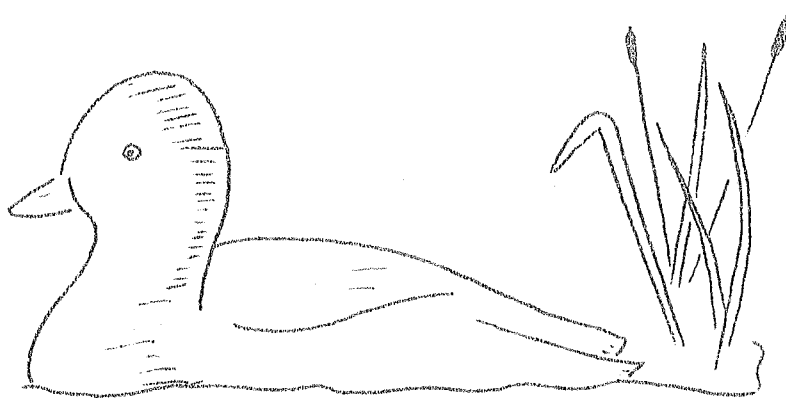


# The Lesser Squawk



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## MARCH ACTIVITIES

This month's program promises to be a departure from the usual. We are fortunate to be able to obtain Mr. J. Kisser, who will present a program on wild rivers in the southern United States and Central America. Mr. Kisser is president of the Folbot Corporation of Charleston, manufacturers of a line of light-weight, portable boats which can be classed as kayaks. Mr. Kisser is an avid boater himself and has taken many fine movies on his trips throughout the United States and Central and South America. We can look forward to an exciting evening travelling in the most inaccessible parts of many wild rivers. Don't miss this meeting!

Julian Harrison will lead an all day field trip to the Savannah Wildlife Refuge on Sunday, March 14. Participants will meet at the Dupont Crossing Piggly Wiggly at 7:00 a.m.

## OBSERVATIONS

On February 17, about 4:00 p.m., Paul Bonney saw a flock of about 12 adult and one immature White Ibis near the old Mt. Pleasant-Sullivan's Island bridge. At the same location on the afternoon of the 20th, he and Mrs. J.F. Holbrook saw the same or a similar flock.

On February 21 Terry Moore saw five Avocets on the mudflats at North Bridge.

Correction: The February Lesser Squawk erroneously reported a sighting by D.M. Foreythe of a Black-headed Gull at Breach Inlet on January 20, 1971. The bird referred to actually was a Black-backed Gull.

## FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP

Seven members of the Society participated in a field trip to Magnolia Gardens on February 14th--Julian Harrison, Ted Beckett, Perry Nugent, Mrs. Robert N. Coleman, Miss Frances Brewster, and Mr. and Mrs. William Sonnogni. The day was cold and brisk. From the dikes the group observed ducks, coots, gallinules, and an anhinga. While having coffee and donuts at the Becketts' they watched one of Ted's regular visitors, a Baltimore Oriole.

## Santee Wildlife Refuge Plight

As mentioned in the February, 1971, issue of the Lesser Squawk, our field trip to the Santee National Wildlife Refuge brought to light some developments which could seriously jeopardize the future of this preserve.

Santee, like a number of our National Wildlife Refuges, encompasses an area where part of the land is State owned and part is U.S. Government property. In this case the State owned land is under control of the Santee-Cooper Public Service Authority. Herein lies the dilemma and the plight.

The Lake Moultrie, Lake Marion area is already a budding recreational center. With proper investment incentives, it can become almost a boom area. The Public Service Authority recognizes this potential and has started action to bring it about. This action produces two distinct problems, both of which endanger the Refuge and the wildlife it seeks to protect.

The first problem area has already received considerable public and legislative attention. This is the threatened swamp land at the Rimini Trestle area on Lake Marion (headlined as the Santee Swamp). At the time of this report, State Representative Alexander Sanders (Richland County) reported that he had met privately on March 3, 1971, with representatives of the Santee-Cooper P.S.A. and that he was encouraged by the approach they were taking on this problem. He could not reveal the details at his time, but promised that no compromise of the swampland will be acceptable.

The second problem area is in the form of a comprehensive industrial, residential and recreational development plan proposed by the Santee-Cooper Authority. This plan is so comprehensive that it requires detailed study to evaluate its merits and dangers. However, two major considerations are obvious.

First, much of the plan affects the Santee Refuge. This is possible because of the aforementioned joint State-Federal ownership of the land in the preserve. A striking example is the plan to convert Dingle Pond, a Carolina bay, into a marina. In addition to being a Carolina bay, Dingle Pond has been replanted with Cypress and is showing encouraging progress. All of this would disappear to accommodate yachts instead of wildlife.

Secondly, the plan as submitted complies only partially with Federal Power Commission requirements. These requirements call for exhibits which detail the impact of the plan upon recreational facilities and exhibits which examine the impact on the wildlife and ecology of the area. To date, only exhibit R, the recreation impact analysis, has been submitted. Unless an exhibit S, the Wildlife/ecology study, is submitted the Department of Interior cannot intercede in behalf of the Refuge or its protected species.

This is where the problem stands now, and without immediate, concerted, conservation efforts, an entire National Wildlife Refuge is endangered.

--Waddell Robey, Jr.

## THE SKY-WATCHERS' GUIDE

Sky-watchers, on any clear night, may trace the ecliptic through at least four of the constellations of the Zodiac. As soon as it is dark, at the beginning of March, the four that are in view are Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, and Leo. Taurus is high in the southwest. Aldebaran, the "red, angry eye of the Bull", is unmistakable by its orange-red color and brightness, and the "nose", or tip of the v-shaped figure of the Bull's face is pointing westward. Directly north of Orion (which is not within the Zodiac) the tips of the Bull's horns are on either side of the ecliptic. Two very bright stars just east of the meridian are Castor and Pollux, in Gemini. These represent the heads of the Twins. The rest of the stars in this constellation are quite faint. Four, representing the knees and feet, are in two straight lines extending southwestward from the heads, and the ecliptic runs between the knees. Leo, the Lion, is high in the east, with the sickle, or backwards question-mark, representing the head and chest of the animal, and the triangle of less bright stars to the left, its haunches. The bright star, Regulus, the "dot" under the "question-mark", is directly on the ecliptic. Between Gemini and Leo, one of the faintest of the Zodiacal constellations is located. This is Cancer, the Crab. Only on a very clear, moonless night can this group be seen as a faint blur of light, but a telescope will reveal a beautiful cluster of distant stars.

As the earth moves along its orbit, month by month, the sun appears to take its place within each of these constellations in turn, directly on the ecliptic. A point just east of Leo is the location of the sun in September at the time of the Autumnal Equinox. Now in March, six months later, the Vernal, or Spring Equinox will occur. This will take place on March 21 at 1:38 a.m. At that moment, the earth will reach a point on its orbit exactly mid-way between its winter and summer positions. Day and night will be of equal length, the sun rising at 6:00 a.m., and setting shortly after 6:00 p.m. The location of the sun, then, is "in" one of the Zodiacal constellations of the night sky in September.

Saturn, located near the Pleiades, the group of faint stars just west of Taurus, will set about 11:00 p.m. the first of the month, and by 9:30 at the end. Jupiter rises about an hour later, located in Scorpius. Mars rises shortly after 2:00 a.m. on the first, and about forty-five minutes earlier on the 31st. Venus rises about two and a half hours after Mars throughout the month, heralding the dawn in the proverbial "darkest hour".

-Elizabeth D. Simons