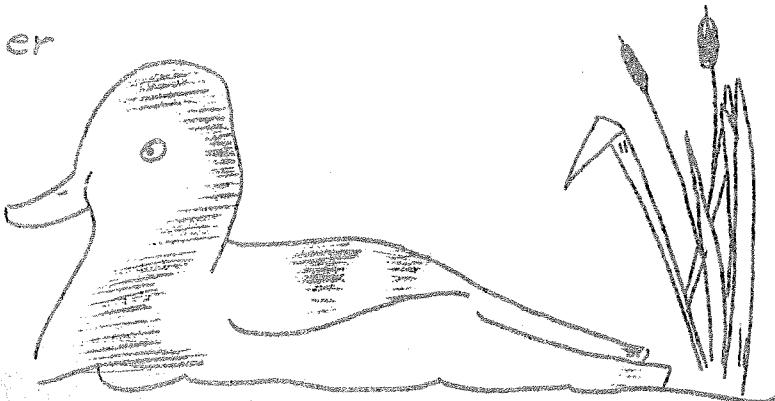


The Lesser Squawk



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APRIL ACTIVITIES

The meeting of the Society this month will be on Tuesday, April 14th, at 8:00 p.m. at the Charleston Museum. The program will be different than usual. It will consist of a seminar on wild flowers and, it is hoped, will evoke comments, questions, and observations from all of the members who are present. Edmund Cuthbert has consented to bring a few specimens to the meeting.

On Sunday, April 19th, Alan Bills and Edmund Cuthbert will lead a field trip to Edisto Beach. Participants should assemble at the DuPont Crossing Piggly Wiggly at 6:00 a.m. The Summerville contingent will join the group in Hollywood. On the agenda will be a visit to the Indian shell mound which lies within the state park. This trip is scheduled as an all-day outing, but, since it begins so early, it will be understandable if some members do not wish to remain all day.

OBSERVATIONS

On February 26th, Mr. and Mrs. B.F. McGuckin had a Dickcissel "on our window sill at 43 Tradd St., Charleston, eating birdseed and paying no attention to us, standing inside, not two feet away." According to Sprunt, the only Dickcissel record for this area in winter is in Summerville. Is anyone aware of a previous observation in Charleston? The McGuckins would like very much to know whether it has been recorded there before.

Mr. Francis Barrington reports that his first observation of Cattle Egrets for this year was on March 22nd at the end of Wentworth Street. He also reports a flock of a dozen Evening Grosbeaks in a yard in Riverland Terrace on March 6th.

On April 5th, Roger Lambert found the first box turtle hatchling of the season in his back yard. The day was cool and windy. The hatchling was lying on its back about two feet from the broken shell and the hole which it had dug upward from the nest.

Although it seemed to be in poor condition when it was found, it revived when it was taken into the house. There it joined four other young turtles which were hatched indoors from eggs laid last summer by the box turtles which have the run of the back yard. It is interesting that this hatchling appeared before the hibernating adults emerged.

BIRD MOVEMENT IN APRIL

Arrivals

- 1 Solitary Sandpiper
- Swainson's Warbler
- Yellow Warbler
- Blackpoll
- 4 Cliff Swallow
- 6 Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Blue Grosbeak
- 7 Worm-eating Warbler
- Kentucky Warbler
- 8

- 8 Sandwich Tern
- 10 Purple Gallinule
- Bob-o-link
- 12 Black-thr. Blue Warbler
- 13 Gray-cheeked Thrush
- 14 Wood Pewee
- 15 Cape May Warbler
- American Redstart
- 17 Magnolia Warbler
- Indigo Bunting

- 18 Blue-winged Warbler
- 19 Gray Kingbird
- 21 Swainson's Thrush
- 22 Red Phalarope
- 23 Black-billed Cuckoo
- 24 Chestnut-sided Warbler
- 27 Kirtland's Warbler
- mid Gull-billed Tern
- early Scarlet Tanager

Departures

- 2 Whistling Swan
- 3 Old Squaw
- 5 Virginia Rail
- 6 Glaucous Gull
- 7 Rough-legged Hawk
- 8 Ipswich Sparrow
- 9 Golden-crowned Kinglet
- 13 Henslow's Sparrow
- 14 Brown Creeper
- 16 American Merganser
- Robin

- 18 Canvasback
- 20 Common Goldeneye
- 21 Pine Siskin
- 22 Water Pipit
- 23 Song Sparrow
- 24 Bufflehead
- Winter Wren
- 26 Blue Goose
- Mallard
- Parasitic Jaeger
- Louisiana Waterthrush

- 26 Evening Grosbeak
- 27 Solitary Vireo
- Purple Finch
- 28 Whip-poor-will
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Palm Warbler
- 29 Rusty Blackbird
- 30 Pintail
- early Greater Scaup
- late Short-eared Owl

Casuals and Accidentals

- Golden-winged Warbler
- Bay-breasted Warbler

- Yellow-headed Blackbird
- Dickcissel

- Lark Bunting
- Lapland Longspur

THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

April offers much of interest to the serious sky-watcher. Perhaps the most spectacular sight will be the parade of all five of the naked-eye planets during the evening hours. At the beginning of the month, shortly after sunset, Venus may be seen shining brightly in the western sky, equidistant between Mercury, to the west, and Saturn, to the east of it. Still higher than Saturn above the horizon is Mars, and in the east, Jupiter will be rising. During the month, Mercury and Venus move rapidly, passing Saturn on April 10. Saturn sets about two hours after the sun on the first, but by the end of the month, it will be lost in the solar glare.

The last of the winter constellations have now moved into the western segment of the sky, and after this month, will not be seen again at night until the fall. This includes Orion, Gemini, and Auriga.

Leo dominates the sky throughout April. At midmonth, it may be located straddling the meridian by 8:00 o'clock. The "Sickle", or head of the lion is facing westward, and the apex of the triangle, representing the tail, points eastward.

High in the east, a very bright orange-colored star readily captures the attention. This is Arcturus, located in the constellation, Boötes. In shape, Boötes, made up mostly of faint stars, suggests a kite, with the top toward the north, and with Arcturus at the other end.

Cassiopeia is now so near the northern horizon that it is largely lost in the denser atmospheres which diffuses artificial lights. However, at this time, the Big Dipper is in excellent view. By following the "Pointers" downward, the North Star is easily located. Careful observation of the handle of the Big Dipper will reveal a very faint star apparently quite close to the one next to the end. The ancient Arabs named the faint star "Alcor", (rider), and the bright one, "Mizar", (horse). The distance between these two stars has been discovered to be 16,000 times greater than the distance between the earth and the sun! Alcor was the first star revealed by telescope to be a double star. It may be interesting for sky-watchers who own telescopes to make this discovery for themselves.

-Elizabeth D. Simons

MARCH FIELD TRIP

A small group of CNHS members braved the elements on March 21, 1970, for the all-day trip to Bear Island Refuge. They were not disappointed for the threat of rain disappeared. The list of birds seen is extensive, so only the more interesting finds are included in this report. On the way to the refuge from U.S. Highway 17, a Louisiana Waterthrush, numerous Yellowthroats, and Parula and Yellow-throated Warblers were heard singing along Bennett Point Road. In the refuge itself most of the time was spent along the marshes and canals in the immediate vicinity of the refuge headquarters. The following is a partial list of the avian species seen: Bald Eagle, Osprey, Black Duck, Pintail, Mallard, Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, American Widgeon, Scaup, Marsh Hawk, Sora Rail, Glossy Ibis, and various egrets and herons. In one of the canals Julian Harrison discovered a population of Littoridina tenuipes, a brackish-water snail, which may be the first record for the state. At lunchtime the group was joined briefly by Steve Best and Mack Horton, Clemson University graduate students who are conducting research in the refuge. An added feature of the day was the opportunity of seeing some of the frogs and toads(including Barking Tree Frogs, Carpenter Frogs, Spadefoot Toads, and a large female Bullfrog) they had collected on Bennett Point Road during Friday night's rain.

-Julian R. Harrison, III