



The Lesser Squawk

Newsletter of the
Charleston Audubon &
Natural History Society



WWW.CHARLESTONAUDUBON.ORG

September-October, 2008

President's Notes

It's that time again – another exciting year with the Charleston Natural History Society is about to begin! Reports of migrant shorebirds, early warblers and other avian visitors are starting to appear on the Carolinabirds list, and I am looking forward to our September 6 field trip to the Orangeburg Sod Farms – perhaps while there I will finally get a good look at an American Golden Plover! I also can't wait to hear Patrick McMillan, host of the ETV program "Expeditions," who will be speaking to a joint meeting of CNHS and the Sierra Club on September 10. These are just two of the excellent set of field trips and lectures that are planned for the fall months.

Looking Back: Birdathon Success

Before describing what else is in the works, let me mention a couple of items from last year. The 2008 Spring Bird Count and Birdathon was another great success! Our 32 participants (divided into 10 field parties) observed 147 total species and 10,264 individuals. With 76 species apiece, the Center for Birds of Prey/Sewee Road party (Paul Nolan, John Weinstein and Steve Moore) and Dewees Island party (Edwin Blicht, Kenneth Priester, Lori Wilson, David Smith, Bob and Connie Drew, Christie Drew, and Judy Fairchild) tied for most species observed. We raised over \$700 in the Birdathon, and the top three contributors were Diane De Steven, Hal S. Currey and Julian and Margaret Harrison. These funds will be used to help construct bird identification displays at the Pitt Street Bridge. Many thanks to all who participated in the Spring Count or who made donations to the Birdathon – your support is very much appreciated!

2008-09 Officers

In May we also held elections for CNHS chapter officers. Returning to serve this year are Andy Harrison (President), Steve Bleezarde (Vice President), Tom Snowden (Treasurer) and Cathy Miller (Secretary). Other members of our board include Cornelia Carrier (Programs), Don Jones (Outings), Paul Nolan, Kevin Hart, and Jeff Mollenhauer. Joe Cockrell is the chair of our McAlhany Nature Pre-

— continued, see **President's Notes**, page 2

Nature "On the Move" With ETV's Patrick McMillan

Times they are a changin' and animals and plants are racing to keep up. Join Clemson University naturalist, and host of the ETV program *Expeditions*, Patrick McMillan for a look at plants and animals on the move.

Alteration of habitats such as the wetlands of south Florida, moderation in winter temperatures, and extreme droughts are forcing native species to seek refuge in new regions. As a consequence, South Carolina is becoming a home away from home for some new and interesting species. We'll take a look at some of the most dramatic examples, from sitings of snail kites, to increases in wood stork populations, bears visiting Upstate cities and otherwise tropical plants showing up in the Grand Strand.

Joint Meeting, Wednesday Sept. 10th, with the Sierra Club

This is a joint presentation with Sierra Club, and we're proud to be able to host this Low Country event: 6:30 reception, 7 p.m. lecture.

» We meet 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.

Snacks! We provide cold drinks and enjoy your donation of snacks at our pre-lecture receptions. Bring anything: Cheese and crackers, chips and dips, cookies; whatever. — Thank You!

Vital Work: The Trust for Public Land

October 8 Lecture: Slade Gleaton, SC Director

Slade Gleaton, South Carolina Director of The Trust for Public Land will discuss growth and development pressures in the Lowcountry and the TPL's role helping communities to create greenspace visions, raise local greenspace funding, and acquire property for protection. TLP's recent projects include – Preserving the Lemon Island tract which represents a rare opportunity for South Carolina to preserve an undeveloped sea island; acquiring many extra acres for the Congaree Swamp which in 2003 was redesignated the Congaree National Park, South Carolina's first and only National Park; and famously, in May of this year the TPL conveyed Morris Island to the public ownership of the City of Charleston. This is vital work which contributes to the preservation of our area's wildlife, habitat and natural beauty.

Upcoming Events

Details in this issue

Sept. 6 – Orangeburg Sod Farms
Sept. 10 – Patrick McMillan
Sept. 20 – Santee Coastal Reserve

Oct. 8 – Slade Gleaton
Oct. 12 – Botany Bay Plantation
Oct. 25 – Pitt Street Bridge

A Vision for the Future

Regional Planning Requires Public Input and Support

by Andy Harrison

What is your vision of the future of the Lowcountry? The population of SC is expected to increase 27% by 2030. Most of these new residents will probably settle in locations near the coast. Where will we build all the houses, schools and other structures needed to serve this growing population? Will our roads increasingly resemble the choked thoroughfares of cities like Atlanta? What about preserving the natural areas that make this region such a special place, and keeping our air and water clean? Clearly there is a need for planning on a regional scale, and the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) has launched a two year initiative called "Our Region, Our Plan" to help guide the direction of growth in ways that promote conservation of scarce resources and avoid sprawl, while maintaining a high quality of life.

On July 26, 2008 the initiative was launched at an all-day public forum held at the North Charleston Convention Center. A number of CNHS members and South Carolina Audubon staff joined some 300 other people (including many public officials but also a large number of interested citizens) attending this meeting. We were seated – more or less at random – at round tables which functioned as "break-out" groups at various times during the day. I found myself at a table that included fellow board member Cathy Miller and her husband Carl, as well as City of Charleston Mayor Joe Riley and about five others. Each person was issued a keypad, which enabled us to "vote" electronically on questions that were posted on a smart board for all to see, and results were tabulated within seconds.

We heard from several speakers over the course of the day, including the keynote address delivered by Parris N. Glenden-

ing, former Governor of Maryland and the President of the Smart Growth Leadership Institute. He described how demographic changes in the United States, our nation's dependency on expensive oil and projected population increases (and the associated needs for new housing, jobs and infrastructure) make the way most growth happens now unsustainable – and what adjustments are necessary. For example, neighborhoods of the future need to be designed so that they are "walkable," with nearby shopping, schools and recreational opportunities. Interspersed between Governor Glendenning's address and those of other speakers were table discussions, each led by a member of HNTB, Inc., a team of consultants hired by BCDCOG to assist with "Our Region, Our Plan." We talked about regional opportunities and challenges in the morning, and then focused on local priorities in the afternoon session. Common themes that arose out of the table discussions included the need for the development of mass transit options, concern for the environment (preservation of natural areas as well as air and water quality), and a focus on attracting high quality "jobs of the future" (such as in the Bioscience and Aerospace industries) to the region.

So what's next? An all-day forum was a good first step, but there is much more that remains to be done to create an effective regional plan. You can learn more – and become involved in the process – by going to the "Our Region, Our Plan" website (www.ourregionourplan.org) and by signing up for e-mail alerts and taking the online survey.

This is our region, and our home: if we care about its future we must not let the opportunity represented by the BCDCOG initiative die on the vine!

President's Notes — *continued from page 1*

serve (MNP) committee. This chapter could not function without significant contributions of time and effort from these individuals and our other volunteers. If you are interested in joining us on the board, helping out at McAlhany, or any other activity (such as assisting with a Piping Plover survey or writing an article for the newsletter), please contact myself or any other board member.

Shorebird Surveys & Conservation Efforts Continue

We will be continuing our participation in the SC Shorebird Project by conducting surveys at least once a month at the SC-10 Critical Habitat Area on Seabrook Island. In addition, this coming spring we are hoping to help protect breeding Wilson's Plovers by posting signs and roping-off nesting areas. With respect to controlling sprawl, the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments "Our Region, Our Plan" initiative is a great idea that we encourage all our members to explore, and to participate in the process – more details inside this issue!

McAlhany Preserve Prospers with Your Help

Speaking of McAlhany, we are planning a work day at MNP on November 8th. This is a great chance to get out and see the

property and a group putting in a few hours of work is tremendously helpful. We'll be making sure we all have a chance to carpool too! Some of the needs we may address include painting the cabin (inside and out), working on a new trail, and cleaning litter from both sides of Wire Road. The longleaf pine/native grass restoration project that Joe Cockrell is directing is doing well, and we will be working there over the course of the year, too. This project will be the site of a field tour during the 2008 Eastern Native Grass Symposium in October!

Seed Sale, Oyster Roast – Great Opportunities

Our Fall Bird Seed Sale is back – please place your orders and encourage family, friends and neighbors to do likewise!

And finally, the Holiday Oyster Roast that we held at Bowen's Island last year was a huge success, and we are planning to do it again this year. Mark your calendars now for December 7! I look forward to seeing you at a lecture, field trip or other event this fall. Let me know if you have suggestions or comments.

Thanks,

Andy Harrison, CHAPTER PRESIDENT
843-795-6934, parula23@aol.com



Mark Your Calendars

FIELD TRIPS, LECTURES & LOWCOUNTRY EVENTS

Upcoming Field Trips —

Orangeburg Sod Farm

» Saturday, September 6, 7 a.m.

The first field trip of the 2008 /2009 season will be to the sod farm near Orangeburg. Although we often don't see a tremendous number of species; there is the possibility of seeing a couple of lifers: Upland Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper Solitary Sandpiper and American Golden Plover are all possible given the proper conditions. In addition Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Horned Lark, Ground Doves and several species of swallows are common there.

This trip will be mostly roadside birding, so not a lot of walking is involved. Bring your birding gear and a lunch, and dress for the weather.

We'll meet on Saturday, September 6 at 7:00 am, in the small parking lot next to the First Citizens Bank in front of the Summerville Wal-Mart (just off 17-A). We will car pool for the one hour drive to the sod farm. Please call or e-mail Don Jones prior to 9/6 to register:

» 572-8232 Birdfrogdjlj@aol.com

Santee Coastal Reserve

» Sat., September 20, 7 a.m.

Santee Coastal Reserve is a 24,000 acre property managed by SCDNR. It is located just off U.S 17 between McClellanville and Georgetown. Bordered on the North by the South Santee River; the property contains numerous habitats including longleaf pine and bottom land hardwood forest, freshwater swamps and tidal marsh. We should see year round resident birds as well as summer visitors and migrating warblers.

Our meeting place will be in the Lowes parking lot off U.S. 17 in Mount Pleasant at 7:00 AM on September 20. Bring a lunch and don't forget the bug spray. Please register with Don Jones prior to the 20th:

» 572-8232 Birdfrogdjlj@aol.com

Botany Bay Plantation, WMA

» Sunday, Oct. 12, 7 a.m.

Botany Bay Plantation Wildlife Management Area was officially opened to the public on July 1, 2008. Recently bequeathed to SC DNR, this former long staple cotton plantation located on Edisto

Upcoming Lectures —

See stories, page 1.

ETV's Patrick McMillan

» Wed., September. 10, 6:30 p.m.

Public Land Trust

» Wednesday, Oct. 8, 6:30 p.m.

» SC Director, Slade Gleaton

Island is a 4,630-acre mix of pine-hardwood forests, agricultural fields, coastal wetlands and a barrier island with plenty of beach frontage. A three mile driving loop passes numerous sites of natural beauty and historical interest and many walking trails are also available. This is sure to become a favorite destination for area birders.

Meet Andy Harrison at 7:00 a.m. Sunday, October 12 in the parking lot of the West Ashley Barnes and Noble store (at the intersection of Hwy 61 and Sam Rittenberg Blvd). We'll carpool from there to the site. Bring binoculars, field guides, water, snacks, sunscreen/insect repellent and weather-appropriate clothing. Note: this WMA does NOT have restrooms.

Register with Andy at 795-6934 or by e-mail at parula23@aol.com by Saturday, October 11.

Pitt Street Bridge

» Saturday, Oct. 25, 7:30 a.m.

Pitt Street Bridge is always a rewarding outing; and with a dropping tide in the morning we'll be looking for shore birds, herons, egrets, gulls and terns on the mud flats, and sparrows and warblers along the edges of the path. This is a great opportunity to introduce a family member or friend to birding as this is slow paced and we will be on a paved path or a boardwalk the entire time.

As we have done in the past, we'll get together after our morning of birding for lunch at a restaurant along Shem Creek and compare notes. We will meet on Saturday at 7:30 a.m. in the Moultrie Plaza shopping Center; (Wild Birds unlimited is located there), and car pool to Pitt Street. Bring a scope if you have one.

Help us get an accurate head-count — please contact Don Jones to register before 10/25.

» 572-8232 Birdfrogdjlj@aol.com

McAlhany Preserve | A Chapter Treasure

Volunteers Needed for Committee and Workday

The McAlhany Preserve is steadily being improved as a sanctuary for wildlife, an outdoor teaching and learning facility, and a conservation demonstration site; but we need your help to keep moving forward.

We are seeking persons interested in serving on the McAlhany Committee and/or helping to manage the Preserve. No special skills are required: Everyone can help; whether operating power tools, preparing a meal for volunteers, conducting biological surveys, developing trails, fund raising, planting trees, installing or checking nest boxes, or monitoring the property. Participants really just need to be able to travel to the Preserve occasionally, and any amount of time you can contribute will be welcomed. And it is not all about work — it is very rewarding to be involved; there's satisfaction in directly conserving a part of the natural world; learning land management and caretaking; enjoying dark, night skies full of stars and the sounds of frogs, owls, and night herons.

We're making plans now for a **work day on November 8th**: There will be more details in the November-December newsletter — we'll arrange for folks to meet and carpool from West Ashley, and we're hoping to tackle a number of different jobs around the property. But keeping the longleaf pine restoration project running, maintaining the buildings and trails, and making improvements is an ongoing process. We encourage

— continued, see *McAlhany*, page 4

The Charleston Audubon & Natural History Society

P.O. Box 504

Charleston, South Carolina 29402

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
CHARLESTON, SC
PERMIT NO. 349



Charleston Audubon – serving Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties, founded as the Charleston Natural History Society in 1905, and a chapter of the National Audubon Society since 1970 – 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 at www.CharlestonAudubon.org.

McAlhany — continued from page 3

you to come out for the work day (which is sure to be fun as well as productive,) but if you're interested in helping other times, contact Joe Cockrell who spearheads all our efforts at the preserve and puts in a tremendous amount of time and effort. With a few interested people, any day can be a great day at McAlhany!

Please – If you are interested in joining the committee, or if you would like more information about what you can do to help, contact or Joe Cockrell at (843) 607-1070 or cockrelljoe@cs.com - or contact any board member.

Visiting McAlhany

The Preserve is available for chapter members to visit and enjoy, but access must be on a controlled basis, which means by permission only. If you would like to visit the Preserve, please contact Joe in advance.

Scouts Thankful to Stop Over at McAlhany

We recently received a letter of thanks from David Provenzano, 2008 High Adventure Trek Leader with the Coastal Carolina Council of the Boy Scouts of America. A group of older scouts from South Carolina, Florida and Georgia practiced low impact camping at the McAlhany Preserve on the first night of a 50-mile canoeing/camping trip on the Edisto River.

Provenzano said “at the end of the trip the [scouts] commented not only about the personal accomplishment they felt in completing this river trip, but also about the enjoyment of the things they saw and did. I believe they are returning home...with a very positive impression of the heart of South Carolina and the times they shared along the Edisto River...The support of the Charleston Audubon...greatly contributed to the overall trip success and enjoyment by all.”

We're proud of the property and the opportunities it provides, and thankful ourselves to be able to continue our stewardship of the preserve.

New Members, Renewals, Gift Memberships	
	
For only \$20* you get one-year subscriptions to <i>Audubon</i> magazine and <i>The Lesser Squawk</i> , and all the benefits of local and National Audubon Society membership. Renew for just \$35/year. *\$15 for Sr. Citizens and Students	
CHECK ONE: <input type="checkbox"/> NEW MEMBER <input type="checkbox"/> GIFT MEMBERSHIP <input type="checkbox"/> RENEWAL	
THIS IS A GIFT FROM:	THIS MEMBERSHIP IS FOR:
NAME _____	NAME _____
ADDRESS _____	ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____	CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
MAIL THIS COUPON AND YOUR CHECK TO:	
AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP CENTER P.O. Box 51003 BOULDER, CO 80323-1003	
# _____	
[RENEWALS MUST INCLUDE THE 20-DIGIT MEMBER NUMBER FROM YOUR AUDUBON ADDRESS LABEL]	
Checks payable to National Audubon Society . Include our chapter code on your check: U-51 7XCH	