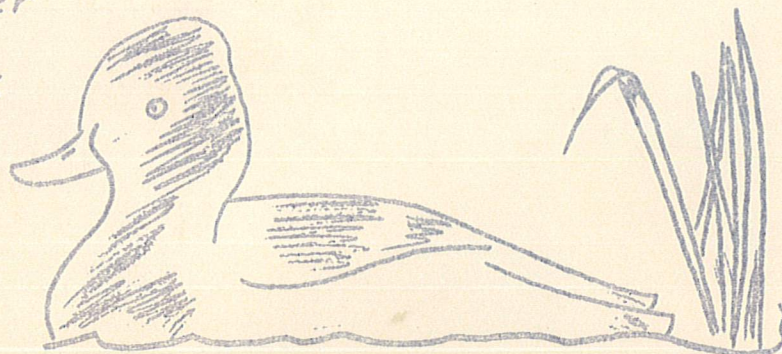


The Lesser Squawk



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Editor: Roger D. Lambert, 205 Harter Drive, Summerville, S.C. 29483. Ph. 873-1582

OFFICERS

President: Julian R. Harrison, III, 670 Stiles Dr., Charleston, S.C.
Vice-President: Norman A. Chamberlain, 458 Wade Hampton Dr., Charleston, S.C.
Secretary-Treasurer: Alan M. Bills, 221 Forest Circle, Summerville, S.C.

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

No meeting of the Society will be held during December. The next regular monthly meeting will be on January 20, 1970, when Dr. Dominick will speak on moths and butterflies.

On December 27 the annual Christmas bird count will be conducted by E. Burnham Chamberlain. Anyone who wishes to participate should call him at 766-4337 or send a postal card to him at P.O. Box 3039, Charleston, South Carolina 29407. Participants will meet at Gregorie's Station at the intersection of highways 17 and 41 at 7:00 a.m.

OBSERVATIONS

Reprinted below is the text of a letter addressed to the editor of the Lesser Squawk by Captain John Le Cato of USNS Victoria.

On October 23, while about one hundred miles northwest of Bermuda, I sighted six large herons, apparently American egrets. The birds were closely grouped, flying strongly toward the west. They made no effort to approach the ship and rain and poor visibility prevented positive identification.

Warblers and other small birds are frequently found at sea during their migrating season, but I have never seen herons so far off shore.

Does any reader know if these birds are found in Bermuda or travel there regularly? If they did not come from Bermuda, they must have travelled at least five hundred miles from the North American mainland. Winds had been northwesterly for several days along the coast.

If any member of the Society has information relative to this very interesting observation, a telephone call or a note to the editor will serve to inform all of us in the next issue of the Squawk.

Frank Cuthbert of Summerville reports a flock of approximately thirty whistling swans on the Cooper River during the weekend of November 29. They were in the vicinity of Bushy Park.

Mrs. Harold Pettit of Wadmalaw Island reported in the middle of October that a downy woodpecker had moved into one of her bluebird boxes. At that time he had lived there for six weeks.

Mr. Francis Barrington reports the arrival of a fox sparrow on November 22 and a swamp sparrow on November 29 at Riverland Terrace. He has trained a Carolina wren and a yellow-throated warbler to eat from his hand. He suspects that the warbler is the same one which fed from his hand last year.

PAYMENT OF DUES

Members who have not yet paid their dues for the current year should send them to the secretary-treasurer of the Society, Dr. Alan M. Bills, 221 Forest Circle, Summerville, South Carolina 29483. The name of anyone who has failed to pay dues for the second consecutive year by January 1, 1970, will be deleted from the membership list.

BIRD MOVEMENT IN DECEMBER

Arrivals

13 Great Black-backed Gull

15 White-fronted Goose

29 Purple Sandpiper

Departures

1 Common Nighthawk

8 Bobolink

10 Least Bittern*

1 Golden Plover

Casuals and Accidentals

Mute Swan
Fulvous Tree Duck
King Eider
Sandhill Crane
Lapwing

Baird's Sandpiper
Red Phalarope
Long-tailed Jaeger
Burrowing Owl
Rufous Hummingbird
Great-crested Flycatcher

Vermillion Flycatcher
Black-thr. Gray Warbler
Hooded Warbler
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Bobolink (Dec. 28)

*Records now lead us to believe that the Least Bittern is a permanent resident here.

THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

Stars are a part of Christmas, and in the month that Christmas is celebrated, the sky presents a choice display.

In the last of the evening twilight, Mars may be found in the southwest, and Saturn will be seen high in the south.

In the eastern half of the sky, several fascinating constellations have come into view, three of which contain first magnitude stars. Northeast of Saturn is a small group conspicuous--not by its brilliance, but by its softly glowing beauty. This is the Pleiades, or the Seven Sisters of Greek mythology. Anyone with a small telescope will discover that the group is made up of numerous sparkling individuals. Continuing northeastward, the bright yellow star Capella will be seen in the five-sided figure of Auriga, the Charioteer. In a line almost directly south of Capella is another bright star, red in color. This is the "red angry eye" of Taurus, the Bull. The V-shaped face of the Bull is formed by several fainter stars, and the long horns extend northeastward from the face. The tip of one of the horns belongs also to Auriga. East of Taurus is Orion, the Hunter. If one is facing east, he will see the belt formed by three stars in a row upward from the horizon. To the left of the belt, a very bright orange-red star represents one shoulder, and a fainter star, the other shoulder. The bright star is Betelgeuse, which means "arm pit of the Giant", and truly it is an enormous sun. Between the shoulders, the head is formed of a very faint triangle of stars. Diagonally opposite Betelgeuse is Rigel, a brilliant blue-white star, which represents the heel of the Hunter, propped on a rock, and beneath Rigel, a little nearer the horizon, the knee of the other leg is represented by a fainter star.

In the north, Cassiopeia rides high, a little northwest of Polaris, and diagonally opposite, the bowl of the Big Dipper is now just above the horizon. The two outer stars of the bowl are called the "Pointers", for they point almost directly to the North Star.

At the beginning of the month, both Venus and Jupiter may be seen in the east before dawn, but Venus soon disappears into the glare of the sun.

"THE CHRISTMAS STAR" will be the topic of the Planetarium program to be held on December 15, at 8:00 p.m.

—Elizabeth D. Simons

