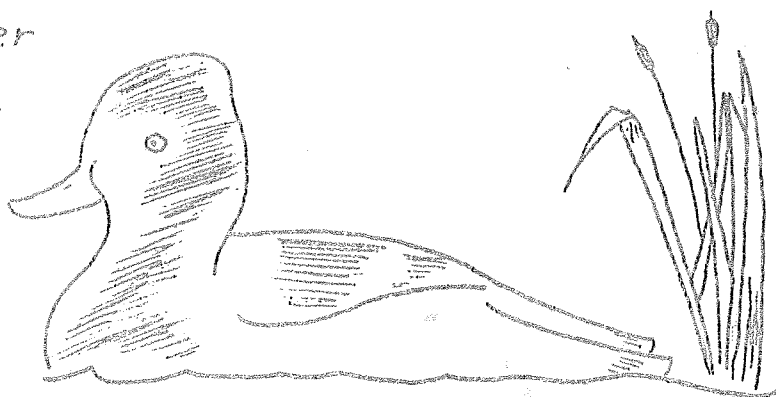


The Lesser Squawk



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JANUARY ACTIVITIES

The January meeting will be on the 20th, rather than on the second Tuesday of the month as is the usual custom. The time and place, 8:00 p.m. at the Charleston Museum, will be as usual. This month we shall have the good fortune of hearing Dr. Dominick speak on some of his work with the Lepidoptera. A lecture by such a recognized expert in the study of these insects should be very stimulating to members of the Society.

A short field trip to Magnolia Gardens will be led by Ted Beckett on January 18th. Participants should assemble at DuPont Crossing at 7:00 a.m.

OBSERVATIONS

Mrs. Robert H. Coleman reports a female Baltimore oriole at her home in Lawton Bluff on December 15th.

Mr. Francis Barrington reports a horned grebe in the river in front of his home in Riverland Terrace on December 6th. He also reports a red-breasted merganser on the 9th, a goldfinch on the 17th, and a ruby-throated hummingbird on the 18th.

On December 2, Mr. Alan Berry saw a single whistling swan in Kiawah River just opposite the old Vanderhorst house on Kiawah Island.

A recent communication from the Botanical Gardens of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries of Paget, Bermuda is a very welcome and an extremely interesting comment on an observation by Captain John Le Cato of USNS Victoria. On October 23, 1969, Captain Le Cato sighted six large herons flying westward approximately one hundred miles northwest of Bermuda. The letter from Mr. David B. Wingate is printed in full below:

"A note on egrets sighted at sea near Bermuda in your "Lesser Squawk" December newsletter has just been drawn to my attention by Mr Richard Pough.

"As a resident ornithologist on Bermuda, I am happy to be able to provide the following information for Capt. J. Le Cato of U.S.N.S. Victoria.

"Herons and egrets of all east North American species with the exception of the Great White Heron and Reddish Egret are of regular occurrence in Bermuda. Some, like the Great Blue Heron are quite common and apparently make deliberate short cut flights over the western North Atlantic between the United States and the West Indies in Spring and Autumn. Others are apparently vagrants drifted off the East Coast in storm and lost at sea. Included in this category apparently are the cattle egrets, although now one of our most common heron visitors.

"Vagrants may arrive at any time of year but usually the first arrivals are in late October- early November with further occurrences through the winter, usually January, February, March and April.

"If the large herons seen on October 1969 were white, they were probably common egrets or cattle egrets. However we have evidence from a Radar study on Bermuda of a large migration on that date which apparently included a number of Great Blue Herons heading S - S.S.W., many passing right over Bermuda without stopping.

"I hope this information will add credence to your observation.

Sincerely,

David B. Wingate,
Museum and Conservation Officer"

BELLEFIELD BIRD CENSUS

The annual bird census at Bellefield and Hobcaw Plantations was conducted on November 16, 1969. The day was clear, bright, and dry, with only a light wind. Dr. Harry Freeman reports that the twenty-six participants identified 6650 birds of 113 species. The number of individuals of each species is given below:

Common Loon 3	Hooded Merganser 22	American Coot 5
Pied-billed Grebe 5	Turkey Vulture 37	Semipalmated Plover 2
European Cormorant 1	Black Vulture 11	Wilson's Plover 1
Double-crested Cormorant 2	Sharp-shinned Hawk 2	Killdeer 1
Great Blue Heron 7	Cooper's Hawk 1	Black-bellied Plover 13
Little Blue Heron 1	Red-tailed Hawk 18	American Woodcock 1
Common Egret 18	Red-shouldered Hawk 4	Common Snipe 1
Snowy Egret 13	Rough-legged Hawk 1	Greater Yellowlegs 1
Louisiana Heron 10	Marsh Hawk 18	Dunlin 100
Ylw-crowned Night Heron 6	Osprey 6	Dowitcher 4
Wood Ibis 6	Peregrine Falcon 1	Western Sandpiper 14
Black Duck 10	Pigeon Hawk 2	Sanderling 200
Green-winged Teal 1	Sparrow Hawk 7	Herring Gull 7
Blue-winged Teal 12	Clapper Rail 32	Ring-billed Gull 6
Wood Duck 11	Virginia Rail 1	Bonaparte's Gull 1
Ring-necked Duck 2	Yellow Rail 1	Caspian Tern 5
Ruddy Duck 55	Common Gallinule 1	Mourning Dove 8

Belted Kingfisher 17	Winter Wren 8	Pine Warbler 27
Yellow-shafted Flicker 97	Carolina Wren 40	Yellowthroat 11
Pileated Woodpecker 26	Long-billed Marsh Wren 11	Eastern Meadowlark 49
Red-bellied Woodpecker 29	Mockingbird 61	Redwing Blackbird 702
Red-headed Woodpecker 1	Catbird 9	Rusty Blackbird 6
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 50	Brown Thrasher 18	Boat-tailed Grackle 65
Hairy Woodpecker 4	Robin 1490	Common Grackle 36
Downy Woodpecker 6	Hermit Thrush 35	Cardinal 51
Red-cockaded Woodpecker 39	Gray-checked Thrush 1	Purple Finch 3
Eastern Phoebe 6	Veery 1	American Goldfinch 71
Tree Swallow 1027	Eastern Bluebird 11	Rufous-sided Towhee 72
Blue Jay 51	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 3	Savannah Sparrow 16
Common Crow 119	Golden-crowned Kinglet 41	Sharp-tailed Sparrow 5
Fish Crow 175	Ruby-crowned Kinglet 248	Vesper Sparrow 3
Carolina Chickadee 118	Water Pipit 6	Slate-colored Junco 63
Tufted Titmouse 29	Loggerhead Shrike 2	Chipping Sparrow 12
White-breasted Nuthatch 6	Starling 15	Field Sparrow 13
Red-breasted Nuthatch 15	Solitary Vireo 1	White-throated Sparrow 318
Brown-headed Nuthatch 63	Black and White Warbler 1	Swamp Sparrow 16
Brown Creeper 8	Myrtle Warbler 461	Song Sparrow 55
House Wren 8	Yellow-throated Warbler 1	

BIRD MOVEMENT IN JANUARY

Arrivals

None

Departures

18 Western Kingbird

24 Snowy Owl

31 Brant

Casuals and Accidentals

Eared Grebe
Blue-faced Booby
Reddish Egret
Cinnamon Teal

Harlequin Duck
Harlan's Hawk
Great-crested Flycatcher
Vermillion Flycatcher
Black and White Warbler

Purple Martin
Northern Waterthrush
Dickcissel
Green-tailed Towhee

THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

Any clear night in January holds in store a rich reward for those willing to brave icy temperatures under the open sky. Seven brilliant stars dominate the scene throughout the night, and in the evening during the first week three planets are also visible. Elusive Mercury may be glimpsed briefly in the sunset glow, near the south-west horizon; then after a few days, it will be lost to view. Higher in the same direction, Mars will be recognized by its reddish color, and just west of south, Saturn shines with a steady yellow light.

Well above the southeastern horizon, one cannot fail to notice the brightest star visible from the earth. This is Sirius, whose name means "Sparkling". From the latitude of Charleston, Sirius is also the nearest bright star that can be seen in

the sky. Its distance from the Solar System is $8 \frac{1}{3}$ light-years, which means that the light from this star, travelling at 186,000 miles per second, takes a little more than eight years to reach our sight.

Just south of overhead is Taurus, the Bull, with lowered horns and red angry eye. Between Sirius and Taurus stands Orion, defending himself against the Bull. One arm of the Hunter, extended above his head, and holding a club, is represented by three faint stars. In his other hand, he is thrusting forward a shield of lion-skin. This may be seen in a curve of faint stars just south of Aldebaran, the Bull's eye.

High in the southeast, Castor and Pollux, the Twins are in excellent view. Pollux, the brighter of the two, is yellow, and Castor is white. Southeast of Pollux is Procyon, and north of overhead is Capella, in Auriga.

By midnight, most of the Big Dipper can be seen above the horizon, as though balanced on the tip of its handle.

Saturn sets about 1:30 in the morning, and at the same time, Jupiter rises over the opposite horizon.

"PREVIEW OF THE 1970 SKIES" will be the topic of the showing at the Planetarium on Monday, January 19, at 8:00 p.m.

-Elizabeth D. Simons

A REFLECTION

Just within the entrance to Edisto State Park a narrow woods road disappears southward into a grove of young live oaks. Across two miles of dappled forest floor, first beneath the young oaks and then through a more mature stand of oaks and pines, the road winds. It stops in a small glade a few yards from the tip of a peninsula which juts into a saltwater marsh.

Hidden beneath the undergrowth which covers the tip of the peninsula, and almost invisible to one who has not seen it before, a brush-covered mound gently rises. At the edge of the marsh to the left of the mound a faint path drops over the four-foot bank of a tidal creek. To the right another path winds around the mound and forks. One route climbs to the summit of the mound; the other declines and disappears among the raccoon tracks on the edge of the creek.

In its steady erosion of the mound, the creek has exposed a revealing cross-section. Lying upon the undercut bank is a heap of weathered seashells. A thin layer of humus on top of the shells supports a pair of evergreens, a cherry-laurel and a holly, with their contrasting study of berries, jet black and brilliant red. A little to one side, with gnarled roots exposed, a rugged cedar imparts a slightly funeral air to the dwindling mound.

Below the bank, where the creek bed is exposed at low tide, are strewn shells which already have fallen--clams, whelks, periwinkles, mussels, and, most numerous, oysters. Here and there among the shells hard, angular sherds of red, brown, and gray reveal the vanished presence of human inhabitants--Indians who slowly built the mound with discarded shells from thousands of forgotten meals.

These vanished Indians, perhaps of the Edisto tribe of Cusabos who in the sixteenth century were known to French and Spanish explorers, were accomplished artisans. Hardly a piece of their pottery is without some design. And most of the designs are delicate, precisely executed punctate markings. Narrow rows of tiny triangular or conical impressions create graceful patterns which rival the beauty of modern ceramics. A complete vessel would be a prized addition to any museum.

To the northeast, across the marsh, on the waveswept outer beach, similar pieces of pottery sometimes wash ashore. These pieces are almost uniformly gray, and their designs have nearly disappeared after centuries of exposure to water and sand. Perhaps they too once tumbled from an eroded mound as the water and the land fought their never-ending battle. Someday, perhaps, as the sea overwhelms the land, they will be joined by the pieces now protected by the barrier island and the marsh.

But, long before that time, the present mound will have succumbed to the waters which are relentlessly eroding the bank of the creek. This final vestige of a vanished people who lived, laughed, loved, and died in the land which we now claim but which was their homeland will have gone forever. The opportunity to save it is there--a small dike, a slight shift in the channel--but no one seems to care. After all, it is only a mass of broken shells and a few broken pots--not a monument to a broken people whom we would not befriend in life and will not in death.

-Roger D. Lambert