go approximately 1/2 mile and look for the drive and sign on the left. For more information, call Jeff Dennis at 577-8890.

Mark Your Calendars

For information on outings in coming months, see "Caw Caw" article on page one. Upcoming programs are:

March 12—Whit Gibbons, Savannah River Ecology Lab and Research Programs.

April 9—Dan Connelly, National Audubon Society Silver Bluff Sanctuary

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

Recruit New Members!

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

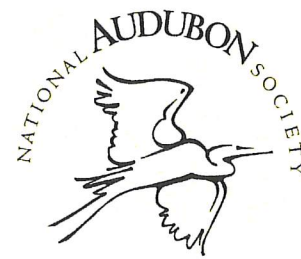
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THE LESSER SQUAWK

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February 2002

Sandy Island Subject of Feb. 12 Meeting

John Nelson, the Curator of the USC Herbarium in Columbia, will be our speaker at the meeting **Tuesday, February 12**, at the Charleston Museum.

Dr. Nelson will be talking about the natural history of Sandy Island, a unique 6,000 acre sand hill formation at the confluence of the Waccamaw and Pee Dee Rivers.

Dr. Nelson received his Ph.D from Florida

State University. His academic interests include plant taxonomy and the flora of South Carolina.

Bring your friends to the reception that begins at **6:30 pm**. The meeting follows in the museum auditorium at **7 pm**. We'll have a door prize, and you can purchase a beautiful print as part of our current fundraiser. See details on **page 2**.

Visit Caw Caw Center Sunday, Feb. 17

Join CNHS for its first ever visit to the Caw Caw Interpretive Center in Ravenel, SC on **Sunday, Feb. 17**. This relatively new 654-acre county park was formerly part of a 5500-acre rice plantation in the late 1700s and early 1800s.



Photo by Bob Chinn

Remnants of rice culture in the form of dikes, rice trunks, and canals are still evident on the property. Diverse habitats including cypress swamp, mixed woods, and impoundments provide foraging or breeding areas for migratory waterfowl, songbirds, raptors such as bald eagles, swallow-tailed and Mississippi kites, deer, as well as many kinds of amphibians and reptiles. There are seven miles of trails that interpret the

history and ecology of the area.

Meet field trip leader Julian Harrison at the West Ashley Walmart at **8:15 am** in the corner of the parking lot opposite St. Francis Hospital. Bring binoculars, field guides and raingear in case of inclement weather. This is a half-day trip but bring lunches or snacks and water should you desire to spend additional time in the park. We'll stop first at the Visitor's Center that houses a number of interesting exhibits and displays concerning rice culture and the park's fauna and flora. There is a \$4 fee for adults, \$2 for seniors (60+) and children (3-12).

Future Outings

A February field trip to Capers Island has been postponed. It may be rescheduled for early March or April. See **page 2** for details of Tidelands Birding Festival. Look also for a possible trip to Congaree National Monument in early March. There will be an outing to Woods Bay State Park in Florence County in late March. Details of spring outings will appear in the March Lesser Squawk.

Lone Snowy Egret For Sale

Our current fundraiser offers signed and numbered prints of Burton E. Moore III's photograph of a snowy egret. It measures 15 by 24 inches. The cost is \$35 each with \$15 of this price going to CNHS. We want to thank Burton and board member Polly Holden for organizing this wonderful opportunity to raise money for the chapter. "The Lone Snowy Egret" is pictured here and will be for sale at the meeting February 12.



BOARD MEMBERS

Bob Chinn, president/web master 552-7884
Christopher Walter, vice-pres., secy. 569-1062
Thomas Snowden, treasurer, 875-3445
Julian Harrison, historian, outings 795-1694
Ann Tiller, membership, 884-4532
Cornelia Carrier, newsletter, 577-6437
Joe Cockrell, birdseed sale, 762-3868
Morgan McClure, programs, 763-0222
Jeff Dennis, McAlhany, 577-8890
Norm Brunswig, State Office, (843)688-5833
Polly Holden, 853-1100



Santee National Wildlife Refuge Birding Outing

NEWS BRIEFS

BIRDING FESTIVAL Feb. 21-24

The second annual **Tidelands Birding Festival** will be held in the Litchfield/Pawley's Island area, **Thursday, February 21 to Sunday, February 24**. Planning is underway and volunteer help is needed!! Please call Valerie Graham (Tidelands Birding Festival Director) at (843)347-9720 to see how you can help. Information on the festival can be found at www.birdfestival.net or call Wildlife Action, Inc. at 1-800-753-2264, Monday-Friday, 9 am - 5 pm.

WETLAND RULING

The Bush administration announced today that it would ease some Clinton administration regulations covering wetlands and streams, saying the changes would reduce unnecessary paperwork.

However, Julie Sibbing, the wetlands lobbyist for the National Wildlife Federation, said the Army Corps had forsaken the goal of achieving no net loss of wetlands.

"This arrogant move demonstrates the Corps' complete lack of respect for our country's natural resources and is another example of how this administration is turning its back on protecting our nation's wetlands," she said.

MANY THANKS

The delicious refreshments at the last meeting were thanks to **Lois and Don Jones**. We encourage other members to volunteer to handle refreshments at meetings. We buy the wine, but we need volunteers to set up, greet people and clean up.

ARCTIC REFUGE

There is a movement among environmentalists to refrain from calling the **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**, ANWR. The Squawk has been guilty of that offense. Drilling opponents say it sounds like a dead Egyptian or the acronym for an oil company or oil field. So let's try to start referring to it by its full name. Keep calling your senators to oppose oil drilling in this pristine refuge. Here's a handy 1-800 number for the nation's Capitol where you can be connected directly to senators and representatives: **1-800-648-3516**. Use it to make your views known. Ask for aide who handles particular issue.



McAlhany Easement by Bob Chinn

On December 19, 2001, a conservation easement agreement was signed by CNHS and Low-country Open Land Trust. This easement ensures that (barring any government condemnation) McAlhany remains undeveloped and in a natural state forever.

The easement does allow for some construction and improvements to existing features, as long as they conform to our conservation goals for the nature preserve.

The executive board has been working on this for the past year, and finalized the deal in October.

Many thanks to Christopher Walter, Jeff Dennis and Joe Cockrell for their time spent researching and ironing out the details for the agreement.

Not only does this easement protect McAlhany, but will serve as a model for other land owners in the area. Conservation easements are the best way to curb unchecked urban sprawl, unregulated development and destruction of rural and forested land.

Christmas Bird Count

Had a good count this year. Had beautiful weather and tallied 147 species and 23,715 individuals. Thanks to all who gave up a Sunday

during the holidays to help.

Rufous Hummingbird

Got a call today about a rufous hummingbird in Mt. Pleasant. It has been there for a few days.

The lady's name is Doris Bernard. She said she didn't mind people coming to see the bird, but they have to call first, since she lives in a gated community. She seems to be taking very good care of her visitor. Doris lives in Ravens Run, right off the Isle of Palms connector, on the marsh. Her phone number is 884-6897.



Backyard Birder by Van Atkins



Well a lot of you wanted cold weather, now you have it!!! Brrr I work outside so a big bowl of soup or hot chili hits the spot, and puts the energy back. Have you noticed more birds at your feeders since that first cold snap? They are looking for a source of energy too!

Sunflower and millet are great for some, but suet is faster energy for a lot of the birds. Beef suet that comes from the region of the kidney is getting hard to come by, so a substitute can be lard. Use about two tablespoons for each cup of peanut butter. Mix in yellow cornmeal, chopped nuts, raisins, oats, sugar or other items you have that birds like. You can heat it and put it in muffin tins for the freezer or just roll in small ball and put in a freezer bag till ready to use. I dispense two or three balls of mix a day.

I have robins, blue birds, ruby crowned kinglets, nuthatches, thrashers, woodpeckers, white-throated and chipping sparrows and many other birds that come to my peanut butter mix. There are many recipes out there — try them till you find one that works for your birds.

Don Jones called with a good list of birds he has seen from his yard. They include but are not limited to pileated, red-bellied and downy woodpeckers, white-breasted nuthatch, junco, bluebird, goldfinch, ruby-crowned kinglet, cedar waxwing, towhee, rusty blackbird, red-shouldered, sharp-shinned and red-tailed hawks, bald eagle and brown thrasher.

Ben Smith has a few ducks in the pond behind his house but not near as many as usual. He is feeding all the regular winter birds. Brenda Davis of Monks Corner

called to report ring neck turtle doves in her yard. Her phone is 761-8062 if you need to see this bird.

Bob Chinn e-mailed about white-breasted and brown-headed nuthatches, ruby-crowned kinglet, pine warbler, chipping sparrow, woodpeckers and all the regular winter birds. I watched a large flock of cedar waxwings devouring *Lugustrum* fruit downtown today. Call me with your reports. Van Atkins 766-7000 or e-mail at vatkins@awod.com.

VISIT OUR WEBPAGE

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