

Carolina Birds and Birders

. . . with Willie Morrison

Scouts Urge Protection for Birds of Prey

How does a Boy Scout troop manage to get into the improbable position of trying to have a law protecting birds of prey passed by the state legislature? BSA Troop 98 of North Augusta, S.C., is in that position. I am an adult leader with that troop, but I am not sure how we got there. It seems that the boys came up with the idea out of thin air, but you will probably understand the story better if I start at the beginning.

In August 1969 I stopped by the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, an Atomic Energy Commission sponsored ecology research center operated by the University of Georgia, to discuss a few items with Dr. I. Lehr Brisbin Jr. During the conversation I asked him if he had an idea for a nature oriented project to be presented by our Scout troop at the "Wonderful World of Scouting," an annual Scout fair held at Augusta, Ga. Brisbin suggested a predator education project of displaying and flying free hawks trained by falconry techniques. Brisbin felt that education in hawk conservation was badly needed, and he volunteered to serve as a technical advisor on diet and training procedures.

The idea was discussed with the junior leaders of the troop at the next meeting. Despite dire warnings about hard work, long hours, and small chances of success, the junior leaders decided this was to be the troop project for the fair. As the fair was not to be held until May 1970, the project was set aside with the understanding that concrete planning and work on the project would begin around Christmas.

Up to this point, the project had been strictly educational, but during this fermentation period before Christmas something happened. I do not know who started it, but the boys started talking along the lines that South Carolina laws on hawks were wrong; something should be done about it; and we'll circulate a petition to see if we can get the laws changed. By December every boy in the troop seemed to know that we were going to circulate the petition and get the law changed.

Page after page could be written about the work done by the boys of Troop 98 in the next few months. Let's just say that hundreds of hours of work by Scouts Ray Holzworth, Bud Lemon, Jim Reinig, Jerry Knighton, and other boys in the troop plus timely helping hands by Calvin Zippler, falconer Bill Robbins, and many members of the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory resulted in a successful presentation at the fair. The large number of signatures on our petition at the fair encouraged us to take the next step of contacting a state legislator. State Senator G.W. McMillian of Aiken County gave us a courteous hearing and agreed to introduce a bill implementing the points in our petition to the South Carolina Legislature when the new session begins in January 1971.—GERALD E. KNIGHTON, 3 Linnet Loop, N. Augusta, S.C. 29841, 13 October 1970

Pulpwood Pest Pursuers

During a visit to Westvaco's Pulpwood Yard here in early September, we were fascinated to watch hundreds of swallows, tentatively identified as Barn Swallows, in motion. From the woodyard manager we learned they come in July and remain until late September each year and are the most effective insecticide Westvaco could wish for. They destroy millions of insects that are common pests in woodyards, and my

information is that they seek out wood and lumber yards all over the country. — MARTHA BEE ANDERSON, Hampton, S.C.

On Squirrel-proofing Feeders

After much trouble from a vast squirrel population, feeders at our house have been fastened to lengths of pipe, which are set up in open places in the yard far away from the house and trees. For final squirrel-proofing, we keep the pipes heavily greased with Vaseline. With no place to jump from and a greasy pole to climb, the squirrels have to be satisfied with spillage on the ground below! —MARTHA BEE ANDERSON, Hampton, S. C.

Any Egrets at Your Feeder Lately?

From W. H. Jeffers, Editor, The Pee Dee Natural History Society Newsletter, Summer 1970:

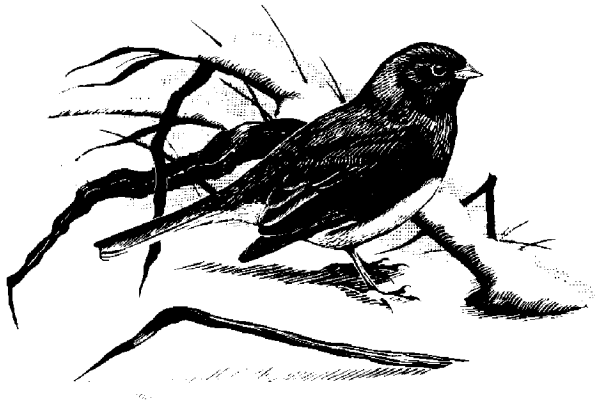
Calvin Clyde of Effingham, S. C., has been enjoying an unusual visitor to his bird “feeder” this summer. As soon as he puts a few small fish in a shallow pan of water, an American Egret drops down gracefully from the trees nearby and proceeds to swallow his free meal. Calvin rescued the egret nestling from the ground at the Indiantown rookery in the spring, took it home and raised it. Now it stays around for the daily handout!

Brown-headed Nuthatches with Racing Stripes

The following report of two aberrant plumaged nuthatches was sent to me by Gerald E. Knighton, 3 Linnet Loop, N. Augusta, S. C. 29841.

“Concerning the Brown-headed Nuthatches with the ‘racing stripe’: The gentleman who had this unusual pair at his nesting box is George F. Young, 625 Morton Ave., N. E. Aiken, S. C. I saw the birds on 22 March 1970. The white spot found on the back of the neck of the Brown-headed Nuthatches was in both cases elongated into a stripe. One of the pair had a white stripe which ran up the back of the neck and down the center of the crown to approximately above the eye. The other one of the pair had the spot enlarged into a stripe running up the back of the neck but not extending on the crown.

“Mr. Young is an ardent backyard bird photographer, but due to light conditions he did not succeed in photographing the bird with the longest stripe before it disappeared a few days later. However, he did get a slide of the other bird of the pair.”





ATTRACTING BIRDS TO THE GARDEN

ELIZABETH BARNHILL CLARKSON

The most important step in attracting birds is to provide water. It may be a bird bath or something as simple as a garbage can lid or flower pot saucer; but, birds need clean, fresh water in winter as well as summer for drinking and bathing.

Next in importance are shrubs and vines for food and nesting sites. Amur River Privet hedge plants and *Ligustrum japonicum* either trimmed as trees or untrimmed, are the favorites in our garden for winter berries. They make evergreen trees to 25 feet and berries hang on until eaten by birds. Some of the best summer berries are wild cherry, mulberry, pokeberry, elderberry and blackberry. Some of the best plants we use are:

Shrubs and Vines

Amur River Privet
Barberry
Blackberry
Elderberry
Eleagnus
Honeysuckle

Ligustrum
Mahonia
Pokeberry
Pyracantha
Trumpet Vine
Virginia Creeper
Wild Grape

Trees

Black Haw
Chinese Flowering Crabs
Dogwood
Hollies
Japanese Weeping Cherry
Mulberry

Native Cedar
Pines
Sour Gum
Vitex
Wild Cherry
Yoshino Cherry

Herbs

Cornflower
Mustard

Poppies
Sunflower

Flowers Attracting Hummingbirds

Abelia	Lantana
Azalea	Larkspur
Beebalm	Mimosa
Butterfly Bush	Petunia
Columbine	Sultana (Impatiens)
Foxglove	Trumpet Vine
Honeysuckle	Tuberoses

Feeding trays build a larger bird population than an area can normally feed, and if the supply SUDDENLY CEASES birds find it difficult to obtain sufficient food. Especially in nesting season nestlings may die because parents cannot find enough insect food for themselves and their young. In winter adult birds may suffer due to lack of food which lowers their resistance to sudden bitter cold. In prolonged snow or cold put out grain, crumbs, cracked nuts, suet, etc., where birds can find them. My advice is: do not build up an artificially large population unless you continue.

These are helpful hints if you begin feeding birds. Place feeders where you will enjoy them. Feeders with automatic hoppers containing cracked chickfeed, small bird seed in mixture, or sun-flower seed require the least effort and range in price from \$1.00 to \$15.00 but may be homemade. A quart fruit jar turned on its side and suspended by a wire from a limb makes an excellent feeder for small birds such as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches and Purple Finches. Construct suet baskets of a 3 by 5 inch board covered on one side by ½ inch square mesh wire sometimes called hardware cloth leaving enough space to slip suet between wire and board.

Wing Haven is a garden as well as Bird Sanctuary and I know how insects and weeds affect gardeners; but, my MOST IMPORTANT WARNING is about the careless and promiscuous use of weed killers and pesticides. Inform yourself as to the danger they hold for wildlife before using. Excellent fertilizers for grass have been made hazardous for birds and wildlife by addition of insecticides and weed killers. People who would never intentionally harm birdlife use such fertilizers without realizing their effects on birds. Attracting birds to a poisoned lawn is inhumane. Two books on the subject are:

Gardening Without Poisons - Beatrice Trum Hunter, Houghton Mifflin Co.

Beneficial Insects - Lester A. Swan, Harper and Row.

The second warning is to keep pet cats in the house at night and, during the nesting season, in daytime as well. Birds are defenseless at night and cats see well in the dark. It is better to choose between the two pleasures, cats and birds, than to try to have both.

A partial list of food for feeding trays follows:

- Peanuts
- Peanut hearts
- Peanut butter cooked with oatmeal or cornmeal and fat
- Sunflower seed
- Cracked chickfeed
- Mixed bird seed
- Apple cut in two
- Raisins
- Doughnuts
- Suet
- Plain rich pastry
- Cornbread crumbled
- Slices of orange and cake for Baltimore Orioles
- One part sugar, 2 parts water for hummingbirds

It may take several weeks to get boarders. In the meantime change food as it spoils or dries out.

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SONG SPARROW - Observations were again reported of Song Sparrows summering eastward of their normal breeding range in the N.C. piedmont. A male was found singing on territory in late May at Lake Raleigh in Wake County by Robert Hader, and a small colony was apparently nesting near Durham where three singing males were heard in mid-June by Robert and Elizabeth Teulings.

SNOW BUNTING - A flock of about 12 was seen at the NE end of Ocracoke Island, 28 February by Dr. and Mrs. R. R. Tasker and Helmut C. Mueller.



CAROLINA BIRDS AND BIRDERS

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These books on attracting birds are excellent but some plants suggested are impractical for the Charlotte area.

The Book of Bird Life - A. A. Allen (one chapter on attracting)

Audubon Guild To Attracting Birds - John H. Baker

Songbirds In Your Garden - John K. Terres

Place bird houses not less than 25 feet apart away from trees preferably on 8 foot pipe driven 2 feet into the ground. Place boxes during winter or early spring so they can weather before a nesting time. Some species nest several times so late boxes may catch a later nesting. Do not clean houses in summer. Wait until November, remove nesting material, clean and spray with Bird House Powder from any pet shop. Carolina Wrens and Screech Owls begin to nest in February; chickadees, bluebirds, flickers, Downy Woodpeckers, and Tufted Titmice in March; House Wrens and Great Crested Flycatchers in April.

We use one size box, placed not less than 25 feet apart, 6 feet from ground on iron pipe away from trees, for bluebirds, House Wrens, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, Downy Woodpeckers and Great Crested Flycatchers. The size is 4 or 5 inches square inside, 9 inches high, hole $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter placed two inches from top of box. Have a removable top or side for cleaning purposes. Never make hole less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter.

Flickers require a box $6\frac{1}{2}$ X $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches square by 16 to 24 inches high, hole $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter placed 2 inches from top. Use rough lumber which facilitates the climb from nest to exit hole. We have had Screech Owls nest in this size box.

Never put more than one nesting compartment to a box except for Purple Martins. They nest in colonies and each compartment should be 6 X 6 inches square, 6 inches high, hole $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter placed 1 inch above floor, box placed 15 to 20 feet above ground in open space near water.

Wood Ducks need a box 12 inches square by 18 to 24 inches high, hole $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter placed 12 to 16 inches above floor. Box should be 10 to 20 feet above ground near water. Pennsylvania Game Commission perfected a metal predator proof Wood Duck box and specifications are in *Birds of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*.

[The above material was adapted from Mrs. Clarkson's very attractive and informative check-list, *Birds of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*, which was revised and reprinted in 1970 for benefit of Mecklenburg Audubon Society.—ED.]