

The Lesser Squawk



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OFFICERS

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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 12, 1970, when Mr. J.G. MacDougal will present a program on "Wildflowers".

On December 27th the annual Christmas bird count will be conducted by Society members. Anyone who wishes to participate should call Julian Harrison (795-1694) or Ted Beckett (766-3462). Participants will meet at Gregorie's Station at the intersection of highways 17 and 41 at 7:00 a.m.

AUDUBON SOCIETY VOTE

At the November meeting the Society voted to become a chapter of National Audubon Society. The vote was 47 for and 9 against, with 2 abstaining. Affiliation will not be complete prior to a year of probationary membership in National Audubon. A meeting of the Executive Board will be held soon for arrangement of the details of affiliation.

OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Francis Barrington completes his list of fall and winter arrivals with these observations:

November 1	Song Sparrow	December 4	Red-breasted Merganser
2	Cedar Waxwing	7	Fox Sparrow
5	Junco	8	Horned Grebes (2)
6	Robins	9	Orange-crowned Warbler
17	Rusty Blackbirds (4)		

He also reports an interesting observation concerning a Yellow-throated Warbler. For two years he tried to tame it to eat from his hand as it came to his feeder with Chickadees and Titmice that already were tame. He finally succeeded, and it ate regularly for about a year and a half. Then it disappeared for a year. Recently a Yellow-throated Warbler--presumably the same one--appeared and without hesitation came to his hand and ate.

SKYWATCHERS' GUIDE

December, known as the "Long Night Month" by the Indians, offers the greatest number of hours for sky-watching, and starts the parade of the brightest stars of the year. Each day, the sun rises a little later, and sets a little earlier, until the 22nd of the month when the Winter Solstice occurs. On that date, the earth will reach the most northerly point on its course around the sun, and because it is inclined $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees to the plane of its orbit, the northern hemisphere of the earth is tilted at an angle away from the sun. Consequently, the sun rises in the southeast, and sets in the southwest, casting its rays slantingly as it describes a lower arc across the sky. Winter, then, officially begins in the northern hemisphere, and summer in the southern hemisphere.

Once more, Mercury is an "Evening Star". It may be seen thus throughout most of the month, appearing higher in the southwest each evening after sunset until the tenth, when it reaches its greatest eastern elongation (i.e., greatest distance east of the horizon). For several days, it will be visible, shining brightly after dark. Then it will start moving rapidly toward the sun, and by Christmas, it will be lost in the glare. However, before the arrival of the New Year, it will rise about 6:30 in the morning.

Saturn reaches the meridian about 9:30 p.m. at mid-month, and sets by 4:00 a.m. The other three naked-eye planets are "Morning stars". Mars rises shortly after 3:00 o'clock, Venus about 45 minutes later, and Jupiter follows, about 5:30 at the beginning of the month and earlier each succeeding day until the 31st when it appears about 15 minutes after Venus.

Soon after dark at Christmas-time, Cygnus the Swan, also called the Northern Cross, may be seen in the northwest. It appears as a cross standing upright, symbolizing to Christians the sign of their faith.

At mid-month, Perseus reaches the meridian by 9:00 p.m., with Pegasus and Andromeda west of it, and Auriga and Gemini to the east. Directly south of the "bell-clapper" of Perseus, the faint group of the Pleiades may be discerned. This is followed by Taurus, the Bull and Orion, the Hunter. Shortly after Orion is completely in view, Sirius, the brightest star seen from earth will appear above the southeastern horizon, to shine throughout the night as it moves across the sky.

-Elizabeth D. Simons

BIRD MOVEMENT IN DECEMBER

Arrivals

13 Great Black-backed Gull

15 White-footed Goose

29 Purple Sandpiper

Departures

1 Common Nighthawk

8 Bobolink

10 Least Bittern*

1 Golden Plover

Casuals and Accidentals

Mute Swan

Baird's Sandpiper

Vermillion Flycatcher

Fulvous Tree Duck

Red Phalarope

Black-thr. Gray Warbler

King Eider

Long-tailed Jaeger

Hooded Warbler

Sandhill Crane

Burrowing Owl

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Lapwing

Rufous Hummingbird

Bobolink

Great-crested Flycatcher

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

BELLEFIELD BIRD CENSUS

Thirty-five members of the Society, under the leadership of Dr. Harry Freeman, participated in the annual bird census at Bellefield Plantation north of Georgetown on November 15th. The group was divided into ten field parties and obtained the following records for the day:

Party	Total Birds	Number of Species
1	1,642	43
2	569	49
3	409	41
4	182	29
5	422	45
6	271	32
7	1,536	32
8	332	44
9	1,090	71
10	203	31
Grand totals	6,521	125

Through the courtesy of Miss Ella Severin, the Belle Baruch Foundation treated the group to coffee and pastry before entering the field and a fine lunch at noon.