

THE Lesser SQUAWK

The Charleston Audubon Society
P.O. Box 504
Charleston, SC 29402

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Audubon

The Charleston Audubon Society – a SC chapter of the National Audubon Society since 1970, founded as the Charleston Natural History Society in 1905, and serving Berkeley, Charleston and 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.



introduces readers to the pioneering conservationists who scrambled to study, record, photograph and save the ivory bill before its habitat fell victim to the developing nation's appetite for timber.

Hoose, a conservation planner who has worked for The Nature Conservancy for 27 years, counts himself among the countless enthusiasts who have fallen under the mysterious bird's spell.

Visit Our Website



Webmaster Bob Chinn keeps us up-to-date with details of programs, outings & more.
<http://cnhsaudubon.homestead.com>

South Carolina is lucky to have such a vast amount of wonderful aquatic resources. We are home to a diverse wildlife population, and our economy thrives on tourism. However, if we don't care for our natural resources, they simply won't be there. Can you imagine a future in which your children or grandchildren won't be able to enjoy our beaches? Won't fish? Or boat? If we don't address our throwaway, disposable lifestyle now, these grim possibilities could become our reality, experts tell us. Don't let it happen!

To volunteer, contact:

Susan Ferris, coastal coordinator, (843) 727-2078
Lynn Quattro, inland coordinator, (803) 734-9094

Charleston Audubon Society



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The Charleston Natural History Society, Celebrating 100 Years, 1905-2005

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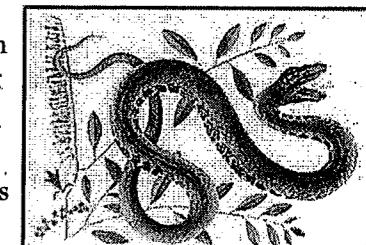
Fall Lecture Series Relocates to Charleston County Library

Beginning with our September 15 meeting and lecture, we will be gathering in the second floor auditorium of the main branch of the Charleston County Library, 68 Calhoun Street in Charleston. Our lecture series remains free, and open to all Audubon members, guests and to the general public. We gather at 6:30 p.m. for a reception and speakers will begin their programs at 7:00 p.m.

Naturalists and their Art in South Carolina

Wednesday, September 15

Burton Moore, owner of the Audubon Gallery, will give a slide-illustrated talk on naturalists and their art in our state, starting with Mark Catesby in 1722. He will also speak about Audubon's visit here in 1831 and show some of his Charleston paintings, as well as discussing Audubon's friendship with the Reverend John Bachman. Other artists covered will include Edward von Siebold Dingle and John Henry Dick.

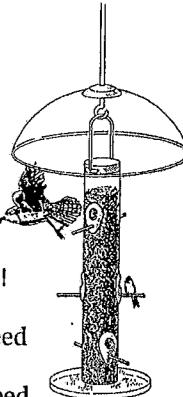


Water Viper – M. Catesby

Bald Eagles

Wednesday, October 13

Tom Murphy, a SC Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologist and leader of the state's Bald Eagle project, will present a program on the current threat of a deadly disease, avian vacuolar myelinopathy (AVM) to South Carolina's eagles. Tom will also give an overview of our bald eagle population, which has been steadily increasing after reaching a low of 13 nesting pairs in the 1970s. There are now more nesting eagles in the state than at any other time since the 1800s.



Fall Birdseed Sale: A Chance to Help

Money for our programs remains tight, but our annual birdseed sale is a good chance for you to help the chapter raise money while getting excellent seed to stock your feeders this Fall and Winter. You may find cheaper seed at discount stores, but you get what you pay for: This year our sale offers high-quality seed thru Wild Birds Unlimited!

Use the enclosed form to place your order(s) – and make sure it is postmarked by October 16. If you can sell some seed to your friends, coworkers or neighbors, please do. You can duplicate the order form and let others pick-up their own seed, or you can place a large order and then distribute the seed yourself.

This year seed pick-up is easier than ever. Instead of a one-day pick-up, this year you can visit either of the area Wild Birds Unlimited in our area (stores in Mount Pleasant and West Ashley), during the ten-day pick-up time, Friday, November 5 thru Sunday the 14th.

An additional order form will be included in the October newsletter, and copies will be available at the September and October membership meetings. Contact this year's sale organizer, Mike Hutchinson (884-7746, 425-4047, mhutchinson15@comcast.net), with any questions you have about this year's sale.

President's Message

Next year both the National Audubon Society and The Charleston Natural History Society will be 100 years old. We have a variety of Fall activities planned as part of the celebration, and are making plans for next year. Along with other state Audubon groups, we will visit some select areas of the state which are usually not accessible. Please let us know if you have any ideas about how we can celebrate.

- This year we will host our monthly meetings and lecture series at the Charleston County Library on Calhoun Street. We will be in the auditorium on the second floor, and we've moved to Wednesday nights, so mark your calendars. Our first meeting will be Wednesday September 15, 2004.

We are still looking for volunteers. We need a membership chairman. This position involves keeping track of our members, change of addresses and welcoming new members. This can be done in a few hours per month from home. Please think about this and let me know if you can do it.

- We also need someone to chair our education committee. This position involves reviewing applications for grants from community organizations. It would also be important to get the word out that we do have grants to offer. This can be a rewarding position and does not take much time.

Please join us this year. If you have suggestions or comments e-mail at the address below.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS – details in this issue

Sept. 15	Lecture: SC Naturalists' Art	p. 1
Sept. 17	Field Trip: Mepkin Abbey	p. 2
Sept. 18	Beech Sweep/River Sweep	p. 4
Oct. 2	Field Trip: Parris Island	p. 2
Oct. 3	Field Trip: Patriots Point	p. 2
Oct. 9	Field Trip: Point of Pines	p. 2
Oct. 13	Lecture: Bald Eagles	p. 1



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Upcoming Programs, Outings & Lowcountry Events

■ Saturday, Sept. 18 – Mepkin Abbey Fieldtrip*

Take a trip to Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist Monastery on the Cooper River, south of Moncks Corner with former CNHS president Bob Chinn. We will tour the grounds and gardens of this quiet retreat among large trees and Spanish moss.

This is from the Abbey's web site—*“Passing down through various owners, Mepkin was purchased in 1936 by Henry R. Luce, the noted publisher-philanthropist, and his distinguished wife, the Hon. Clare Boothe Luce. They donated a large portion of their property to the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1949, for the purpose of founding a monastic community here.”*

“Shortly after the Luces purchased Mepkin in 1936, Mrs. Luce commissioned the famed landscape architect Loutrel Briggs to create the Mepkin Gardens. They were renovated in 1988 through the vision of Nancy Bryan Luce, wife of Henry Luce III. Thousands continue to visit us and to stroll through these Gardens each year.”

Meet Bob at the Super K-Mart (across from Stokes Honda) on Rivers Ave In North Charleston at 8:15 a.m. on September 18, 2004, to car pool to the Abbey.

It will still be hot, so bring plenty of water/liquid drinks. Also bring binoculars, field guides, lunch/snacks and bug juice!

Register with Bob at 552-7884 or email bobchinn@comcast.net by Friday, Sept. 17.

■ Saturday, Oct. 2 – Parris Island Fieldtrip

Join Bob Chinn for a trip to Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, near Beaufort, SC on Saturday, October 2, 2004. Parris Island has a variety of habitats including; a large saltwater pond, extensive marshes, maritime forest, golf course, rivers, tidal creeks and some upland woods. We should see wood storks, eagles, osprey, shorebirds, waders, some migrant warblers and local residents. Once, we saw 2 manatees (about this time of year) in the Broad River.

Near the golf course is Ribaults Monument, named for a French colony there in the 1500's. Also near are some Spanish relics and an ongoing archeological dig.

The weather could still be pretty hot, so dress accordingly. There is not a lot of walking involved, so comfortable shoes are O.K. Water, food and sanitary facilities are available, but food service on Saturdays is very limited.

Meet Bob at 6:45 am, Saturday, October 2, 2004 at the Wal-mart in West Ashley. (Hwy 61 Xpressway and Magwood, directly across from St. Francis hospital). We will car-pool as much

as possible. Bring a valid ID (drivers license is fine) for entrance to the Depot. Bring binoculars, scope, field guides, lunch/snacks, water and insect repellent (gnats are usually worse than mosquitoes).

Register with Bob by Friday, Oct. 1, 2004 at 843-552-7884 or email bobchinn@comcast.net.

■ Sunday, Oct. 3 – Patriots Point 1/2-Day Fieldtrip*

Join Outings Chairman Burton Moore for a morning trip to Patriot's Point in Mt. Pleasant. Despite the extensive development, Patriot's Point continues to be a great migrant trap in the fall. Last year, many unusual species of warblers and sparrows were seen, as well as common migrants and resident species.

Meet Burton at the Omar Shrine building (near the entrance to Patriot's Point) at 7:30 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 3. The weather could still be hot so dress accordingly. Bring binoculars, field guides, water, snacks and insect repellent.

Register with Burton by 5:00 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 2, at 843-853-1100.

■ Saturday, Oct. 9 – Point of Pines Fieldtrip*

Join Bob Chinn and Andy Harrison for a return engagement at Point of Pines Plantation on Edisto Island on Saturday, October 9. Owner and host Burnett R. Maybank III will Meet us at 8 a.m. to give us a guided tour of the property, which includes ponds, fields, hedgerows, river beach, extensive marsh, vistas of the North Edisto and tabby ruins of a fort built in 1692.

Meet Bob and Andy at 7:15 am, Saturday, Oct. 9, at the Food Lion parking lot in Ravenel at the junction of US 17S and SC HWY 165. Bring binoculars, field guides, lunch/snacks, water and insect repellent. There is some walking, so wear appropriate shoes. There are sanitary facilities available at the house.

Register with Andy @ 843-795-6934 or Bob, 843-552-7884 or email bobchinn@comcast.net.

*Charleston Audubon Field Trips

We sponsor at least one field trip/outing per month, September - May. Field trips are free, unless otherwise noted, and open to the general public. Please wear suitable outdoor gear and note that a brown bag lunch is often appropriate.

Please register with the trip leader by 6 p.m. the day before the outing, (allowing leaders to plan appropriately for the size of the group). All participants sign an "acknowledgement of risk" statement as required by our insurance carrier.

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The Charleston Natural
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P.O. Box 504
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THE LESSER SQUAWK

by Andy Harrison

We had much to celebrate – and unfortunately a fair amount to mourn – with respect to conservation in South Carolina during the past year. Two issues have become particularly relevant to residents of the Lowcountry: the recent trend among forest products companies toward selling-off large tracts of land (because of its higher value as real estate), and the escalating rate of commercial and residential development in areas that many thought would remain rural forever – in other words, “sprawl.” Meanwhile, with the helpful prodding of our phone calls, letters and e-mails, the SC legislature authorized full funding for the Conservation Land Bank, and a number of anti-environmental bills were defeated or at least stalled. There is more work to be done, though.

The purchase of the 10,697-acre Bonneau Ferry tract from MeadWestvaco Corporation by the Conservation Fund (on behalf of the SC DNR) in March 2004 was a major success for conservationists in our state. This \$47 million sale was made possible by long-term negotiations and a combination of federal, state and private funding sources. The battle over plans to develop the 4,500 acre Poplar Grove tract in lower Dorchester County and the controversy surrounding the recently announced sale of the 6,600 acre Watson Hill tract near Middleton Place, however, suggest that we may lose other large chunks of environmentally and/or culturally significant land to development in the next few years – especially in this

of state and federal budget deficits. The fight over Poplar

culminating in an unsuccessful annexation bid in February 2004 by the City of Charleston) highlights the need for local governments to coordinate infrastructure plans with one another before allocating public funds to such construction. In the face of opposition from area residents and despite the huge infrastructure costs likely to result from a high density development so far from existing bases (new roads, water and sewer lines, schools, etc. will be required), Dorchester County Council approved the project. If Watson Hill is developed, the culturally and ecologically significant Ashley River Road corridor will be irreparably harmed – not to mention the effect of increased traffic on an already strained roadway.

The 2004 SC legislative session was marked by a number of conservation victories. Although early versions of the state budget diverted substantial portions of the \$10 million originally allocated for the Conservation Land Bank to other causes, in its final form the Bank received full funding. This will allow South Carolina to protect some of the environmentally significant lands that have been coming onto the market. The so-called “wetlands destruction act” (H. 4934), a bill backed by development interests that would have exempted isolated wetlands of less than five acres – some 75% of the total – from state protection, was prevented from passing. The “hog bill” (H. 3555), which would have prohibited local communities from adopting pro-

ive ordinances more stringent than minimum state standards, was likewise stopped. There were also some setbacks during the past session. Notably, the “priority investment area bill” (H. 4354), which would have helped curtail the wave

of sprawling development in our state, did not pass. Work is in progress on a new version of the bill for review in the next legislative session.

Among other issues that arose during the past year, a developer from Greenville announced a plan to develop Morris Island (calling for 20 luxury homes on a severely eroding barrier island that is zoned for only two). The Morris Island Coalition (uniting many different organizations) was formed in opposition to this proposal, and so far the scheme has been foiled. A plan to dam the Tyger River (flooding some 5000 acres of bottomland forest in the Sumter National Forest) to create “Patriot Lake” – in the hope of stimulating the economy of Union County – was also announced earlier this year. Some 1400 acres of publicly owned land would be converted to private development along the new lakeshore. The potential environmental impacts of this particularly egregious plan would be devastating. We would lose thousands of acres of breeding habitat for Neotropical migrant bird species and see the destruction of one of the few free-flowing rivers (and its aquatic ecosystem) in our state. Feasibility studies for the project are underway, however. Finally, although the study area for the proposed Interstate 73 was significantly narrowed in July 2004, the possibility that a Highway 701 connector may be built (depending on the route of I-73) still exists. A much less environmentally damaging – and less costly – alternative would be for I-73 to connect to the Grand Strand via the existing SC 22 Veterans Highway.

In the year ahead we can expect to see and hear more about these issues, and others too. As before, your voices need to be heard! The highly successful “First Annual Conservation Lobby Day” (coordinated by the Coastal Conservation League and sponsored by fourteen conservation groups, including Audubon) held at the Statehouse in February 2004 will be revisited, so you can even talk in person to your senator or representative. Also, the Audubon SC Action Network provides those with internet access an easy way to keep apprised of important conservation issues and to contact their legislators quickly and efficiently. Needless to say, this is also a Presidential Election year – and on the issue of environmental conservation in the United States there may not be a more important choice to make than in this race.

New Members, Renewals, Gift Memberships

For only \$20* you get one-year subscriptions to *Audubon* magazine and *The Lesser Squawk*, and all the benefits of local and National Audubon Society membership. Renew for just \$35/year. *\$15 for Sr. Citizens and Students

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CHARLESTON, SC 29402

[RENEWALS MUST INCLUDE THE 20-DIGIT MEMBER NUMBER FROM YOUR AUDUBON ADDRESS LABEL]

Checks payable to National Audubon Society. Include our chapter code on your check: U-51 7XCH