

## Bits & Briefs

### 2006-2007 Officers/Board:

We are looking ahead to next year's board and officers. Normally we hold a vote at our May lecture/membership meeting. Currently Andy Harrison is slated to serve as president next year and Steve Bleezarde as vice-president. Board/committee assignments may change, but Cornelia Carrier, Joe Cockrell, Mike Hutchinson, Don Jones and Tom Snowden are slated to remain on the board. Julian Harrison will remain our historian. We're actively seeking members who are willing to serve – as board members at large, or helping with particular tasks (fellowship, membership, fund-raising, education, etc.) Please contact Andy (795-6934) or Steve (406-2061) if you'd like to be active yourself or nominate anyone to serve.

### McAlhany Workday Success:

Special thanks to Laren Clark, Abbey Clark, Bill Robertson, Mary Levisen, John Butler, Tom Snowden, Andy Harrison for giving up a beautiful Saturday to labor at McAlhany Preserve.

We successfully:

- Removed trash along Wire Road
- Planted +/-125 longleaf pine seedlings
- Removed several trees along the driveway
- Fixed outside lighting problem at the cabin
- Installed five wood duck boxes
- Surveyed the trail around the lake and along the river. Trees along the trail were marked at with blue diamonds, with orange flagging all the way to the lake inlet at the river.
- Finished work on cabin foundation & floor.
- Inspected bald cypress seedlings planted in January (Survival is estimated >50%.)

Go to McAlhany Preserve and use it when you'd like! The policy of CNHS Charleston Audubon is controlled access. Prior to going, please contact a manager (Joe, Tom, or Andy) with a phone call or e-mail message.

-Joe Cockrell

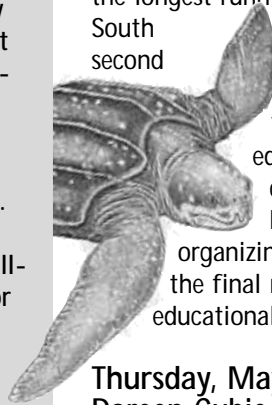
(843) 607-1070 cockrelljoe@cs.com

## April and May Lectures

Wednesday, April 12, 6:30 pm

Meg Hoyle: Sea Turtle Conservation

Meg leads the Botany Community Conservation Sea Turtle Project, one of the longest running loggerhead sea turtle protection projects in the state of South Carolina. The Edisto-based program hosts South Carolina's largest nesting aggregation of loggerhead turtles. As a result of the program's nest protection efforts, an estimated 10,000 hatchlings enter the water each summer, and their education programs reach over 100 students each year. Our chapter has financially supported their efforts.



Meg will talk about the turtles and the effort that goes into organizing beach patrols – Patrols begin in mid-May and last until the final nest hatches in late September or early October – and educational outreach, all designed to save these amazing animals.

Thursday, May 11, 6:30 p.m.

Doreen Cubie: Attracting Hummingbirds

Join hummingbird bander Doreen Cubie to learn about South Carolina's year-round hummers and how you can attract them to your garden.

Doreen is affiliated with the Hummer/Bird Study Group (HBSG - www.hummingbirdsplus.org), a nonprofit organization currently involved in a long-term study of the hummingbirds wintering in the southeastern states.

Besides telling you how she catches those hummingbirds and how small those bands are (5,500 to an ounce), Doreen will talk about favorite hummingbird plants and also look at the life history of hummingbirds.



### Mark Your Calendars Now:

We compete for use of the Library auditorium, and not ALL of our lectures can be on Thursday. When we can't schedule the second Thursday of the month, we try for the second Wednesday – In April we are meeting on Wednesday, but in May we're back to Thursday. The Lesser Squawk schedule may not always provide a reminder in the days before a talk, so please – Mark your calendars early and take special notice of whether we're meeting on a Wednesday or a Thursday.

## Spring Bird Count Planned for May 7th

The Charleston Audubon Society Spring Bird Count will be held this year on Sunday, May 7. Our chapter has conducted this count for many years, and the data we collect is extremely valuable in detecting long-term trends in bird populations. Our 15-mile diameter "count circle" (the same area used on the Charleston Christmas Bird Count) is divided into territories, and groups of observers record the numbers of species and individuals they see or hear in their territory over the course of the day. Experienced birders are particularly encouraged to participate, but all are welcome.

Contact the compiler, Andy Harrison, at 795-6934 or parula23@aol.com for more information.

## SC Nesting Islands a Compromise, Includes Protections, Limited Access

The Charleston Audubon Society helped achieve a great conservation victory in February. Spurred on by the efforts of Conservation Committee member Jim Cubie, our membership (along with many other concerned citizens) deluged the SC Department of Natural Resources Board with dozens of letters, phone calls and hundreds of e-mail messages urging them to grant sanctuary status to Deveaux Bank, Crab Bank and Bird Key. These islands are owned by the state (in the Heritage Preserve system) and host three of only five active seabird nesting colonies along the SC coast. Unfortunately, despite warning signs and rope barriers, human and canine disturbance have contributed to a sharp decline in nesting populations of some species, notably the Brown Pelican. At its February 17 meeting the DNR Board voted to close the islands completely to human access during the March to October nesting season (allowing visitors to the tidal beaches during the remainder of the year) and to prohibit dogs at all times. However, the new regulations were subject to approval by the SC Budget and Control Board at its March 21 meeting before they could become law – and sadly, they did not survive intact.

A small group of property owners, upset at the prospect of not being allowed year-round access to Deveaux Bank, were able to convince local state legislators to derail the original DNR proposal. Subsequent negotiations that included Norman Brunswig of SC Audubon have resulted in a compromise that is not completely satisfying to either side but offers some measure of protection to the nesting colonies. Under provisions of the revised regulations, Crab Bank and Bird Key (both relatively small islands) will be completely closed during the nesting season, but access to the tidal beaches at Deveaux Bank (at 215 acres, a much larger island than the other two) will be permitted year-round. Dogs will be prohibited at all times on the three islands. The size of Deveaux Bank is significant. According to April Stallings of SC Audubon, establishment of similar regulations for larger islands in NC has been shown to result in a 300% increase in nesting Brown Pelicans in the first year after passage.

This issue is not yet completely settled, though. On Deveaux Bank, bird species that use upland areas may experience increases in nesting numbers, but others that prefer sandy beaches closer to the water's edge (such as Least Terns) will probably not. SC Audubon has agreed to hire a warden to help DNR Law Enforcement officials patrol the islands. SC DNR biologists will continue to monitor nesting success and disturbance levels, and the new rules will be reviewed at the end of the year. I encourage our membership to keep an eye on the islands too (Bird Key is visible from Folly Beach, for example, and there are certainly CNHS members who enjoy boating in the vicinity of the islands). Report any violations you may observe to DNR's Operation Coast Watch, 1-800-922-5431. We also need to contact our local state legislators and let them know that many of their constituents are concerned about the welfare of the nesting colonies and are following the issue closely.



**Vanishing Sight**  
Nesting pelicans have completely abandoned Bird Key. Ongoing disturbance could lead to the same on the interior of Deveaux Bank.

## Shorebird Surveys Present Conservation Opportunity

The Charleston Audubon Society has agreed to partner with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in a project to conduct research and foster education about Piping Plovers in our state.

This shorebird species is Federally-listed as Endangered, and small numbers of the birds winter on beaches along the southern Atlantic seaboard – including the entire SC coast. Melissa Bimbi and Sid Mattock have submitted a grant proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (seeking funds from the Savannah-Santee-Pee Dee Resource Protection Fund), and our chapter has offered an in-kind contribution of 200 hours of volunteer time over two years to the project.

If you are interested in helping promote shorebird conservation in SC, and in particular the birds that use our local beaches, watch this space! We will be looking for volunteers to assist with both the research and education components of the work. Contact Andy Harrison at 795-6934 or parula23@aol.com if you'd like to help – thanks!

## Upcoming at Beidler Forest

**Nightwalk** – May 6, 8:30 p.m.  
Call 843-462-2150 for reservations.

**Earthday Swampology Day** – April 22  
Arrive by 2 p.m. for a family day of present and past uses of the swamp and hands-on scientific, nature-related activities and demonstrations. General boardwalk admission.

**Wine and Warblers** – April 28  
5:30 to 7:30 p.m. starting times  
Enjoy wine and hors d'oeuvres as you stroll along the boardwalk with an expert bird guide. Groups of 10 will begin every 30 minutes. Call to reserve your starting time. \$25



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

### Upcoming Programs, Outings & Lowcountry Events

#### FIELDTRIPS & OUTINGS:

##### » BP, Cainhoy/Wando Outing

» April 15, 2006, 7:15 a.m.

On Saturday April 15, Don Jones and Andy Harrison will lead an outing to the 6000 acre B.P. property near Cainhoy/Wando on the east side of the Cooper River. The property contains diverse habitat including long leaf pine woods, salt marsh, cypress swamps and hardwood forest. There are also several interesting historic sites in the area. We should see many of the spring migrants such as warblers, vireos and tanagers as well as wading birds and hawks.

Bring a lunch and bug spray. We'll meet in front of Lowe's just off of 17N in Mount Pleasant at 7:15 a.m. and car pool to the location. Plan for a half day outing. Contact Don Jones no later than Friday the 14th if you plan to attend. 843-572-8232 or Birdfrogdjj@aol.com

##### » Spring Bird Count

» Sunday, May 7, 2006

The Charleston Audubon Society Spring Bird Count will be held this year on Sunday, May 7. Our chapter has conducted this count for many years, and the data we collect is extremely valuable in detecting long-term trends in bird populations. Our 15-mile diameter "count circle" (the same area used on the Charleston Christmas Bird Count) is divided into territories, and groups of observers record the numbers of species and individuals they see or hear in their territory over the course of the day. Experienced birders are particularly encouraged to participate, but all are welcome.

Contact the compiler, Andy Harrison, at 795-6934 or parula23@aol.com for more information.

##### » Francis Marion Nat'l Forrest

» Saturday, May 13, 2006, 7:30 a.m.

Doreen Cubie will lead us on a spring birding trip to various sites in the north-eastern portion of the Francis Marion National Forest – Echaw Road and areas

near Wambaw Swamp will probably be on the itinerary. We are likely to see or hear species such as Prothonotary Warbler, Northern Parula, Prairie Warbler and Bachman's Sparrow in these areas, and we may be lucky enough to see a Swallow-tailed or Mississippi Kite as well!

If you plan to go on this trip, please register with Doreen at 928-3702 by Friday, May 12. She will meet participants at 7:30 a.m., Saturday, May 13 in the Lowe's parking lot in Mt. Pleasant. Bring binoculars, field guides (the spring wildflowers should be abundant too), water, food/snacks, sunscreen/insect repellent, and weather-appropriate clothing.

##### » McAlhany Flora/Fauna Survey

» Saturday, May 27, 2006, 7:30 a.m.

Julian Harrison continues bi-monthly outings to survey the fauna and flora of the McAlhany Nature Preserve on Saturday, May 27th. Everyone's welcome, and no special expertise is needed.

These trips may last until mid or late afternoon (although you're welcome to leave early if you like). Bring water, lunch/snacks, binoculars, guides and cameras (digital cameras may be especially helpful for quickly transferring photographs to our website).

Meet Julian in the West Ashley Barnes and Noble parking lot directly behind the Burger King restaurant at 7:30 a.m. We'll carpool from there to the Preserve, planning to arrive by 9:00 a.m. or before. Please contact Julian (843-795-1694 or harrisonj@cofc.edu) no later than Friday, May 26, if you plan to participate.

**DIRECTIONS:** The McAlhany preserve is located in upper Dorchester County on the Edisto River, about an hour's drive from downtown: Take Hwy. 61, Hwy. 78 or I-26 to Hwy 15. Go to the small town of Grover which is about 10 miles south of St. George. Turn west on Wire Road, cross over I-95 and continue for several miles and look for our signs on the left (the main sign is set-back somewhat, so look carefully.)

## Bachman Symposium

The Rev. John Bachman (1790-1874) served Charleston's St. John's Lutheran Church as pastor for 56 years, during which he wrote learned books and articles on wide-ranging topics from Martin Luther and the Reformation to animal taxonomy and human speciation.

Perhaps Bachman's most unexpected contribution came as an expert Low Country naturalist who befriended John James Audubon. Their association began when Audubon visited Charleston to sell subscriptions to his monumental *Birds of North America*. The artist became acquainted with Bachman's knowledge of flora and fauna, and arranged to spend a month at Bachman's Rutledge Avenue home, known for its animal menagerie and diverse if unkempt botanical collection.

Advanced registration for the Symposium, 20-23 April 2006, at Newberry College closed in February, and on-site registration is not guaranteed, but this remains a fascinating event for Charleston and Audubon enthusiasts alike.

» For more information visit <http://www.johnbachman.org/>

## Native Plant Symposium

The 9th Annual SCNPS Native Plant Symposium will be held April 21-23, 2006 in Charleston, at the College of Charleston, hosted by the Lowcountry chapter.

For an agenda and registration information please visit the SCNPS website: [www.scnps.org](http://www.scnps.org).

Saturday, following an evening reception, keynote speaker, Lawrence Earley will take to the stage. Earley is a former editor of "Wildlife in North Carolina" magazine, a freelance writer, and photographer living in Raleigh, NC.

Sunday will conclude with fieldtrips including several in the Francis Marion, canoeing along the Cooper River exploring rice fields, viewing native gardens at Mepkin Abbey, and visiting the new Birds of Prey Center. Transport and lunch are included in the price of the symposium.

# The LESSER SQUAWK

The Charleston Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 504  
Charleston, SC 29402

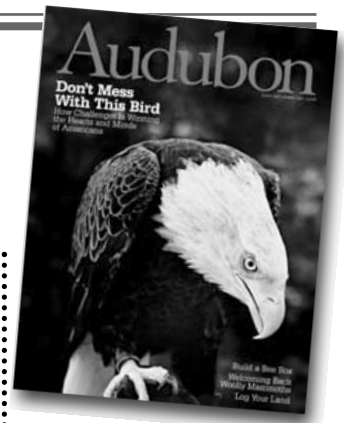
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