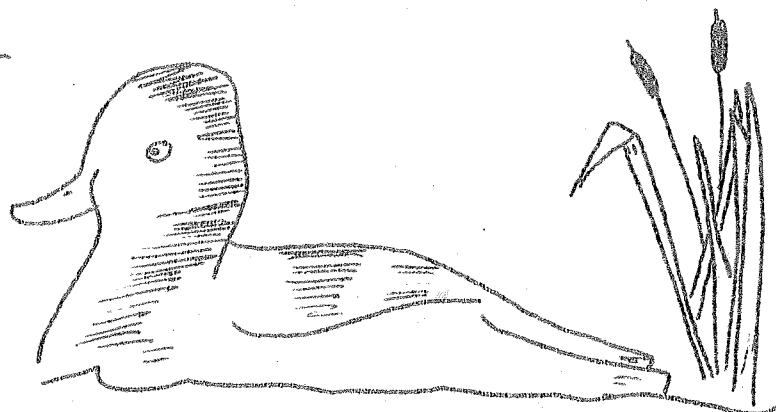


The Lesser Squawk



Published at Charleston, S.C. by The Natural History Society, Mar. 1970. Vol. XXI No. 3
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MARCH ACTIVITIES

On Tuesday, February 10, the monthly meeting of the Society will be held at 8:00 p.m. at the Charleston Museum. Dr. Julian R. Harrison, III, will speak on frogs and salamanders with emphasis upon species found in South Carolina.

An all day field to Bear Island will be held on March 21st. Participants will meet at the DuPont Crossing Piggly Wiggly at 6:30 a.m. Since the parking lot there will be in use that day, participants are encouraged to share rides and keep the number of cars left on the lot to a minimum. Nonavailability of the Cobury Dairy boat was responsible for cancellation of the trip to Bull Island which originally was scheduled for this month.

BIRD MOVEMENT IN MARCH

Arrivals

- 3 Least Bittern
- Wilson's Plover
- 5 Swallow-tailed Kite
- 6 Parula Warbler
- 7 Chimney Swift
- Wood Thrush
- 9 Rough-winged Swallow
- 10 Eastern Kingbird
- 11 Upland Plover
- Chuck-will's-widow
- 12 Mississippi Kite
- 15 Least Tern

- 15 Yellow-throated Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- 16 American Golden Plover
- 18 Veery
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- 19 Yellow-crowned Nightheron
- 20 Pectoral Sandpiper
- Common Nighthawk
- Black-thr. Green Warbler
- 22 Stilt Sandpiper
- Gr. Crested Flycatcher
- 23 Hooded Warbler

Departures

- 16 Long-eared Owl
- 19 Bewick's Wren
- Brown-headed Cowbird

- 28 Eastern Phoebe
- 29 Fox Sparrow
- 30 Redhead

Casuals and Accidentals

Lapland Longspur

THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

As probably all Sky-watchers are aware, Saturday, March 7, will present one of nature's most awe-inspiring sights--a total eclipse of the sun. Since much has already been published in the newspapers to prepare observers for what is to take place, this writer will not repeat all the details, except to emphasize the necessity to protect the eyes from exposure to the sun's corona at the time of totality.

The brilliance of the sun, scattered around us by the atmosphere, normally completely obliterates all stars from view; all stars, that is, except the one producing the light of day, for the sun itself is the star nearest to the earth. Just as the earth steadily revolves around the sun during the course of a year, so the moon revolves around the earth in a period of 29 1/2 days. Once a month, therefore, it reaches a point between the earth and the sun. At rare intervals, that point is in a direct line between the two bodies, and the shadow of the moon is cast on the earth. Because of the enormous distance between the sun and the moon, for about three minutes, the sun's face will be entirely hidden by the moon. Only the corona, an envelope of incandescent gases in constant agitation, will extend beyond it. In that brief time, Sky-watchers may be able to see some of the stars that appear in the night skies of autumn.

Within an hour after the sun has set, Venus may be detected near the western horizon, and by dark, Mars and Saturn will be seen a little higher. Mars is rapidly drawing nearer to Saturn, and by month's end, the two will be in conjunction. Jupiter rises about 10:00 p.m. on the first, and about 8:30 toward the end.

The constellation most associated with spring is Leo, the Lion. This may be seen in its entirety well above the eastern horizon. It is made up of two groups of stars--a backwards question mark high in the eastern segment of the sky, and facing toward the west; and a triangle, the apex of which points to the east. When these two groups are connected, the figure of a lion is suggested. One very bright star is contained in this constellation. Its position is that of the dot under the question mark. This star was named by the ancients "Regulus", because they believed that it ruled all the affairs of heaven.

Taurus, Orion, Canis Major, and Auriga are all located west of the meridian, and Gemini, the Twins are high overhead. Castor and Pollux represent the heads of the Twins, with Pollux the brighter of the two. Directly south of Pollux is another first magnitude star, Procyon, the only bright star in Canis Minor. A large triangle is formed by these two stars with Regulus.

In the north, the Big Dipper rides high, and diagonally opposite, Cassiopeia is approaching the horizon. Between these two is the Little Dipper, with the North Star at the tip of the handle.

The topic at the Charleston Museum Planetarium on March 16, at 8:00 p.m., will be "MYSTERIES OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM".

-Elizabeth D. Simons

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP

February 15, 1970, had an ominous beginning, but as the morning wore on, it developed into a perfectly beautiful day, providing perhaps the best outing of the season to date. Fourteen members turned their attention first to various habitats along Brick Church Motorway in the Francis Marion Forest. One pleasant surprise was the presence of numerous bluebirds in an expansive, cut-over area, about half-way down the road. Other birds of interest seen were Brown-headed Nuthatches, Phoebes, Downy Woodpeckers, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and several nest holes of the last species. From Brick Church Motorway, the group then proceeded along Clement's Ferry Road to Middleburg Plantation, the home of E. von Siebold Dingle on the East Branch of the Cooper River. Middleburg provided the high points of the trip, the sighting of an adult Bald Eagle over the river, and, later, the Eagle's nest in a tall tree not far from the live oak lane leading to the house. This year a Horned Owl has constructed a nest in a nearby tree. We are indebted to Mr. Dingle for making us welcome, and for providing us with the increasingly rare opportunity of viewing our national bird. Next on the itinerary was lunch at Huger Recreation Area, after which we visited Little Hellhole Reservoir near Witherbee Ranger Station. A walk on the dam in search of ducks and other waterfowl proved disappointing, but it is a beautiful place, and holds much promise for future trips.

—Julian R. Harrison, III

MOLA MOLA CAUGHT BY CHARTER BOAT

A Mola mola, commonly known as ocean sunfish, was caught on February 22nd by Capt. Tommy Sing of the charter boat Gulf Stream. This species, although of cosmopolitan occurrence, is not commonly encountered in cool waters. According to Dr. William Anderson, early last year a specimen which was reported as somewhat larger than the one caught by Capt. Sing washed ashore on Morris Island. A third local specimen recently lay, or perhaps still is lying, upon Edisto Beach. During the last two weekends it was seen by Edmund Cuthbert.

Capt. Sing was fishing with a snapper rig on the bottom in forty-five fathoms. The mola was hooked about noon and was boated about an hour later. This time does not compare with the fighting times of the large game fish caught off our shores, but it does speak well for the stamina and vitality of this individual. Dr. William Anderson and Dr. Norman Chamberlain have examined the specimen. It was 5 feet 2 inches long, with a greatest depth of 24 inches. Its half-girth was 36.6 inches.