



Audubon SOUTH CAROLINA

STATE NEWSLETTER: JANUARY 2005

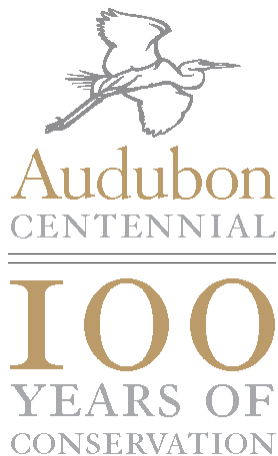
AUDUBON MEMBER RECEIVES AWARD FOR EFFORTS TO PROTECT CONGAREE

Audubon South Carolina member Richard Watkins, a St. Matthews resident, is the recipient of the prestigious Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award for 2003. The award is presented annually by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) to recognize the efforts of an individual or group that result in protection of a unit or proposed unit of the National Park System. NPCA's Southeast Regional Senior Director Don Barger presented the award at the Congaree National Park dedication ceremony on October 25, 2004.

Richard Watkins was selected to receive the award for his role in grassroots campaigns to establish and expand Congaree Swamp National Monument. Congress authorized establishment of a 15,200-acre Congaree Swamp National Monument in 1976. A 7,000-acre expansion was authorized in 1988.

CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF CONSERVATION

This year will mark the centennial anniversary of the National Audubon Society. Audubon South Carolina will mark the event with a variety of special events throughout the year. A special issue of the Audubon South Carolina newsletter will be sent to members in March outlining the upcoming events.



Another expansion of 4,576 acres was authorized in 2003, when the monument became Congaree National Park as a result of legislation sponsored by Senator Hollings and Congressman Clyburn.

In accepting the award, Mr. Watkins briefly reviewed a half-century of history – in which the advocacy of many citizens, the stewardship and goodwill of affected landowners, and the actions of elected officials led to establishment and expansion of Congaree Swamp National Monument and its subsequent designation as Congaree National Park. Mr. Watkins' concluding remarks encouraged landowners like himself to continue to work to protect the Congaree Swamp, through voluntary conservation easements and activism.

Congaree National Park is related historically to Audubon's Francis Beidler Forest Sanctuary in Four Holes Swamp. The 3,415-acre core tract of Beidler Forest was purchased in 1969 from the Francis Beidler family of Chicago. Likewise, the Beidler Family owned the 15,138-acre tract that the National Park Service purchased after 1976 to establish Congaree Swamp National Monument. Another 110 acres of Beidler Family land were purchased as part of the Congaree expansion authorized in 1988.

Currently, negotiations are underway to purchase a 2,420-acre tract of Beidler Family land within the Congaree expansion area authorized in 2003. Congaree is an Audubon South Carolina Important Bird Area.



The Congaree National Park Dedication Ceremony on October 25, 2004 (Photo courtesy of Hope Derrick)

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The mission of Audubon South Carolina is to protect and enhance habitat for birds and other wildlife, and to educate people and involve communities in conservation.

ISOLATED WETLANDS – WHY ISOLATED JUST ISN'T RIGHT

Daniel Tufford, Ph.D. is a hydrologist and wetland scientist at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Tufford is also the President of the Columbia Audubon Society and a member of the Audubon South Carolina Board. The following is an excerpt from Dr. Tufford's testimony before the Ocean and Coastal Resources Management Appellate Board on the issue of isolated wetlands. The restoration of protection for these invaluable resources will be a top priority for Audubon South Carolina in the upcoming legislative year.

We need to understand that what we call isolated wetlands are not very isolated. The name describes a lack of surface connections to streams and rivers. However, there are almost always connections to streams via groundwater. I cannot explain the choice of such an ambiguous term for this resource. I dwell on it because names have a way of taking on a reality beyond the facts. By calling them isolated often enough we begin to believe they are actually isolated. The word isolated is commonly associated with things that can be ignored or discarded with little consequence. So it is unfortunate from a perspective of public understanding that isolated wetlands have their name.

They are not isolated from humans in the sense that we receive real benefits from them. The stormwater that collects in them is there instead of your front yard. Many of the pollutants that are in storm runoff are neutralized or adsorbed to the soil. Some of the water that is now relatively clean makes its way into your drinking water or nearby streams. I am certain that everyone in this room has witnessed or personally benefited from the hydrologic function of isolated wetlands. These are natural functions of isolated wetlands. If they were not being done by the wetlands we would either need to put hard dollars into technological solutions or exist with a degraded environment and quality of life.

Isolated wetlands are more complex and have more ecological importance than just their role in surface and subsurface hydrology. They are of critical importance to biodiversity. In very simple terms, biodiversity is important because we need it for our existence. Biodiversity is not optional. The very food we eat, and, in particular, if you think about the great variety available to us, is a statement of biodiversity. We enjoy biodiversity; it contributes to our nourishment and enjoyment of life.

Many people, my wife and I included, enjoy watching birds. But what good are birds...I mean really? Consider that many birds eat insects, many of which are harmful to human interests such as our personal health or food crops. Not all birds eat all insects so many varieties of birds are needed to keep insect populations in check.

Of course many insects are important for human interests. Some pollinate our food crops, help keep weed numbers down, or parasitize animal pests. In addition to birds, insects are food for lizards, salamanders, frogs, and snakes, to name a few. Frogs are food for snakes, which also eat rats and other rodents that can spread disease. Birds also eat snakes. Birds bring millions of dollars in commerce to the state both from birdwatchers like myself and duck hunters.

So which animal can we live without? Many species of these frogs, salamanders, insects, snakes, and birds that we now appreciate for very selfish reasons live in and depend upon wetlands. And some are adapted particularly to isolated wetlands. So isolated wetlands are not simply mud-holes on the landscape; they are inextricably bound to things and services we need. In the end the case is compelling. Isolated wetlands are not impediments to a good life; they are a contributing partner to a good life.

A growing number of people have recognized that the natural world is more than something to look at, walk around, or paddle in. Ecosystems bring essential products and services to the mix of our existence, and destruction of them is to our detriment. Recently The State newspaper published an article about flooding in South Carolina and how property damage and loss of life due to floods along major rivers is relatively small. The reason is our mostly intact floodplains, except in urban areas where damage can be extensive. Will community leaders think about this the next time someone proposes to develop a floodplain and its wetlands? We can hope that they will.

AUDUBON'S FIVE GOOD MINUTES OF THE MONTH:

Take five minutes and contact your State Representative and Senator and let them know that you care about protecting and conserving South Carolina's "isolated" wetlands. Visit www.capitolconnect.com/audubon to find out who your legislators are.

WINE & WARBLERS

Join Audubon and the South Carolina Wildlife Federation as we celebrate Audubon's Centennial Anniversary and the return of Spring to Beidler Forest.

The evening will include birdwatching from the Boardwalk, a wine tasting and heavy hors d'oeuvres. All proceeds benefit the South Carolina Wildlife Federation and Audubon.

April 23, 2005 @ 5:30 p.m.

\$25.00 Per Guest

Call (843) 462-2150 for Reservations

CHAPTER ASSISTS PROJECT TO ADDRESS WATER RESOURCE ISSUES

The Augusta-Aiken Audubon Society recently made a donation of \$500 to the Southeastern National Academy of Sciences to help fund its Savannah River At Risk Initiative. The initiative is a combined scientific and advocacy project to form responsible and sustainable water resource policies for the Savannah River.

As populations throughout the Southeast grow, pressures on water resources will continue to increase. States that share common water resources (a definition that by default includes the entire Southeast) have begun to address the issue of shared water quality and use. Early involvement by groups like the Augusta-Aiken Audubon Society will help shape policies that preserve water quality and availability for humans and wildlife.

CHAPTER CONTACT INFO

Augusta-Aiken Audubon Society
(803) 471-0291

Charleston Natural History Society
(843) 875-3445

Columbia Audubon Society
(803) 777-3292

Hilton Head Island Audubon Society
(843) 363-2092

Lowcountry Audubon Society
(843) 726-5663

Piedmont Audubon Society
385 South Spring Street
Spartanburg, SC 29306

Waccamaw Audubon Society
(843) 651-5177



The Charleston Natural History Society played a big role in educating the public on winter birdwatching in a recent series of articles in the Post & Courier

CHAPTER NOMINATES REDEVELOPMENT EFFORT FOR CONSERVATION AWARD

Columbia, like other rapidly growing cities in the state, must balance economic development and growth with existing infrastructure and greenspace. An alternative to developing undisturbed areas is infill development – which uses space that is within an already developed area.

Recently the Columbia Audubon Society nominated such a project, The Shoppes at Woodhill, and the developer, Edens & Avant, for a South Carolina Wildlife Federation Conservation Award. The site was home to a deteriorated shopping center, with Target as the anchor store. Many retailers abandon such locations to create newer developments at urban edges, leading to sprawl and loss of habitat. Today, Target remains the largest retailer in the redeveloped center, along with a broad range of other stores.

Columbia Audubon recognizes that this redevelopment project is an example of responsible economic growth that uses existing infrastructure and resources, something that benefits taxpayers as well as the environment. The project is part of a commitment from Edens & Avant to the concept of reusing urban space. The company has projects of a similar nature in Boston, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Savannah, and Orlando. Awards will be announced January 22, 2005. Visit www.scwf.org for more information.



Interstate agreements will influence future water use

BEIDLER FOREST CENTER

BEIDLER NEIGHBOR CONSERVES 400+ ACRES

A joint initiative between the Lowcountry Open Land Trust (LOLT) and Audubon South Carolina to create a buffer of protected property around the Audubon Sanctuary at Francis Beidler Forest has resulted in the voluntary conservation of three parcels of land deemed vital to the health of the Forest. Beidler Forest is one of the largest wetland reserves on the East Coast and a globally significant Important Bird Area.

One of Beidler's neighbors, Holcombe M. Bell, Jr., has donated conservation easements to the Land Trust on three tracts of rural land totaling 426 acres. All of the parcels are within Dorchester County. "I never wanted to see the place developed. I want to see it stay the way it is now for future generations so they can enjoy the land and the hunting. You just never know what might happen to it down the road."

Mr. Bell and his relatives own about 2,200 acres in the area. His interest in preserving his land was piqued by a meeting hosted by Audubon last spring. Audubon and the Land Trust presented information to local landowners about the benefits of conservation easements. Easements allow landowners to maintain ownership of their land and continue their traditional land uses, such as forestry and farming, while protecting the land against future development pressures.

"The meeting this spring got me rejuvenated about protecting the land," Bell said. The tracts consist of Big Pasture at 195 acres, Isaac Bay at 200 acres and the Bell Family Tract at 31 acres.

Sanctuary Manager Norman Brunswig calls the easement significant. "One of the weaknesses in our original design of the Audubon Sanctuary was that we focused on wetlands only," says Brunswig. "We didn't have any uplands. Many species that live in the Sanctuary wetlands must live part of their lifecycle in upland areas. This easement adds dedicated upland conservation property along our margin, which is a huge contribution."

LOLT Executive Director Will Haynie added, "We are proud to be working in partnership with Audubon and dedicated landowners like Holcombe Bell and others in the Four Holes Swamp area to promote private, voluntary conservation of the land around this Lowcountry gem."

PLEASE WELCOME NANCYJEAN NETTLES

The past ten years have seen many changes and successes for Audubon South Carolina. However, Audubon South Carolina continues to plan for a bigger conservation presence in the state. These plans look beyond Audubon's two existing Centers, seven Chapters, and 5000+ members.

In preparation for our increased habitat



conservation, advocacy programs and educational programming across the state, Audubon is excited to announce that Nancyjean Nettles has joined Audubon South Carolina as Development Director.

Nancyjean comes to Audubon after ten years with Summerville D.R.E.A.M. (Downtown Restoration Enhancement And Management), a community revitalization program in the Town of Summerville. She brings expertise in event planning, marketing, writing, tourism promotion, corporate relations and grant writing, in addition to a great attitude and a desire to succeed. Please join us in welcoming Nancyjean and helping her make Audubon South Carolina's big dreams come true!



M. MUSSELMAN

Over 2,200 children visited Beidler Forest in the Fall

BEIDLER FOREST HAS RECORD FALL SEASON

This past Fall brought record numbers of visitors to the Audubon Center at Beidler Forest. The surreal Fall hurricane season that scared away potential visitors and left the Center with lower-than-usual visitation. After the almost constant barrage of hurricanes came to an end, visitors and students alike returned to Beidler Forest to enjoy the unique natural experience the Forest offers.

The Forest came away with a very strong September, the second best October and the absolute best November ever, based upon twenty-five years of visitation records. Understandably, this rebound in visitor numbers was welcome and wonderful. The strong numbers were in most part due to increased student programs at the Forest. This season saw over 2,200 students and 380 chaperones taking part in the Forest's standards-based educational programming.

SILVER BLUFF IS HOME TO EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

The Silver Bluff Audubon Center is proud to announce that its teacher/naturalist, Anne Bohnet, was recently selected as the 2004 South Carolina Outstanding Educator of the Year for the Project Learning Tree (PLT) program. Project Learning Tree is an environment-based curriculum sponsored by the American Forest Foundation.

Anne was honored in Myrtle Beach at the November conference of the South Carolina Forestry Association in recognition of her exemplary work using PLT curricula and materials for environmental education. Anne has begun her third year at Silver Bluff and has made a tremendous impact with over 4,000 students to date.

Silver Bluff partners with the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center (RPSEC), Anne's employer, to provide quality educational opportunities within the 3,100-acre "living laboratory" at Silver Bluff. The RPSEC program that partners with Audubon also was recently honored with the 2005 South Carolina Wildlife Federation Conservation Award for Education.



A Silver Bluff student shares a thrill with Anne Bohnet

SILVER BLUFF REACHES 200 BIRDS - AND THEN SOME!

Silver Bluff finally reached a long sought-after milestone when visitors recorded the 200th species for its bird checklist! This elusive species came in the form of a pair of Black-necked Stilts. The Stilts appeared on September 18th in a pond that had been lowered for foraging Wood Storks.

A series of hurricanes may have pushed these birds toward Silver Bluff, and the Stilts stayed through the following weekend. Their prolonged stay allowed visiting members of the Carolina Bird Club to enjoy a good long look at the wayward pair.

While visiting Silver Bluff, Club members also discovered three additional new species (Swainson's Thrush, Chestnut-sided and Yellow Warblers). These sightings push the Silver Bluff list to a fantastic 203, confirming Silver Bluff's designation as one of South Carolina's Important Bird Areas.

SILVER BLUFF WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE AUGUSTA-AIKEN AUDUBON SOCIETY FOR THEIR TIME AND EFFORT DURING THE 2004 SILVER BLUFF CLEAN-UP DAY!



FIRST ANNUAL SILVER BLUFF AUDUBON CENTER & SANCTUARY TRAIL RIDE

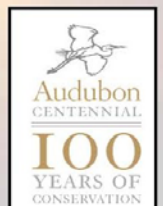
Saturday, March 12, 2005

\$20.00 Per Rider

Chili and Cornbread Lunch Provided
Original Current NEGATIVE Coggins Required - No Exceptions!
No Dogs or Alcohol Please

Registration Form Available by Calling
(843) 462-2150 or
Visiting www.beidlerforest.com

**Registration and Payment
Deadline: March 1, 2005
Space is Limited**



IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

WHOOPING CRANES RETURN TO SOUTH CAROLINA IBA

After being absent from South Carolina for more than 150 years, the Whooping Crane returned to the state in November of 2004. One Crane was spotted in McCormick County in early November and then moved on to Colleton County, where it was last reported.

A separate group of four other Cranes appeared at the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. One of the Cranes was killed by a predator while at the Refuge. The other three spent some time at Cape Romain before moving on to coastal North Carolina. Cape Romain is one of the oldest designated Important Bird Areas within South Carolina.

The Whooping Crane is the tallest bird in North America, standing about five feet tall. The name of the Whooping Crane comes from its distinctive call, a sound that can carry for miles.

After being brought to the edge of extinction by a combination of factors, including hunting, loss of nesting habitat and human disturbance the Crane was listed as an endangered species in 1967. The low point for the species occurred in 1941 when the Whooping Crane population stood at only sixteen individuals.

The arrival of five Cranes in South Carolina followed an intensive effort to re-establish migratory flocks of Cranes within the Eastern United States. The only naturally occurring population of Whooping Cranes divides their time between nesting grounds in Canada and wintering grounds in Texas. The vulnerability of the species to being lost in a single event led to efforts to create other geographically separate flocks. To date, thirty-five migratory Cranes have been established in the wild in the Eastern United States.

Enthusiastic birdwatchers are reminded to respect private property laws and maintain a minimum distance of 600 feet from Cranes. Hopefully, future opportunities for seeing the rare Cranes will come around more often than every 150 years!



FWS

IBA OF THE QUARTER: MEDWAY PLANTATION

Medway Plantation is located in Berkeley County on the Back River of the Cooper River, between Goose Creek and Moncks Corner. Medway's wide variety of habitat makes this IBA especially attractive to numerous bird species. These habitats include longleaf pine savannahs, bottomland hardwood forests, loblolly pine stands, cypress-tupelo swamps, lakes, ponds, as well as cultivated and natural wildlife openings.

Historically, Medway was a working

To learn more about South Carolina IBAs please contact Paul Koehler at (803) 471-0291

plantation that specialized in brick making and rice production. Today, it is used for recreation and traditional land use activities, like forestry. Best Management Practices are used in these forestry operations, ensuring that this land use is compatible with wildlife and water quality.

As a testament to the success of Medway's management, the IBA is home to fifteen Red-Cockaded Woodpecker colonies and a nesting pair of Bald Eagles. Thousands of waterfowl can be found in Medway's ponds and lakes. Other interesting birds of note are Wood Storks, American Bitterns, Cooper's Hawks and Loggerhead Shrikes.

Robert Hortman is the manager of Medway Plantation. He has worked over the years to protect Medway by several conservation easements. Today, the most serious threat to this 6,800-acre wildlife haven is encroaching development, which may impede Medway's ability to perform prescribed burning – a practice that is critical to maintaining some of the rarer habitats found on the IBA.

Medway is private and not open to the public.



FWS

Red-Cockaded Woodpecker

A CENTURY OF SPEAKING FOR THOSE WHO CAN ONLY SING

Of course, those “who can only sing” refers to the common tie that binds all of us who are connected to Audubon – birds. As we approach the National Audubon Society’s Centennial Anniversary it is important to remember that our roots have always been in our advocacy and our members.

In the late 1800’s, a handful of women began a grassroots movement to stop the widespread harvest of feathers for the hat trade – a practice that was destructive and wasteful. From that handful of women in Boston over a century ago came State Audubon Societies and finally the organization we know today. Obviously, that’s a simplified version of Audubon’s history, but the moral of the story is that it has always taken a handful of dedicated people to advocate for better protections for our environment and the birds that we love.

Today, more than ever, people must take the step from just admiring and watching birds to speaking out for the conservation of these amazing animals. Nearly 20% of South Carolinians consider themselves to be birdwatchers. What if even half of them wrote a letter or made a phone call on behalf of birds? In the upcoming year take some time to respond to Audubon South Carolina Action Alerts (or take a moment to sign up for them if you haven’t already) and help us speak for the birds.

– Norman Brunswig, Executive Director

ENVIRONMENTAL GRAND JURY BILL WILL BE BACK

Last session, South Carolina came very close to passage of Bill H.4790 by Rep. Jim Merrill (R-Berkeley). Bill H.4790 would have empowered the State Grand Jury to investigate deliberate environmental crimes, such as the Tin Products case in Lexington County. The company deliberately discharged wastewater contaminated with organotins, a chemical that is highly toxic to aquatic life. The discharge created a massive fish kill and closed down a public works facility

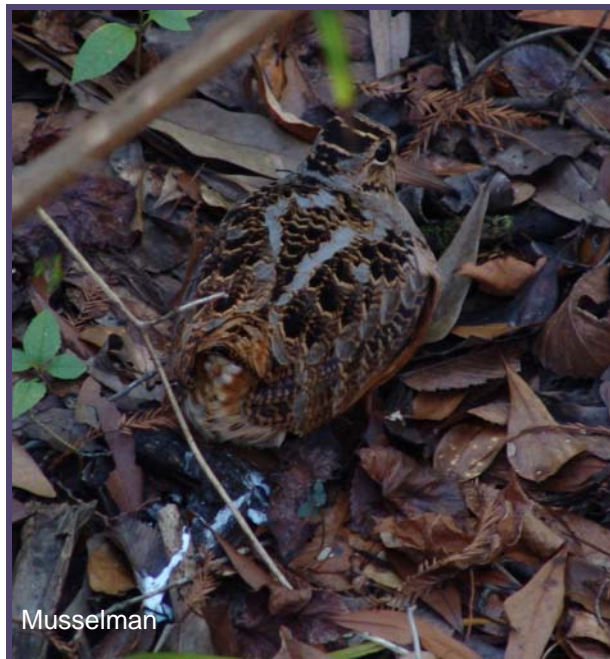
Currently, the people of South Carolina rely on federal authorities to conduct investigations into environmental crimes. With the shifting emphasis of federal agencies towards homeland security, South Carolina’s environment is left at risk. Currently, the State Grand Jury may be convened to investigate terrorism, drugs, pornography, election fraud, computer crimes, and securities fraud – but not environmental crimes.

Despite having over sixty sponsors the bill was not passed in the previous session. The upcoming year will bring this legislation back to the House and Senate. The Attorney General’s Office will continue to push for the environmental crimes bill. Write or phone today and let your legislators know that you support an Environmental Grand Jury.

Save the Date:
April 19, 2005

The 2nd Annual Conservation Lobby Day

Columbia, South Carolina



Musselman

American Woodcock camouflaged

ADVOCACY THROUGH BETTER SHOPPING

Buying from companies with environmentally friendly ethics is not a new phenomenon. However, it is sometimes hard to distinguish the good guys from the bad guys. And sometimes the good guys are only that way in some instances and not in others. Where we spend our money has the power to send a conservation message. Here are examples of companies to shop (or not) with.

1) **BP** announced on April 15, 2004 that drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge was no longer part of its business plan. **BP** also dropped out of Arctic Power, a group created solely to lobby for drilling in the Refuge.

2) **Dell and Hewlett Packard** lobbied against a bill that would have created recycling stations in South Carolina for outdated computer products and televisions. Thousands of these machines and their toxic components end up in landfills every year. Send **Dell and Hewlett Packard** a message when the time comes to upgrade.

3) **Proctor & Gamble** has recently begun incorporating fair trade coffee into its nationwide brand, **Millstone**. The fair trade coffee guarantees growers a profit from their product. Look for the fair trade label on the bag. The line is expected to begin carrying shade grown coffee as well.

Women In Conservation

A century ago, the Audubon movement came to life as a result of the passion of a handful of dedicated women who stopped the wholesale slaughter of birds for the feather trade. In honor of Audubon's Centennial Anniversary, Audubon South Carolina will present the Evelyn Chace Award to five women who have made outstanding contributions to conservation in South Carolina.

A nominee for the Evelyn Chace Award should embody the spirit of the conservation movement and have made significant contributions to preserving and protecting South Carolina's natural heritage.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from www.beidlerforest.com or requested by contacting astallings@audubon.org.

Nomination deadline is May 1, 2005



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Please contact bthomas@audubon.org
with any address corrections.