

Here's a page of field sketches from a practicing naturalist's sketchbook, warts and all. When you see published "naturalist's sketchbooks" (and there are several excellent ones available) don't be misled into thinking the pages started out looking the way they do in the published books!

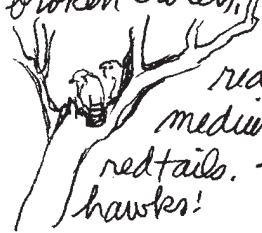
Sometimes a sketchpage done "on location" does turn out perfectly, but the format usually falls prey to the excitement of the sketching moment. Notes are scribbly and sometimes illegible, sketches may be just a little bit sketchier than one might like, or the drawing is inaccurate, requiring notes that say things like "shorter than this."

Since this page was originally done in ballpoint pen (a major oversight when heading out the door) there was no choice of erasing, and boobos are right out there in plain sight. The two butterflies originally "malted" in the shrub, and the hawks' heavily barred tails started out being "barded" - which may be halfway between banded and barred. Who knows how the brain works when we take quick notes!

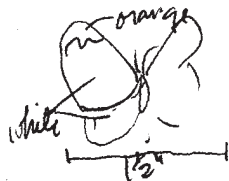
The "ichneumon" insertion was added later when the wasp was identified in a field guide. But one could seem a lot wiser (and tidier) by hiding the fact that it was an afterthought.

The page has no name or date, making possible problems if it becomes detached from the rest of the sketchbook. And it might someday be useful to know that it was sketched near the canoe launch at 4-Holes Swamp (in the Beidler Forest Audubon Sanctuary) in South Carolina on a warm, sunny day in late March, just after a rain.

1:06 p.m. I may have spotted a hawk's nest. I've been hearing them call: "Eee yughk! Eee yughk!", two of them back & forth in the trees across the lake, then the two came together on a tree across the way, with a broken crotch, one left & the other stayed & seemed to settle down. Heavily barred tails, reddish heads, hard to id. properly. medium size, maybe slightly smaller than redtails. → yeah! Barb says they're red-shouldered hawks!



Tufted titmice overhead. "tut-tut-few, tut-tut-few"  
 out in the sunny grass - a white butterfly about 1 1/2"



2:15 p.m.  
 then, 3 black walking swallowtails, fluttering, circling, one flew away, two fluttered into a shrub & mated.



wow! I just saw this huge wasp (yellow, red & brown) inserting its egg into a rotten log! When it was done, it stood on its head with abdomen straight up & pulled until it freed its ovipositor, (3-part) then pulsed until it had slack down to a single 3" tail, and flew away. I sketched from @ 12" away - no more than 3 minutes total, but I don't know how long it had been laying.

Try to get it right the first time, but if you meet with obstacles don't let them paralyze you. Just go out and sketch! (To see how this sketch looks when "cleaned up" a bit, turn to page 60.)