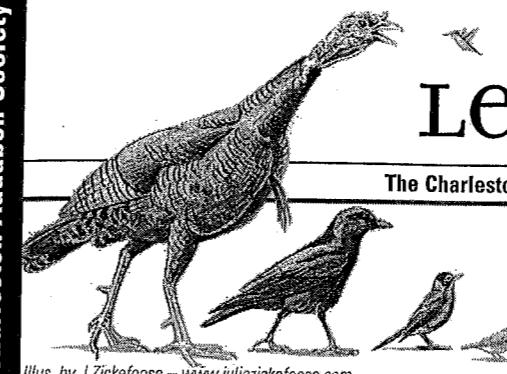


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Charleston Audubon Society



Audubon

The Charleston Natural History Society – a SC chapter (chartered in 1970) of the National Audubon Society, serving Berkeley, Charleston & Dorchester counties – is a nonprofit environmental organization that actively promotes awareness, appreciation and conservation of the natural environment through educational programs, field trips, conservation projects, sponsored research and social activities.

Birds and Books

continued from page 3

testosterone to fuel 1998's record-breaking "Big Year" competition. Why should the story of three men racing to secure bragging rights to seeing the greatest variety of birds in a single year be so compelling? Because, at its heart, this nonfictional narrative is a fabulous story about personality and persistence.

Spix's Macaw : The Race to Save the World's Rarest Bird by Tony Juniper.

Tony Juniper's heart-stopping inside account of the race to save a rare blue parrot, the last of its species, is a priceless addition to nature literature. Despite a ban on endangered-parrot trading since 1975, smugglers have continued to

trap and sell parrots on the international market. By 1990, only one wild Spix's remained.

Juniper is an impassioned advocate, and also demonstrates a deep understanding of the social issues involved in saving endangered wildlife. The situation for the Spix's remains precarious; whether it will share

the fate of the dodo or eventually flourish again, as did the almost-extinct Przewalski's horse and European bison, depends on "human cooperation, foresight and generosity."



Need to Contact Your Elected SC Officials?

Email addresses for Charleston's County Council are online: go to www.charlestoncounty.org and follow the links to Elected Officials, County Council and then Contacts.

Information for Berkeley and Dorchester Counties can be found at www.co.berkeley.sc.us and www.dorchestercounty.net.

For State House and Senate Members go to: www.scstatehouse.net and follow the links to either House or Senate and then Email Addresses. The mailing address for all House Members is: P.O. Box 11867, Columbia SC 29211; for all Senate Members it is: P.O. Box 142, Columbia SC 29202.

The CNHS/Audubon Board for 2003-04

President: Tom Snowden w 953-0311, h 875-3445

Vice President: Joe Cockrell w 462-2150, h 762-3868

Secretary: Melissa Davis h. 216-3833

Treasurer: Doreen Cubie h 928-3702

Ex Officio: Bob Chinn h 552-7884

Historian: Julian Harrison

Newsletter: Steve Bleezarde h 406-2061

Committees - - - - -

Hospitality: Don Jones h 572-8232

Education: Melissa Davis

Membership: Doreen Cubie

Publicity: is open at this time.

Outings: Burton Moore 853-1100, Bob Chinn, Andy Harrison

Programs: Polly Holden h 795-1124

Conservation: Garrett Budds h 571-4668, Andy Harrison

McAlhany: Joe Cockrell, Julian Harrison, Garrett Budds, Marion Page, Jeff Dennis,

Wannamaker: Norm Brunswig (843)688-5833, Julian Harrison, Marion Page, Dan Tufford

Interested in joining a committee? Contact one of the members listed, or talk to chapter president Tom Snowden about how you can help.

President's Message:

We have nearly reached the end of another year of program activities and planning is going on for next year. We are in desperate need of people to help with all areas. We need volunteers to help with our bird seed sale, conservation activities, educational programs and in planning outing and programs.

Next year will be our 100th anniversary and we hope to plan some special activities to celebrate, but we need your help. Most of our volunteer positions only involve a few hours of work a month, so please, offer your time, your skills and your talents and help to make it a successful year.

Your can speak to many of our active board members at the monthly program meeting or at the April 17th picnic at the McAlhany Nature Preserve – or you can call me to discuss your interests.

Tom Snowden PH: 843.875.3445
EMAIL: toms@myexcel.com

Contributions to Support Beidler Forest Memorial For Writer Lynne Langley

To celebrate the life of Lynne Langley, who for 25 years educated the public about nature, Beidler Forest is naming a tract of forest in her memory. A plaque will designate the forest to commemorate her life and inspiration to others.

Lynne inspired many through her writings and brought nature to those who may not otherwise have sought it out. Throughout the years she supported Audubon through her columns and listed Christmas Bird Count schedules.

If any of you are interested in making a donation in her memory, please send it to:

Lynne Langley Memorial
Francis Beidler Forest
336 Sanctuary Road
Harleyville, SC 29448

Questions? contact Ann Shahid at 462-2150 or via email at ashahid@audubon.org.

Come to McAlhany for Paddling And A Spring Picnic

Canoe Trip Scheduled – Please Register Now

The date is set for Saturday, April 17. We will float down the Edisto from US 21 to our McAlhany Nature Preserve. Rental canoes will be available from Carolina Heritage Outfitters for \$50 per canoe (and you can share).

To reserve a canoe call Joe Cockrell at 762-3868 by Sunday, April 4th. Personal canoes and kayaks are welcome, but please call or e-mail Joe so we will know to expect you. (After the 4th you can call Joe to check, but the outfitter may be out of rentals.)

Paddlers will meet at McAlhany Nature Preserve at 9:30 a.m. Then we will carpool up to the put-in point at US 21 where we will meet the outfitter with the rental boats. The float down to McAlhany Preserve will take about 4 hours. We should be off the water by about 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. and refreshments and a cookout will be waiting for us.

We will paddle in light rain, but not in severe weather. If you think weather conditions are questionable call Joe to find out if the trip is still on. What to bring: water, snack, sunscreen, change of clothes (just in case). Contact: Joe Cockrell, 762-3868 (h), 607-1070 (c), cockrelljoe@cs.com

Spring Picnic Brings Outdoor Fun

While some folks enjoy their canoe trip, the rest us us are set to enjoy a Spring picnic at McAlhany. The preserve is located in upper Dorchester County on the Edisto River. On the first Sunday of each month we usually hold an Open House for members and the public. On Saturday, April 17, 2004, from noon till dusk we're inviting you to join your fellow members for a cookout. About 40 of us got together last December, and we're hoping to see many of you again!

We will be grilling assorted picnic fare and invite you to bring a dish to share, and come out to enjoy the day. You may explore the riverbank and bottomland hardwood forests. And Bob Chinn will be available to lead a bird walk in the early afternoon. There will be plenty to do for the whole family, so plan on coming out!

Directions to McAlhany: Take Hwy 61, Hwy 78 or I-26 to Hwy 15. Go to the small town of Grover which is about 10 miles south of St. George. Turn west on Wire Rd., cross over I-95 and continue for several miles and look for our signs on the left.

If you will be able to attend the Spring picnic please call (875-3445) or email (toms@myexcel.com) Tom Snowden by Thursday, April 15 so we can get a rough head-count. Looking forward to a good afternoon and a great turnout.

UPCOMING EVENTS – details in this issue

- April 4 Reserve Your Canoe: For the April 17 Picnic and Paddle (details above)
- April 13 Carolina Hummingbirds: Program mtg. (details pg. 2)
Presented by Gary Phillips of Clemson's Baruch Inst. of Coastal Ecology
- April 17 Spring Picnic and Edisto Paddle (details above)
Something for the entire family at McAlhany
- April 24 Night Walks at Beidler Forest in April, May & June (details pg. 2)
- May 11 Splendor in Nature: The Biodiversity of Dominica: Program (details pg. 2)
Presented by Dr. B. Merle Shepard, Clemson Prof. of Entomology
- May 15 Daniel Island Spring Bird Count (details pg. 2)
Please register with Ann Shahid



Mark Your Calendars:

►Upcoming Programs, Outings & Lowcountry Events

April Program Welcomes Waccamaw's Gary Phillips

► Tuesday, April 13 – 6:30 reception, 7 p.m. program
Carolina Hummingbirds

Presented by Gary Phillips, Wildlife Biologist, Clemson University Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Service

Mr. Phillips, a past president and active board member of the Waccamaw Audubon Society, is actively engaged in hummingbird study in South Carolina. He writes "Bird Notes," a weekly column for the *Myrtle Beach Sun News*. He is a permitted bird bander and active research affiliate with the Hummer/Bird Study Group (www.naturalsciences.org/nchummers/) tracking vagrant hummingbird sightings in the Carolinas.

On February 2, Gary received an inquiry from a master bander in Hillsborough, N.C. (just north of Chapel Hill), regarding an adult female rufous hummingbird she'd captured that morning. Upon removing the tiny treasure from the trap, she found that it was already fitted with its own uniquely numbered bracelet.

As it happens, Gary had originally banded the bird as an immature a year ago on January 26, 2003, at a family home in Murrells Inlet. Gary was excited to know that this avian gem has survived her first year, is in good health and is spending her second winter in the Carolinas. These are exactly the sort of reports Gary likes to hear and why he encourages you to keep your feeders clean and your eyes open for Carolina hummingbirds.

► Tuesday, May 11 – 6:30 reception, 7 p.m. program
Splendor in Nature: The Biodiversity of Dominica

Presented by Dr. B. Merle Shepard, Professor of Entomology and Director, Clemson University Coastal Research and Education Center.

The Commonwealth of Dominica (not to be confused with the Dominican Republic) is an independent island nation of approximately 65,000 residents. Located between the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe in the West Indies, it is known as the "Nature Island of the Caribbean" because of its natural beauty. Over 65% of the island is covered with undisturbed forests. Approximately 167 species of bird inhabit the island, including the rare and endangered Sisserou parrot, the national bird.

A list of avifauna will be handed out, and a general overview of the landscape, climate and natural history presented along with a general description of Clemson's Archbold Tropical Research and Education Center that is located there. (www.clemson.edu/coastalrec/atrec_index.htm).

Seeking Reader Submissions:

Have you taken any great birding photos lately? Do you use a field guide that has all the others beat? If so, then send your reviews, comments, or photos to the *Squawk* and we'll share them in a future issue. And we can forward photos to the folks assembling the new South Carolina Audubon web site who are asking for submissions.

Email your submissions to squawk@bleezarde.com or mail them to CNHS Audubon, POB 504, Charleston, SC 29402.

A Spring Count, Night Walk and Spoleto Performance...

► Daniel Island Spring Bird Count

Ann Shahid will lead a bird count on Daniel Island on Saturday, May 15. The count will begin at 7:00 a.m. and last until 1:00 p.m.. or longer, if there is interest.

Meet in the parking lot of Publix, but please call to register with Ann at 695-0175 (evenings), 843-462-2150 (day) or e-mail ashahid@audubon.org.

► Beidler Forest Night Walks and Canoe Trips

Call the forest for reservations for night walks April 24, May 1, June 26, and 4 hour canoe trips (1-5 p.m.) on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, water levels permitting.

► Beidler Forest Hosts 4th Piccolo Spoleto Event

Four Shillings Short will be the featured artists for two performances: 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on May 29. Ticket includes hors d'oeuvres and a night walk.

Fieldtrip Report: 3/13/04 Donnelley/Bear Island WMAs

On a beautiful day the 18 participants were treated to some good birds. We spent the first hours in Donnelley and moved on to Bear Island in late morning. At least 76 species were observed, including the following highlights:

Wood Stork	White Ibis
Black-bellied Plover	American Avocet (4)
Common Snipe	Western Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher	Wood Duck
American Black Duck	Bufflehead
Barn Owl (adult and chick)	Osprey
Loggerhead Shrike	Chipping Sparrow
Eastern Meadowlark	American Goldfinch
American White Pelican (15-20)	
Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs (100s)	
Bald Eagle (about 8, including a pair and nest with at least one eaglet)	

Tundra Swan (seen after I left, unfortunately for me)
Northern Parula (not unusual, but my first this year!)
Eastern Bluebird (some great looks at plumage)

Thanks to all who came. Hope you can join us on future outings! —Andy Harrison

Morris Island Follies

by Andy Harrison

Once again a developer has set his sights on Morris Island. This uninhabited, severely eroding barrier island at the mouth of Charleston Harbor has been the target of builders four previous times since the end of the Civil War ("Morris Island," by Ada Montague in the March 17, 2004 issue of the *Charleston City Paper*). To date none have been successful. Harry Huffman, a Greenville developer, now envisions 20 luxury homes located on the high ground around Cummings Point, north of a 713-acre dredge disposal site. Homeowners would access the island by boat and move around on golf carts. For a variety of reasons this proposal makes little sense and should meet the same fate as its predecessors.

Morris Island is historically significant—it was recently named as one of the Civil War Preservation Trust's top 10 most endangered sites. The 1863 raid by the 54th Massachusetts Regiment on Battery Wagner that was depicted in the 1989 movie *Glory* took place here. The island's barrier beaches also provide valuable foraging and nesting habitat for shorebirds. Such undisturbed nesting beaches are in short supply along our coast. There have been efforts to protect the island in the past. In 2002, U.S. Sen. Fritz Hollings secured some \$4 million in federal funds for the purchase of Morris Island (which is owned by Yaschik Development Co. of Charleston), but unfortunately the option to buy held by the Trust for Public Land had already expired (February 16, 2004 Post and Courier).

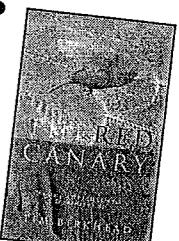
The 62 acres of high ground at Cummings Point are zoned for the construction of only one house per 25 acres. In order to build more than the two houses currently allowable, Mr. Huffman must seek a zoning change from Charleston County Council. He also needs permits from the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control for the 20 wells and septic tanks that will be necessary for his resort homes, as well as permission from the SC Office of Coastal Resource Management to build his docks. Numerous groups (including the Battleground Preservation Trust and SC Coastal

Conservation League) have already voiced their opposition to the project, and Mr. Huffman has been careful to demonstrate sensitivity to the historical and ecological values of the island. Perhaps the most important reason to deny Huffman's bid, however, is the island's erosion rate. According to a 1990 survey, Morris Island loses some 19 feet of land to the ocean each year (February 16, 2004 Post and Courier). The site of Battery Wagner itself has been underwater for years.

Construction on this fragile island could potentially increase its rate of erosion. Homeowners in danger of losing their property would no doubt seek permission to build groins or seawalls—which only transfer the problem to someone else—or even ask for highly expensive (and only transiently successful) beach renourishment. In an era of strained state and federal budgets we do not have the resources to waste if ill conceived gambles like this go awry. I urge our readers to contact members of Charleston County Council and voice their opposition to the development of Morris Island.

For Your Consideration: Birds and Birders in Books

The Red Canary: The Story of the First Genetically Engineered Animal by Tim Birkhead



A flight through the history and genetics of canary breeding. This book explores one of the earliest lines of research into heredity through the unlikely story of obsessive, and at times unethical, domestic bird-breeding. Or, if you prefer, it's the biography of an innovative hero of bird-breeding through the unlikely story of genetics. Either way, the range of Tim Birkhead's research is remarkable, and it is his ability to weave historical facts and scientific information into the fabric of his narrative that makes this book both enjoyable and rewarding.

The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession by Mark Obmascik



Could you drop everything else in your life for one year, spend \$60,000 on airline tickets and criss-cross North America birding? It took three determined men, weather patterns fed by El Niño and perhaps more than a little pent-up

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