

The Lesser Squawk  
The Charleston Natural History Society  
PO Box 504  
Charleston, SC 29402

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# THE LESSER SQUAWK

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

Founded 1905

NAS Affiliation 1970

March, April, May 2003

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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.*

## McAlhany Open Houses Mar. 2 & May 4

We'll have two Sunday open houses this spring at the McAlhany Nature Preserve. On **March 2 and May 4**, the gates to the preserve will open at 9:30 am. There will be no open house in April. Come enjoy the birds and flowers. 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 1-95 and across a small creek. Look for our sign on the left side of the road. Questions? Call Tom Snowden at 875-3445 about March. Call Garrett Budds at 571-4668 about May.

### BOARD MEMBERS

Bob Chinn, president, 552-7884  
Cornelia Carrier, v-p, newsletter 577-6437  
Thomas Snowden, treasurer, 875-3445  
Julian Harrison, historian, outings 795-1694  
Ann Tiller, membership, 884-4532  
Steve Bleezarde, webmaster, 406-2061  
Joe Cockrell, birdseed sale, 762-3868  
Morgan McClure, programs, 763-0222  
Jeff Dennis, McAlhany, 577-8890  
Norm Brunswig, State Office, (843)688-5833  
Garrett Budds, conservation, 571-4668  
Doreen Cubie, (843)928-3702  
Melissa Davis, 216-3833  
Polly Holden, 853-1100

### Recruit New Members!

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to this coupon and check to:

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## Help out with CNHS Rummage Sale March 8 Bring Items to Sell/ Buy Items We're Selling

CNHS will be holding its first rummage sale Saturday, March 8 from 8 am until noon at the Masonic Center, 1285 Orange Grove Road off Sam Rittenberg (and directly behind the new Bi-Lo). We hope to raise money to replace our reduced dues share from National Audubon. Our ability to return to a monthly newsletter schedule, expand our support of environmental educational programs and pay our other expenses depend upon success of this fundraiser. So please help us out!

First, we need items to sell, so be gathering them up. We would like working appliances, furniture, dishes, knick nacks, paintings, frames, household items, towels, bedding and nice, clean clothes, etc. We also need tables to display the goods so if you have one we could borrow, please bring it. Questions? Call Cornelia Carrier at 577-6437. We will have a portable storage unit on site (behind the main building) all day Friday. Deliver items on Friday from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Secondly, we need volunteers to help with the sale. Many CNHS board members will be working, but we'll need more

help. If you can volunteer for all or part of the time, call Cornelia.

Thirdly, we need you to come out and buy the goods we're selling. We'll be putting ads in the paper, but we need you to be a customer. It will be fun. We'll be selling Audubon singing birds, raptors and ducks along with chili and soft drinks.

We want to thank the board of the Charleston County Masonic Association for allowing us to use the Masonic Center. The sale will be in the covered picnic pavilion in the back so we can have it rain or shine!

The sale would not have been possible without the generous donation of a portable storage container by Russ Houston, operations manager of Charleston Portable Storage, the local franchise of Portable Storage on Demand. PODS are a revolutionary concept providing a unique alternative to traditional mini-storage and moving options. We're using one to store donations before the sale.

## Come hear about Grazing, Wetlands, Hawks

All meetings are held at the Charleston Museum on Tuesday evenings. The wine and cheese reception begins at 6:30 pm followed by the program at 7 pm. Win door prizes!

### March 11

Mike Hudak, PhD, who has given more than 100 presentations about livestock impacts on Western public lands, will be our March speaker. In 1999, Mike established the Public Lands Without Livestock, a project of Social and Environmental Enterprises, to facilitate the work of informing the American people about how livestock grazing in the western United States has caused severe environmental damage to a variety of ecosystems.

Livestock grazing ranks well above logging and mining in impacting plant and wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened. Hudak will give us examples of how species have been harmed in his slide presentation.

### April 8

Nancy Vinson, director, Water Quality Program, South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, will give a slide

presentation on the continuing threat to South Carolina's wetlands — both fresh and saltwater. Federal protection of freshwater wetlands has been removed by a recent court order (see story below) and Nancy will talk about efforts to protect them. Developers' plans to build bridges across marshes to islands threaten South Carolina's critical marsh ecosystem.



### May 13

Back by popular demand is Jim Elliott, executive director of the South Carolina Center for Birds of Prey. Jim will be giving us some pointers on hawk identification and of course he will bring live birds. In addition he will bring us up to date on the work of the center, which treats and releases (where possible) injured birds of prey. Bring your children and grandchildren!

## Wetlands Protection Presents Two-Fold Problem

by Garrett Budds, Conservation Chair

A new Washington dictated wetland's policy is striking a chord at home for South Carolinians. In the latest onslaught against our state's natural resources, a guidance issued by the Bush administration and upheld by the Supreme Court eliminates federal protection and classification of wetlands thus placing the task solely on the shoulders of the state regulatory agencies. The problem with this shift in regulation is that without the filing of federal permits for construction, the states will be left in the dark when the destruction of non-navigable wetlands takes place. In addition, crippling state budget deficits burden our ability to regulate and delineate our wetlands.

The filling of wetlands is synonymous with development in the Lowcountry. Thus, the prospect of establishing state regulations governing the use of the wetlands is likely to fall to the same fate we saw last year when lawmakers were rendered impotent by objections from developers and private land use advocates. These groups claim that wetlands' mitigation banking provides an equal amount of protected wetland for that destroyed. Unfortunately, this option doesn't guarantee

the preserved wetland be of equal quality and/or complexity. Again we are faced with tactics that profit few while destroying a part of our ecosystem and heritage. We must push state legislators to propose a bill that will offer the same protection to isolated and non-navigable wetlands as they received formerly under the federal government.

The second half of the problem lies in the regulation of navigable waterways. Examples of protected areas supposedly set aside from development, yet soiled by construction projects, are surfacing all over the Lowcountry. For those who thought an afternoon walk at Middleton Place would provide relaxing and scenic vistas are now confronted with homes in view just across the Ashley river. The encroachment will continue unchecked unless we as a populace voice our opposition directly to the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers. The most decisive statement and first step is to enact protective legislation in our home state. Abandoned by an uncaring Washington, the job has been left to us. I hope that, in the end, we can prevail and our wetland home will be preserved.

## Keep Your Eyes Peeled for Active Raptor Nests

The South Carolina Center for Birds of Prey is again requesting assistance from us in documenting the location of active bird of prey nests. The Center has established over the years that the best procedure for treating an orphaned bird is for it to be returned to its nest or to a surrogate nest if the original nest is unavailable. Only as a last resort does the center take in an uninjured nestling.

Young birds can be ejected from the nest by high winds, sibling competition, or through an accidental fall. The center's protocol for managing uninjured orphans is one of three methods: First, the bird is replaced back into the nest from which it came.

Secondly, if necessary, the bird is placed in a suitable

nest from a like species with nestlings of the same age.

Lastly, the bird is admitted to the Medical Center and raised using puppets and camouflage to avoid imprinting the association and dependency on humans. Each method can be successful but undoubtedly the best situation is the one that allows the bird to develop in the company of adult birds.

To facilitate this process, each season the SCCBP inventories the known active nests. These are monitored as needed for placement of candidate orphans. Please report any active raptor nest that the center may utilize for surrogate purposes during the orphan season. Contact the Center at (843) 928-3494 with the following information: species; nest location; accessibility, and approximate stage of development, if known.

## Folly Beach Groin Will Harm Rookery by Garrett Budds

Despite local opposition, the new Folly Beach groin project is moving along unimpeded. The proposed groin will be constructed at the tip of Folly Beach County Park in response to erosion that occurred to the facility's parking lot as well as other areas. This should cause concern for all local conservationists, particularly birders. Skimmer Flats is a small island located between Folly Beach County Park and Kiawah Island. Although uninhabited, the flat is an important nesting area for brown pelicans and least terns.

While the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission and now Kiawah Island, which has been guaranteed compensation for any erosion damage caused by the groin, find no problem with the erasure of valuable avian resource,

we as Lowcountry residents should. I urge you to contact the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission as well as the Kiawah Island Natural Habitat Conservancy and voice strong opposition to the proposed groin and the damage it will cause.

Questions?  
Call Garrett Budds,  
571-4668.

VISIT OUR WEBPAGE  
 [www.homestead.com/  
cnhsaudubon](http://www.homestead.com/cnhsaudubon)  
contact Webmaster  
Bob Chinn  
843-552-7884  
[rchinn@awod.com](mailto:rchinn@awod.com)

## Enjoy Variety of Outings This Spring

North Charleston Power Lines, Sat., April 26

Join chapter president Bob Chinn for a morning trip along a large set of power lines in N. Charleston, off Ashley Phosphate Rd. The area features cleared/weedy habitat under the power lines, mixed woodland on the edge, some swampy areas and a shallow pond (maybe, depends on rainfall). Over 120 species of birds have been seen 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. Meet Bob at 7:30 am in the Festival Center at Ashley Phosphate and Dorchester Roads (in the parking lot behind the Bank of America on Ashley Phosphate). This is a half-day trip.

### March Outings

#### Francis Marion Forest Clean-up, Sat., March 15

For our first outing of the spring, we will participate in a major forest clean-up in the Francis Marion Forest. Meet at the Sewee Environmental Education Center on HWY. 17 N in Awendaw at 8 am, Saturday, Mar. 15. Following the clean-up there will be a barbecue at the center from noon until 1 or 2 pm. The rain date is March 22.

Charleston Clean City Commission, in conjunction with Palmetto Pride, is currently working on illegal dumping in the Francis Marion National Forest. Its plan will include increased enforcement, signage, and perhaps incentives to forest users to reduce dumping and littering in the forest. However, behavior change is a long process, and in the

This is an excellent opportunity for us to improve the habitat of the forest which we enjoy on many other outings. We might see a few red-cockaded woodpeckers at the same time. CNHS members are urged to participate in this clean-up. Questions? Call Janna Larson at 843-928-3368.

#### Pitt St. and Sullivan's Island, Sunday March 30

Julian Harrison will lead a half-day outing to the Pitt Street Causeway in Mt. Pleasant and Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island to look for migratory shorebirds, egrets, herons, and other species of the area's marshes, tidal flats, and beach. Seaside and sharp-tailed sparrows are possible at the causeway and the dunes. At Fort Moultrie ground doves and meadowlarks, loggerhead shrikes, Eurasian collared doves, and kestrels are often seen. This is an afternoon trip. Meet Julian at 1 pm. in the parking lot of the Omar Temple at Patriot's Point.

### April Outings

#### Dixie Plantation, Saturday, April 19

Plan to see lots of birds with Julian Harrison on a half-day outing to the College of Charleston's Dixie Plantation. This was the home (called "Little Eden") of noted bird artist and world traveler John Henry Dick who willed the property to the College with the goals of preserving the natural state of the land and providing a wonderful natural laboratory for science faculty and students. Dixie has a magnificent avenue of oaks, patches of maritime forest, marsh front areas along the Stono River, and brackish water and freshwater ponds providing habitats for warblers, buntings, sparrows, shorebirds, waders, and others. Meet Julian at the parking lot of Toys-R-US/Books-A-Million on Sam Rittenberg Blvd. at Orleans Avenue at 7:30 am.

#### Spring Bird Count, Sunday, April 27

Contact Bob Chinn at 552-7884 for more information.

#### Migratory International Bird Day, Sat., May 10

Plans for this event are not yet finalized so be sure to check local newspapers for announcements of events.

