



# the Lesser Squawk

www.CharlestonAudubon.org

October–November 2005

## Bits & Briefs

### NRDC Speaker Deron Lovaas Thursday, 10/13 at 7:00 p.m.:

*(Please note – we normally we meet for a reception at 6:30 p.m.– due to a scheduling conflict we'll start at 7 p.m. in October.)*

Deron Lovaas is the National Resource Defense Council's vehicles campaign director and deputy director of the smart growth and transportation program. He currently directs NRDC's oil security issue campaign and serves as a lobbyist on transportation issues. Deron coordinated Sierra Club's Challenge to Sprawl campaign and managed Zero Population Growth's sprawl educational program. Come hear what he has to say about our dependency on oil for energy and the consequences for conservation.

### New Logo Submissions:

This month our Brown Pelican and Ravenel Bridge comes from artist Robert Nichols, via Chelsea and her dad, Laren Clark, who had the idea. This sample text treatment was then added by Steve Bleezarde.

Keep an eye on the *Squawk* and the website – this Fall we'll demo several ideas for a new logo: we're working to establish a strong visual identity for our local chapter.

Anyone who would like to contribute additional artwork or ideas please contact us via email:

» [logo@charlestonaudubon.org](mailto:logo@charlestonaudubon.org)

### We Want You – Volunteers Sign-up!

Last month a half dozen members stepped forward to help with membership and conservation activities. Immediate past-president Tom Snowden will oversee membership activities and will be glad to have a group to work with. But we're still welcoming anyone else who can contribute some time and energy to the chapter.

If you'd like to volunteer, or if you can think of someone we should approach about serving, please call Andy (795-6934) or Steve (406-2061), or email: [service@CharlestonAudubon.org](mailto:service@CharlestonAudubon.org)

## Buy Seed Now – Time's Running Out In Fall Bird Seed Fundraiser

This issue of the newsletter has been delayed, so by the time you read this our October 15th deadline for placing orders will be right on top of us. Please take a moment – if you haven't already – and place your order.

The birdseed sale is a great opportunity to help the chapter raise money while getting excellent seed for your feeders this Fall and Winter. You may find cheaper seed at discount stores, but you only get what you pay for: Our sale offers premium-quality seed thru *Wild Birds Unlimited!*

Use the enclosed form to place your order(s) – if it can't be postmarked by October 15, please call Steve at 406-2061 and ask if there's still time. If you can sell some seed to your friends, coworkers or neighbors, please do. Extra order forms can be downloaded at [www.CharlestonAudubon.org](http://www.CharlestonAudubon.org), and copies will be available at the Thursday 10/13 lecture/meeting.

Pick-up is at the area Wild Birds Unlimited store that you select on the order form – in either Mount Pleasant or West Ashley – during the ten days from Friday, November 4 thru Sunday the 13th. Contact sale organizer, Mike Hutchinson (h:884-7746, w:5293486, [mhutchinson15@comcast.net](mailto:mhutchinson15@comcast.net)), with any questions you have about this year's sale.

## Endangered Species Act Faces Changes

On September 29 the US House of Representatives passed a bill that, if enacted, will dramatically overhaul – and seriously weaken – the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The bill was sponsored by Rep. Richard Pombo (R-CA), a rancher who feels that current regulations unduly burden landowners and have done little to save imperiled plant and animal species. This is despite the fact that since passage of the ESA in 1973, only 9 of the approximately 1,800 species listed over the past 32 years have gone extinct, and about a dozen have recovered to the point that they could be removed from the list.

Species that have benefited include the Peregrine Falcon, Whooping Crane, and the Bald Eagle. Pombo's bill includes provisions that: after listing a species, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) can no longer designate "critical habitat" areas to be protected from adverse actions by federal agencies; private landowners would have to be compensated if protection of an endangered species on their land blocked any development plans (a provision that would benefit special interests and likely bankrupt the FWS); and the Secretary of the Interior would assume the responsibility for determining what scientific data to use in making decisions about protecting species.

Although the above bill faces stronger opposition in the Senate, it appears likely that the ESA will be altered in some way during the coming year. The ESA has been a true conservation success story, and we need to let our Senators know that as much as possible of the old bill must be retained if we want to continue to provide an essential safety net for plant and animal species forced to the brink of extinction.

# Planning for Greenbelts in Charleston County – by Andy Harrison

Remember the half-cent sales tax? Officially known as the Transportation Sales Tax, it was approved by Charleston County voters last November primarily as a means of raising funds (more than \$1 billion over a 25-year period) for constructing and improving roads, bridges, highways, and related projects. However, some \$221 million in revenue from the tax is also intended for use protecting greenspace in the County. During the past several months the process of planning how and where this money will be spent has begun.

Charleston County Council and the City Councils of Charleston, North Charleston and Mt. Pleasant have selected a 14-member board, the Greenbelt Advisory Board (GAB), to receive public input and deliver annual recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Commission on potential "greenbelt" (a very broad term encompassing many types of greenspaces, such as parks, trails, playgrounds, natural areas, etc.) projects. Greenways Incorporated (GWI), a consulting firm from Durham, NC, was hired to prepare (working closely with the GAB) a Greenbelts Master Plan. This process is expected to take about a year. The GAB is also responsible for reporting findings, recommendations and public comments about this Greenbelts Master Plan to County Council. An initial set of public workshops was held in three locations around Charleston County September 21–22, 2005.

At these meetings GWI presented maps showing the locations of existing greenspaces (including those held by public, private and non-profit entities), distributed flyers (such as one giving a draft definition of "greenbelts" for discussion), and collected public input by means of a survey form (requesting participants to identify where they lived, the kinds of greenspaces they valued, the uses they hoped to make of these

greenspaces, and how they thought new greenspaces should be acquired). Some of our members attended these meetings, and it will be important for as many of us as possible to attend future Greenbelt meetings to ensure that protection of natural resources – our forests, swamps, marshes (and marsh islands) and other valuable Lowcountry habitats – is not overlooked in favor of the many alternate greenspace functions (important as they are) that the public will demand.

The next set of workshops will take place in late winter or early spring of 2006. Meanwhile, even if you could not make it to one of the September meetings, you can view the maps, flyers and survey form at [www.smallchangeforbigchange.org](http://www.smallchangeforbigchange.org); and you can learn more about GWI and the GAB at [www.greenways.com](http://www.greenways.com) and [www.charlestoncounty.org](http://www.charlestoncounty.org), respectively. You can also contact Cathy L. Ruff, GAB Project Officer, at (843) 202-7204 or [cruff@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:cruff@charlestoncounty.org) for more information. Ms. Ruff will likely still be accepting survey forms at the time you read this, since a joint meeting of GWI and the GAB to review survey results is not scheduled until October 25.

Finally, in April 2005 County Councilman Curtis Bostic proposed a "Greenbelt Bank" modeled along the lines of the SC Conservation Land Bank. The Greenbelt Bank plan would establish a blue-ribbon panel to review applications from eligible greenbelt fund recipients, encourage the formation of partnerships with organizations such as land trusts (leveraging available funds and thus creating more "bang for the buck"), and provide a level of oversight to ensure that funds appropriated for the preservation of natural lands are actually spent for that purpose. At the time of writing this piece the Greenbelt Bank proposal has not yet come up for a vote in Council, but it seems to be an excellent idea that deserves our support.

*Reprinted from a 1956 National Wildlife Federation publication, this article presents a wonderful snapshot of our understanding 50 years ago – of the bird, and of the conservation measures necessary to save it. The type is small – look for a complete reprint online with articles on Whooping Cranes, Trumpeter Swans and more: <http://www.CharlestonAudubon.org>*

## The Ivory-billed Woodpecker JAMES T. TANNER

The ivory-billed woodpecker was never a common bird, but it has long been famous. Its large size and imposing appearance captured the imagination of both Indians and early naturalists. It is the largest woodpecker in North America, larger than a crow. Its shining black and white plumage, scarlet crest in the male, and large white bill combine with its vigorous and graceful actions and far-carrying voice to impress any observer. It differs from its relative, the pileated woodpecker, in being larger, showing more white in its plumage, especially on the back when perched, and the voice sounding like a nasal tin trumpet.

Ivory-billed woodpeckers originally lived in the swamps of the southeastern states. From southeastern North Carolina to eastern Texas they inhabited the large river swamps along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, living in forests of oak, gum, and other hardwoods and cypress. In the Mississippi bottomlands they extended northward at least to the mouth of the Ohio, preferring the first bottom forest of sweet gum, oaks and ash. Throughout Florida they in-

habited cypress swamps, frequently moving into the surrounding pine woods for feeding.

Ivory-bills feed upon wood-boring insects, particularly those kinds that live in the inner bark and between the bark and sapwood of trees or limbs not too long dead. The bark in this stage is still hard and tight, but the big woodpeckers hack and scale it loose by powerful side blows with their bills. This manner of feeding leaves characteristic signs—bare and barkless areas on dead limbs and trunks of trees too sound to be attacked in the same way by lesser woodpeckers. The preferred insect foods are often very abundant, but they are present for a relatively short time, disappearing when the bark loosens in the process of decay. Thus the ivory-bills' food is likely to be irregularly distributed, varying from place to place and from time to time. To find an adequate supply they range farther and require more area than do other woodpeckers.

Ivory-bills began to disappear from their original range as soon as loggers invaded the southern swamps. In several instances the disappearance of

the woodpeckers coincided with the cutting of the forests. The real cause was probably the indirect destruction of their food supply, for the young trees left in a cut-over forest provide much less food for woodpeckers than do the mature trees of a virgin or old forest. After such a forest has been cut, the different kinds of woodpeckers may maintain their status for about two years, then they decrease markedly in numbers. The ivory-bills, with their specific food requirements, were the first to go, and the ones which were lost permanently from the cut-over swamps.

By 1885 the birds had disappeared from the northern part of their original range. The greatest decrease occurred between 1885 and 1900 when the southern logging industry grew most rapidly. By 1915 the species was confined to about a dozen scattered localities in South Carolina, Louisiana, and especially Florida. By 1926 many naturalists believed that the ivory-billed woodpecker was extinct. But a few years later some were found living in the Singer Tract in northern Louisiana, and then some

**OUR  
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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

### Upcoming Programs, Outings & Lowcountry Events

#### Audubon Lecture Series:

We meet the 2nd Thursday of the month in the 2nd floor auditorium of the main branch of the Charleston County Library, 68 Calhoun St. in Charleston. Lectures are free, and open to Audubon members, guests and the general public. We gather at 6:30 p.m. for a reception and speakers will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Note: No Lecture in December.

#### Thursday, Nov. 10, 6:30 p.m.

» Simon Thompson

» Travel Birding Worldwide

Simon owns Ventures Bird Watching in Asheville, NC called and has led birding trips all over the world. He will give a program on travel and birding with lots of beautiful slides of birds.

Originally from Suffolk, England, Simon has lived in North Carolina for over 10 years. He has lived in Lebanon, Kenya, Yemen, and Ghana, where his interest in birds and natural history began. In addition to traveling extensively in the United States, Simon spent six months in China studying cranes and bird of prey migration as a member of the British "China CraneWatch" expedition.

#### Thursday, Jan. 12, 6:30 p.m.

» Jemima Parry-Jones

» International Center for Birds of Prey

Ms. Parry-Jones was the owner and Director of the National Birds of Prey Centre in England from 1982 until she moved with the bulk of the collection to South Carolina in November 2004.

She came with 185 birds of prey of 70 species – ranging from Stellers Sea Eagles to Burrowing Owls and in age from six months to thirty years-old – along with six dogs and – literally – a ton or more of equipment including a concrete eagle block that her father made thirty seven years ago! And you thought your last move was complicated

Her story fascinates us as much as the story of the center itself does. Come hear her speak about the 2004 trans-Atlantic move, the 2005 quarantine, her life with birds before the move and progress at the center's new facility since.

#### Outings 'n' Such:

» Birding Walk at Caw Caw

» Sunday, October 30, 9:00 a.m.

Join Andy Harrison for a morning trip to the Charleston County Park's Caw Caw

Interpretive Center, 5200 Savannah Hwy. (17S), Ravenel. Wooded paths and the succession of centuries-old rice fields are habitat for the 230+ bird species seen here. (September '05 sightings include Summer Tanager, Blue-winged Teal, Black-throated Blue Warblers and Louisiana Waterthrushes among many others.)

Gather at 9 a.m. (park opening) at the main building by the parking lot. Register with Andy at 795-6934 (or by email at parula23@aol.com) by Sat., Oct. 29. Note that there is a \$1 entry fee (unless you have a CCPRC pass). Bring binoculars, field guides, water, snacks, sunscreen, insect repellent, and please wear weather-appropriate clothing.

» Visit the Int'l Bird of Prey Center

» Saturday, November 12, 8:30 a.m.

Join trip leaders Steve Bleearde and Melissa Hughes on a morning tour of the Center in Awendaw. We'll be led on a tour of the new 152-acre site, habitat enclosures and grounds, and given a raptor flight demonstration (weather permitting).

Home to nearly 200 birds of prey representing 78 species from six continents, the International Center for Birds of Prey was created through the combination the SC Center for Birds of Prey, and the leading raptor center in Great Britain.

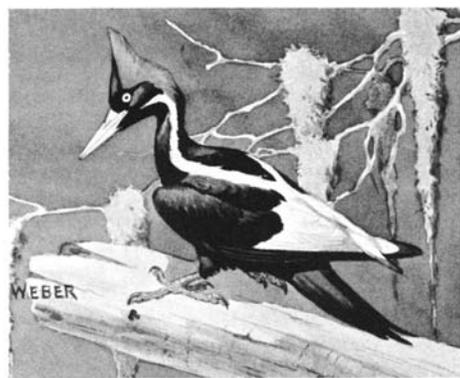
Register with Steve at 406-2061 (or by email at steve@bleearde.com) by Wed., Nov. 9 (we need an accurate count: if our group is large, the center will split us in two). Bring the usual: H<sub>2</sub>O, guides, etc.

» McAlhany Cookout

» Saturday, December 3

A Fall cookout at McAlhany is a good chance to get out and see the property. We're just making plans for our 3rd Annual BBQ and Pot-luck. People will be asked to bring a dish, a salad or a dessert. We'll have some drinks, guests are welcome to BYOB. Don't forget that family and friends are welcome!

The gate will be open about 9 a.m. and we'll start to eat about 1:30 p.m. Mark your calendars now, and stay tuned for more details in the November issue of *the Lesser Squawk*.



FROM WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STAMP SERIES

were seen in the Santee River swamp of South Carolina. An intensive study of the species was carried on in the years 1937 through 1939, at the end of which ivory-bills were believed to be living in those two localities plus about three areas in Florida. Since then, however, there have been no reports from the Santee River. The Singer Tract in Louisiana, where ivory-bills were best known and where practically all of the life history studies were performed, was cut over during World War II. Apparently the last bird to be seen there was a lone female observed in January 1944. The only recent reliable reports of this bird have come from northern Florida, but there have been no authentic reports since 1952.

A program for the conservation of the ivory-billed woodpecker must include the following:

1. Determination of the location and range of surviving individuals. Persons seeing ivory-bills can help by reporting their observations to the National Audubon Society, providing they are certain they have seen a real ivory-bill and not the somewhat similar and common pileated woodpecker.
2. Protection of the survivors of the species from hunting by curious gunners who might be the final cause of extinction.
3. Management of the forests so as to maintain an abundant food supply for woodpeckers. This can be done in different ways, depending on whether the area must also be managed for timber yield or whether it can be maintained as a sanctuary for ivory-billed woodpeckers and other animals native to these swampy wildernesses.

Conservationists must take the initiative in working out solutions to some of the complex social and economic problems that are involved in the restoration of the ivory-bill through management of its timber-producing habitats. Their success or failure will determine the fate of this bird.

# the Lesser Squawk

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The Charleston Audubon Society – a SC chapter of the National Audubon Society since 1970, founded as the Charleston Natural History Society in 1905, and serving Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties – is a nonprofit environmental organization that actively promotes awareness, appreciation and conservation of the natural environment through educational programs, field trips, conservation projects, sponsored research and social activities. Learn more online at [www.CharlestonAudubon.org](http://www.CharlestonAudubon.org).

## Audubon Introduces "At Home" Program

Our backyards are our private spaces, but also part of a larger landscape we share with our human and wildlife neighbors. With the right tools and information, we all can do simple things to create a healthier place to live for our families, our communities, and birds, plants, and other wildlife.

Audubon At Home is about taking personal conservation action to improve the environmental health and habitat quality of our yards and neighborhoods. Together, our actions can have a substantial effect. Explore the Audubon At Home links and resources online for the information, and inspiration, to make conservation actions a part of your everyday life:

» [http://www.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home/](http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/)

## SEWEE Center Events

Hwy. 17, Awendaw More info. online:  
<http://www.fws.gov/seweecenter/>

» **Haunting Walk in Old Cemeteries**  
» **Sunday, October 16, 2 p.m. Free**

Meet at the Center for a trip to very old, local graveyards, that served the earliest settlers. Join Cheves Leland, authority on the French Huguenots and Bud Hill, of McClellanville's Village Museum. Dress for the weather.

» **Live Center for Birds of Prey Program**  
» **Sunday, October 23, 2 p.m.**

Learn amazing facts about these beautiful creatures, and the International Center for Birds of Prey that will be open to the public, scheduled for Fall, 2006. Birds are occasionally flown during the program at Sewee.

» **Lecture: The Wolf of the Southeast**  
» **Thursday, October 27, 7 p.m.**

A slide presentation and update (after our Audubon lecture last Spring) on the Red Wolf recovery program, the history of the Cape Romain wolves and the recent removal of the last wolf on Bulls Island. Following the program, hear the Red Wolves of Sewee Center howl. The doors open at 6:30 with refreshments.



### New Members, Renewals, Gift Memberships

For only \$20\* you get one-year subscriptions to *Audubon* magazine and *The Lesser Squawk*, and all the benefits of local and National Audubon Society membership. Renew for just \$35/year. \*\$15 for Sr. Citizens and Students

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