

THE LESSER SQUAWK

www.charlestonaudubon.org

Newsletter of the
Charleston Audubon &
Natural History Society

NOTE: All LECTURES will be held at 6 PM in the Biology Auditorium (room 101) in Duckett Hall on the campus of The Citadel (map). Use Kovats Field, #28 on the map, or any space marked "Visitor" around the Parade Deck (marked #5 on the map).

LECTURE (Sep 10th): Sparrow Wars: territories, personalities, alternative tactics and song in song sparrows



We often make generalizations about the behavior of birds or other animals - generalizations such as "these birds defend territories". But what variation is hiding in those generalizations? Do all individuals defend a territory the same way? How does personality affect territory defense? Dr. Melissa Hughes has been studying these questions, along with the use of song in territory defense, in song sparrows for years. Join us in welcoming

Dr. Hughes, as she shares some tales from these sparrow wars on **Wednesday, September 10th, from 6-8pm.**

Dr. Hughes did her graduate work at Duke, where she studied honesty and deception in the communication of snapping shrimp (something she still works on, when not studying birds). After brief stints at the Free University, Berlin and Princeton, she came to the College of Charleston in 2001. Melissa maintained a long-term population study (by which she means she followed their lives like a soap opera: who lives where for how long, who is mating with whom, etc.) on song sparrows in northwestern PA from 1998-2010, and still returns there for experimental work. We will begin at 6 pm as usual, with snacks and socializing before the presentation begins at 6:30; feel free to bring a snack to share.

FIELD TRIP (Sep 21st): Caw Caw Interpretive Center

On **Sunday, September 21** we'll bird at the [Caw Caw Interpretive Center](#) in Ravenel, SC. Operated by Charleston County PRC, this is a relatively small park (only 654 acres) but it encompasses a number of habitat types, including upland forest, cypress swamp, brackish former rice field impoundments, and tidal marsh. Unlike other county parks in the area, Caw Caw was designed with a focus on cultural and natural history. The property was once part of several rice plantations and features over six miles of well-marked trails and elevated boardwalks across wetland areas. During recent fall migration seasons there have been many interesting warblers, tanagers, thrushes and other migrants spotted along the trail system here. The park opens at 9 AM and there is a \$1 admission charge for those who do not possess a Gold Pass. If you plan to join the walk, please register with Andy Harrison prior to September 21 at parula23@aol.com or 843-795-6934.

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, Sep 10th, 6 pm

LECTURE: Sparrow Wars: territories, personalities, alternative tactics and song in song sparrows

Join us in welcoming Dr. Hughes, as she shares some tales of sparrow wars on Wednesday, September 10th, from 6-8pm. Find out more in the article on the left.

Sunday, Sep 21st, 8:30 am

FIELD TRIP: Caw Caw Interpretive Center

We'll bird at the Caw Caw Interpretive Center, in Ravenel, SC. This park offers different habitat types and opportunities for many interesting warblers, tanagers, thrushes and other migrants. To learn more or find out how to register, see article to the left.

Saturday, Oct 4th, 7 am

FIELD TRIP: Congaree National Park

If you want to experience the depths of a vast bottomland hardwood swamp, this is the trip for you! It's a great place for birding year-round, and during fall migration it's usually a good place to see warblers, thrushes and other migrants. We should see a variety of woodpeckers and other resident species (such as Wood Ducks, Barred Owls and Red-shouldered Hawks), too. To learn more or find out how to register, see article on page 3.

President's Notes



Greetings from a brand new president! I have only been in Charleston for a couple of years, but it has been long enough to fall in love with the open spaces of the Lowcountry and long enough to identify Charleston Natural History Society/Audubon as an organization I am proud to be a part of.

The first order of business in the President's notes is to thank Paul Nolan, our outgoing president, for his energetic and innovative leadership over the past years. He has taken Charleston Audubon into the electronic age, built a wider audience and constituency for our programs, and been a calm and steady diplomat who brought out the strengths of everyone around him. We were lucky to have him in the Presidency, and we remain lucky to have him as the program chair, arranging talks for the season (when he isn't helping me do all the things he isn't supposed to have to do anymore!). He leaves big shoes to fill!

I didn't get out birding as much as I would have liked to this summer, but I did want to update you on a couple of conservation issues Charleston Audubon has been working on.

First, we were very proud of DNR's decision to close the nesting areas on Deveaux bank to beach-goers. The increasing number of summer visitors has been hurting the bird nesting success there over the last decade, and in recent years, almost every skimmer nest on the island failed. This year boaters were asked to stay away from the nests, and

there were hundreds of fledglings. The Brown Pelicans and other species on the island have doubtlessly benefited from the protection as well. Charleston Audubon submitted a letter to the DNR Board giving our support for the measure, and helped muster some citizens to attend the subsequent DNR board meeting along with South Carolina Audubon's delegation. We hope this nest protection will continue through years to come. Given that Deveaux was donated to DNR by Audubon, we certainly think the birds there should be protected!

We were also pleased to attend a salt marsh workshop hosted by South Carolina Audubon in July. The National Audubon Society has recently developed a conservation plan to help salt marsh adapt to sea level rise, centered on the dual strategies of assisting upslope migration and increasing marsh resilience through habitat management. Audubon identified the ACE Basin as a priority, so in July, there was a scoping meeting to begin building a partnership of stakeholders. In the morning a number of speakers gave perspectives on sea level rise and conservation issues in the ACE Basin, and in the afternoon participants discussed potential responses to the problem of sea level rise and how they would like to be involved in a project. This was basically a baby step toward preparing for changes on the coast, but Audubon certainly deserves applause for starting the conversation and we look forward to working with them as it moves forward!

As the days get cooler and the birds head south, I hope to get out and do some more birding. In the meantime I look forward to seeing you at the great series of lectures that Paul has pulled together. Welcome back to another year of natural history programming!

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, Oct 8th, 6 pm

LECTURE: What Works in Bird Conservation

Jessica will share thought-provoking examples and lessons learned from her years in bird conservation, from running international conservation projects to participating in local birding clubs. To find out more about attending her lecture, see article on page 3.

Sunday, Oct 19th, 7 am

FIELD TRIP: Botany Bay Plantation WMA

Shorebirds and migrant songbirds will be the primary targets of the day, but this 4687 acre property on Edisto Island has a lot to offer. There is a three-mile loop road that winds through and past numerous different habitats, including mixed pine-hardwoods forest, agricultural fields, and coastal wetlands and marshes. To learn more or find out how to register, see article on page 4.

Wednesday, Nov 12th, 6 pm

LECTURE: There's No Place Like Home: The Biology of Attachment in Barnacles on Mobile Hosts

Lecture by barnacle expert Dr. John Zardus of The Citadel's Dept. of Biology. Details of the talk will be posted later.

More Information

For more information check out our calendar online: www.charlestonaudubon.org/calendar.html or join our gmail calendar by searching for CNHS. To attend field trips, please register with Andy Harrison prior to the scheduled dates: parula23@aol.com or 843.795.6934.

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jessicahardesty@gmail.com

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FIELD TRIP (Oct 4th): Congaree National Park

If you want to experience the depths of a vast bottomland hardwood swamp, this is the trip for you! On Saturday, October 4 we'll visit [Congaree National Park](#) for a day of exploring and birding. There are more than 15 miles of trails and 2 miles of boardwalks here, so we won't see everything – but likely more than enough to provide you with a good incentive to return to this wonderful park. It's a great place for birding year-round, and during fall migration it's usually a good place to see warblers, thrushes and other migrants. We should see a variety of woodpeckers and other resident species (such as Wood Ducks, Barred Owls and Red-shouldered Hawks), too.



National Park Service

There is a fine visitor center at the park, and bathroom and picnic facilities are available. Bring food and water, your birding gear, and dress for the weather – bug spray and sunscreen might also prove useful. The meeting time and location for the trip will be 7 AM in the small parking lot next to the First Citizens Bank in front of the Summerville Walmart, just off Hwy 17-A ([map](#)). If you plan to attend, please register with Andy Harrison prior to October 4 at parula23@aol.com or 843 795-6934.

LECTURE (Oct 8th): What Works in Bird Conservation

Dr. Jessica Hardesty Norris, the new President of CHNS, moved to Charleston in 2012 and works as an ecologist for [Biohabitats](#), an ecological restoration firm. Her first bird job was studying communal breeding behavior in jays on the Mexico-Texas border in 1995. She also led the Seabird Program at American Bird Conservancy before moving to the low country. She studied altitudinal migration in Andean hummingbirds for her PhD from Duke.

Jessica will share thought-provoking examples and lessons learned from her years in bird conservation, from running international conservation projects to participating in local birding clubs.

We'll gather at 6 PM for a chance to socialize and share some snacks (feel free to bring your favorite :-), then the talk will begin at 6:30 PM. See you there, and bring a friend!

FIELD TRIP (Oct 19th): Botany Bay Plantation WMA

On **Sunday, October 19** Steve Moore will lead our group on a birding tour of [Botany Bay Plantation WMA](#), a favorite field trip destination since it opened to the public in 2008. Shorebirds and migrant songbirds will be the primary targets of the day, but this 4687 acre property on Edisto Island has a lot to offer. There is a three-mile loop road that winds through and past numerous different habitats, including mixed pine-hardwoods forest, agricultural fields, and coastal wetlands and marshes. A short causeway provides access across a marsh and through maritime forest to a stretch of front beach.



In addition to its beautiful natural areas, Botany Bay also offers some interesting cultural resources: a 19th century Gothic Revival style ice house, an overgrown Japanese garden (first of its kind in North America), and outbuildings and ruins of the two main plantation houses that existed on the property in the 1800's, Bleak Hall and Sea Cloud.

The meeting time and location for this trip will be 7 AM in the Food Lion parking lot in Ravenel, SC ([map](#)). Bring food and water, your birding gear, and dress for the weather. The path to the beach is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile long, and there may be a moderate amount of walking on the beach. There are no restrooms or picnic facilities on the site, and all trash must be removed – pack it in, pack it out! If you plan to attend, please register with Steve Moore prior to October 19 at smoore851@gmail.com or 843 327-4367.

Developing and Serving on a Property Committee

Are you interested in **developing and serving on a property committee**? The property committee will plan the direction, goals, and procedures for McAlhany Nature Preserve. A meeting is tentatively planned for Oct. 28, 2014. We will discuss critical needs, major obstacles, important first steps, and implementation, and the committee will meet periodically thereafter. It is intended that the committee will be the core group that carries out management activities on the Preserve. No special skills are necessary, mainly a genuine care for the rich habitat in the organization's trust, maybe a few ideas, and some occasional spare time and a willingness to expend some energy. If you are interested or have questions, contact Joe at 843-607-1070 or joe.cockrell@comcast.net.

Project FeederWatch

The 28th season of Project FeederWatch begins November 8, 2014 and The Cornell Lab will start shipping kits soon! If you haven't signed up yet, feel free to visit this site to learn more about this citizen science opportunity: <http://feederwatch.org/about/>



Make your morning cup bird friendly!

Most of the coffee sold in America today is literally killing the songbirds we love – and destroying a sustainable method of farming that supports rural communities in Latin America and keeps farm workers and their children away from toxic chemicals.



The only way you can be certain that the coffee in your cup is Bird Friendly® is if the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center seal is on the bag! By buying certified shade coffee you can become part of a truly sustainable chain from seedling to cup. We'll have bird friendly coffee available at some of the meetings this year and at the oyster roast!



Great News from McAlhany Audubon Reserve

In August 2014, we received a grant in the amount of \$13,500 from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct a prescribed burn on about 225 acres of the south of Wire Road. Preparations for the burn will include land surveying and firebreak establishment. This burn will improve the ecological health of the preserve and reduce the treat posed by decades of fuel build-up. The burn will be a mosaic pattern, primarily on the higher and dryer loblolly pine-dominated sites containing high fuel loads with moist and wet areas scattered throughout. The Nature Conservancy burn crew is going to help us get it done once the appropriate fire breaks are installed, probably in the winter of 2015/2016.

South Carolina Shorebird Project

South Carolina's shorebirds and seabirds enjoyed a successful breeding season this year. In the wake of new protections on Deveaux Bank Seabird Sanctuary, not just one but two black skimmer colonies fledged chicks for the first time in many years. After a two-decade absence on Bird Key Seabird Sanctuary, royal terns returned and fledged around 100 chicks, whose distinctive crèching behavior was visible in late summer on the Folly Beach side of the island.

South Carolina Audubon also made headway on the process of launching a bird stewardship program for beach-nesting birds. Erin Weeks coordinated volunteers on Folly and Kiawah Islands keep tabs on the numbers and status of priority species like the Wilson's plover, American oystercatcher, and least terns. Next year, the program will partner with Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission to provide interpretive training for volunteers interested in educating the beach-going public about the remarkable birds with whom we share the shoreline. Those interested in learning more or volunteering next season can [sign up here](#) or email SouthCarolinaShorebirdProject@gmail.com.



Prescribed burn held Jan 2012

The Charleston Audubon Bird Seed Sale: Fall 2014 Order Form

Order by October 15, 2014 — Pick-up November 1-10 at local *Wild Birds Unlimited* locations

The Audubon Society's mission is to conserve and restore local ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats. This sale benefits our local Audubon chapter, the Charleston Natural History Society, and is made possible by area *Wild Birds Unlimited* stores.

HOW TO ORDER

1 Select Your Seed Indicate how many of each item you want to purchase and total the cost. *These are top-quality seeds and seed mixes. Inexpensive blends often contain milo and wheat which most birds won't eat, leading to waste.*

2 Choose a Pick-up Location Orders and payment must be mailed by October 15th. You will pick-up your order at one of two *Wild Birds Unlimited* stores (addresses below):

West Ashley
charleston.wbu.com
(mark one)

Mt. Pleasant
mtpleasant.wbu.com

3 Tell Us Your

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

eMail _____

DESCRIPTION	LBS.	PRICE EACH	HOW MANY	TOTAL
No Mess Patio Blend NO SHELLS, LESS WASTE & CLEAN-UP	20	40.00		
Black Oil Sunflower PREMIUM, TRIPLE-CLEANED	20	23.00		
Deluxe Blend QUALITY SOUTHEAST MIX	20	28.00		
Supreme Blend WITH SUNFLOWER CHIPS	20	29.00		
Choice Blend WITH PEANUTS AND SF CHIPS	20	31.00		
Tree Nutty Plus Blend FRUIT. NUTS. SUNFLOWER SEEDS.	20	40.00		
Safflower DISLIKED BY SQUIRRELS	20	31.00		
White Millet FOR SPARROWS, JUNCOS & MORE	20	22.00		
Suet: Nut & Berries MOST POPULAR SUET CHOICE		3.00		
Suet: Hot Pepper Dough TOO HOT FOR SQUIRRELS!		4.00		
Bark Butter Bits ATTRACTS A HUGE ASSORTMENT OF BIRDS!	3.5	10.00		
TOTAL DUE				

4 Send Order & Payment

Send the top portion of this form with a check or money order made out to the **Charleston Natural History Society (CNHS)** to:



C.N.H.S.
P.O. Box 504
Charleston, SC 29402



The Charleston Audubon Bird Seed Sale: Fall 2014

Order by October 15th – Pick-up November 1-10 at the *Wild Birds Unlimited* you chose above:

Wild Birds Unlimited
Mt. Pleasant, SC
Moultrie Plaza
(843) 216-8800

Wild Birds Unlimited
West Ashley, SC
St. Andrews Shopping Center
(843) 571-3771

Pick-up seed Nov. 1st-10th:
10 am – 5 pm, Sun. 12 – 4 pm

Questions? Contact Jessica: jessicahardesty@gmail.com

5 Mark Your Calendar Keep this portion of the form and be sure to pick-up your order!

6 Help Our Sale Succeed! Please encourage friends, family members and neighbors to order.
**Extra order forms online at www.CharlestonAudubon.org

\$5-off any purchase of \$25 or more!

Offer good on any non-birdfood item. Not valid on sale items or with other discounts. Expires: 11/31/14

West Ashley
(843) 571-3771
www.wbu.com/charleston

Mt. Pleasant
(843) 216-8800
www.wbu.com/mtpleasant



Other Interesting Events in the Lowcountry:

- Lowcountry Fall Native Plant Sale
- Birds of Prey Raptor Center
- Sewee Visitor & Environmental Education Center
- Charleston County Parks & Recreation Commission





New Members, Renewals, Gift Memberships

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<p>MAIL THIS COUPON AND YOUR CHECK TO: National Audubon Society PO Box 422250 Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250</p>	
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