

THE LESSER SQUAWK

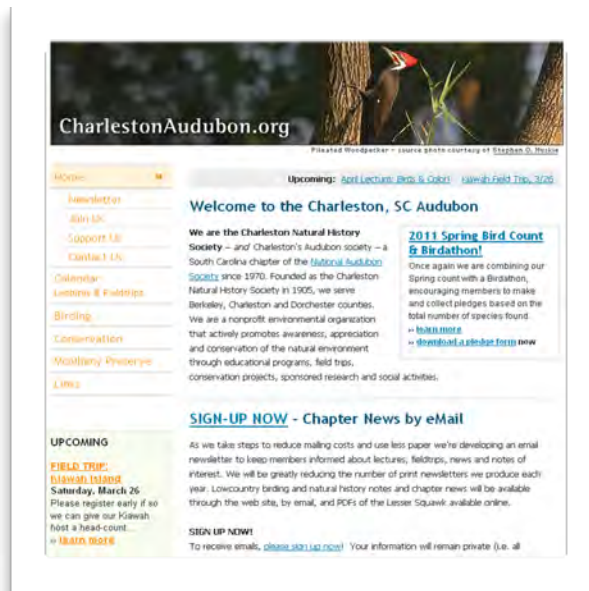
www.charlestonaudubon.org

Newsletter of the
Charleston Audubon &
Natural History Society



This is the Last Paper Edition of the Squawk

We are taking the step of going digital for a couple of reasons: we want to be "greener," and this will save some 4,000-5,000 sheets of paper per edition, along with the energy it takes to print and deliver the newsletter to your door. There will also be money savings — several hundred dollars per-issue that the chapter will now be able to spend on vital conservation efforts and other programs. And finally, we believe that going digital will allow us to communicate better among our chapter members.



[Visit our website to sign-up!](http://www.charlestonaudubon.org)

The Squawk that has been arriving in our mailboxes has been a one-size-fits-all, take it or leave it proposition. And as we get started, our electronic communications are going to be similar, i.e. sign up and you'll be "on our mailing list." (A mailing list that will be protected, private, and never shared or sold.) As we get used to using email and the chapter website, we'll develop new tools that allow members to choose the amount of contact they want from the chapter; you may choose to receive a note only when the new newsletter is available, or you may opt in to receive reminders of calendar events, lectures and field trips, conservation alerts and the like.

Visit the chapter web site (www.CharlestonAudubon.org) and follow the links to sign-up to have chapter news emailed to you, along with a note when new issues of the Squawk become available as a digital download (PDF).

Sign-Up Now for Email Alerts

It is a new step and we're excited about the possibilities. So please — take a minute — visit www.CharlestonAudubon.org and sign-up. You may also send a note to membership@charlestonaudubon.org and we'll add your email address to the mailing list. And for now, we won't be sending more than one email a month — next Fall we'll expand the options allowing you to choose if you'd like to receive more news and alerts.

Calendar of Events

May 1st, 7am-1pm

Citizen Science: Spring Bird Count & Birdathon Fundraiser

The money raised during this year's Birdathon will be used to support ongoing work at our McAlhany Nature Preserve and other local chapter activities. Help us record the number of species and individual birds seen or heard in their territories. Novice birders are welcome, as each group will be led by an experienced birder. Even if you can't participate in the Count, you can make a pledge. To learn more go to:

www.charlestonaudubon.org/birdathon.html. To make a pledge email parula23@aol.com (please put Spring Bird Count in the subject line) or to join the count please contact Andy Harrison at 843.795.6934.

May 11th, 6-8 pm

LECTURE: Painted Buntings for Habitat Restoration

The Painted Bunting, a favorite of many Lowcountry residents, is arguably the most beautiful bird that visits the United States. Sarah Latshaw, Master of Environmental Studies (MES) student at the College of Charleston, [has been researching these colorful beauties](#) and will be speaking to us about her research. See article for more information.

May 21st, 7am-1pm

FIELD TRIP: Brosnan & Beidler Forests

Join us on our last field trip of the season (field trips resume in September). We will visit Brosnan and Beidler Forests. See article for more information.

President's Notes

For once, I'll be brief here :-)
Most of the points I'd like to make are discussed elsewhere in this issue of the *Lesser Squawke*, so I'll direct you there for full details. Still, I'd like to touch briefly on three things. First is the big change coming in our distribution of the *Lesser Squawke*. As described in the first story of this edition, we hope that this will be a strongly positive change, and I ask for your support of it and for your participation in the interactive features we will begin to include in the Fall editions. The *Lesser Squawke* is one of the oldest newsletters of its kind, and I want to stress that we will not stop publication of it, we will only be shifting the manner in which it's distributed. Watch the CNHS webpage (charlestonaudubon.org) periodically for new editions to be downloaded or, much better, sign up for our email list so we can let you know when a new edition is published.

Next is that most of the current Officers of the Charleston Natural History Society, including me, have served for two years since the last election; it's time to get your input again, which we'll

do at the final lecture of the Spring, on Wednesday, May 11th, 2011. I would be honored to serve for another two years, and am joined by Patrick Markham as a candidate for Vice-President of the group, along with Jennifer McCarthy Tyrrell and Steve Moore as candidates for Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Please come out to cast your vote relative to this slate of candidates at the next meeting on May 11th.

Finally, I began my term as President of the Charleston Audubon & Natural History Society by offering thanks to those whose efforts had built a successful group, and I'd like to end the term that way as well. There are simply too many volunteers involved in running the group to name everyone individually, but I do want to point out three. Andy Harrison's advice as Past President has been invaluable, as has his continuing service as Programs Chair. Don Jones' seemingly limitless energy in organizing and running an impressive slate of outings is matched only by Joe Cockrell's work toward professional restoration and management



of our [McAlhany Nature Preserve](#). Numerous other new volunteers and officers keep me confident that the CNHS will be in great shape for years to come. I look forward to thanking them in person at one of our upcoming events, and hope that you will join me in doing so. See you at the next meeting, and have a great summer!

• Paul Nolan,
paulnolancnhs@gmail.com

Cast Your Vote
For New Officers
• May 11th •

Candidates:

President - Paul Nolan

VP - Patrick Markham

Secretary - Jennifer McCarthy Tyrrell

Treasurer - Steve Moore



SEASON ENDING EVENTS!

LECTURE (May 11th): Painting the Way to Habitat Restoration: How Painted Bunting Habitat Preferences are Guiding Restoration Initiatives on Kiawah Island

The *Painted Bunting* (*Passerina ciris*), a favorite of many Lowcountry residents, is arguably the most beautiful bird that visits the United States. Sarah Latshaw, Master of Environmental Studies (MES) student at the College of Charleston, has been researching these colorful beauties since 2007. Sarah has worked in coordination with the Kiawah Conservancy, Town of Kiawah, College of Charleston, and The Citadel to gather information on about 60 Painted Buntings using radio-telemetry technology. The information she has collected on the buntings' habitat preferences will be used to restore small scale habitats on Kiawah Island, allowing island residents to play a significant role in enhancing local habitat and promoting bunting survival.



Sarah Latshaw graduated from the University of Georgia in 2002 with a B.S. in Wildlife Biology. Her current thesis research has been made possible by funding from the Kiawah Conservancy and a Slocum-Lunz Grant. In addition, Sarah was awarded a prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship for her work with Painted Buntings. For the past year she has served as CNHS Newsletter Editor.

We'll meet at 6 PM at the Charleston County Public Library, 68 Calhoun St, to socialize before the talk. Sarah will present her work beginning at 6:30. Please feel free to bring a snack to share while we socialize.

FIELD TRIP (May 21st): Brosnan & Beidler Forests

This will be our last field trip until next September. If you didn't make this outing last year, please take this opportunity to enjoy some great birding at this beautiful property. The Brosnan Forest is located on SC 78 between Summerville and St. George and is owned by Norfolk and Southern Railroad. Almost 12,500 acres have been placed under a conservation easement through the S.C. Open Land Trust and Audubon S.C. There are extensive tracts of longleaf pine, some of which are over 100 years old, perfect habitat for Red Cockaded Woodpeckers. If this is a life list bird for you I can guarantee that we'll see them here. Of course there will be other species of woodpeckers, warblers, and vireos. In addition, we have been invited to bird the boardwalk at Beidler Forest, which is close by, where Prothonotary Warblers are also guaranteed. Ann Shahid from S.C. Audubon will be our host.



We'll meet in the small parking lot next to First Citizens Bank in front of the Summerville Wal-Mart ([map](#)). Plan to be there by 7:00 AM, we'll car pool for the 1/2 hour drive to Brosnan. Bring a lunch, your birding gear and of course insect repellent; there are picnic tables and restrooms at Beidler. Please register with Don Jones before May 21st. 843-572-8232 or Birdfrogdjlj@aol.com

CNHS Board

President:

Dr. Paul Nolan
paulnolancnhs@gmail.com

Vice President:

Open (nominate someone!)

Secretary & Citizen Science Coordinator:

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jmccarthey23@gmail.com

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Social Media Coordinator:

Douglas Stewart

Lesser Squawk Editor:

Sarah Latshaw
paintedbuntinglady@gmail.com

Species Highlight: Flycatchers & Parulas

Great Crested Flycatcher

Perhaps you've heard one of these Neotropical migrants calling in your backyard – that funny-sounding “whreep” from high in a tree. Yes, they're back! The **Great Crested Flycatcher** (GCFL), *Myiarchus crinitus*, is a relatively large (8-9 inches long with a wingspan of 12.75 to 14 inches) member of the Family Tyrannidae. Tyrant flycatchers like the GCFL are woodland birds that often perch on exposed branches high in the canopy, sallying forth to snare flying insects or to glean them from foliage. It's a handsome bird, with an olive brown back, pale gray chest, yellow belly and cinnamon wings and tail.



GCFLs winter in Central America and northwestern South America, but they migrate every spring to breeding territories throughout eastern North America. Although one of many Neotropical migrants whose populations are in decline, GCFLs can sometimes be found living in urban settings. Several years ago, for example, I was asked to check out an “exotic” bird in downtown Charleston that was calling from the treetops in a local cemetery. You guessed it – GCFL! This bird is a cavity nester that prefers to nest in deciduous or mixed woodland near a clearing or edge. Nests are built from dead leaves, twigs, grass and feathers and often incorporate pieces of snakeskin or cellophane. Keep an eye – and an ear – out for GCFLs this spring and summer!

Northern Parula

Those of you who have corresponded with me via e-mail have already guessed that a small warbler called the **Northern Parula** (NOPA), *Parula americana*, is a personal favorite. Like the GCFL, the NOPA is a Neotropical migrant that travels every spring from wintering grounds in the tropics to breed in eastern North America. However, NOPA populations are doing quite well and appear stable or even increasing. In fact, this is one of the most abundant warblers in many SC locations during the spring and summer months. You may also have NOPAs singing in your neighborhood!

Most warblers are small birds, but the NOPA is small even for a warbler (4.3 – 4.7 inches long with a wingspan of 6.3 to 7.1 inches). It's quite colorful, with a blue-gray hood and wings, a yellow chest (crossed by a black and reddish band in males), a green back and two white wingbars. They feed on spiders and many kinds of insects, especially caterpillars. NOPAs typically breed in bottomland habitat along streams and in mature swamp forests. (continued, next page)



Species Highlight (Continued)...

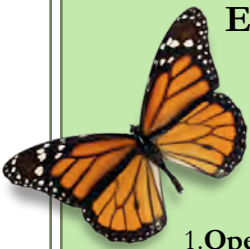
They nest in epiphytic plants that grow on the branches of canopy trees – in the southern U.S. they use Spanish moss, while in the northern U.S they use beard moss. In fact, there is a curious north-south break in NOPA distribution that may be related to the scarcity of epiphytes in the break zone.



NOPAs tend to stay high in the canopy, but if you listen carefully in the right habitat you will probably hear one or more of their **distinctive songs**. The primary song is a rising buzzy trill or rattle that trips over at the top. There is also a secondary series of buzzy notes that ends in a trill, somewhat reminiscent of the **Black-throated Green Warbler** song. Variants of the latter song have been described as almost identical to one of two recorded songs of that rarest of warblers, the **Bachman's Warbler** (probably extinct). I hope that there are still Bachman's Warblers out there somewhere in the SC Lowcountry, but if not, it's good to know that NOPAs are thriving here!

• Andy Harrison, parula23@aol.com

Energy & Recycling Tips: Water, Water Everywhere but not a Drop to Drink



Well, not quite, but this scenario may not be too far in the future if we don't do everything possible to conserve water. Most people know of the many ways that water can be conserved, but there are subtle ways that all add up. Every drop saved is precious. Small acts make a big impact. Some of the following suggestions may be repetitious for you. Others may be a gentle reminder. Please pass these on to those you know.

- 1. Operate dishwashers and washing machines only when full.** With a washing machine, match the water level with the amount of clothes.
- 2. Use a water-efficient toilet** or place a brick or water-filled 1/2 gallon milk jug in the tank of your toilet to decrease the amount used. (You may need to experiment to make sure you have enough water to flush everything with one flush.)
- 3. Turn the water off while brushing your teeth.**
- 4. In the shower, use a low-flow shower head.** Wet yourself down, turn the water off, lather, then turn the water back on to rinse. The same for shaving.
- 5. Keep a small bucket in your shower.** While running the water to get warm, collect that water and use on plants inside or out. Gallons and gallons are lost down the drain while we wait for the water to get warm enough.
- 6. When washing dishes, wash everything, then rinse everything at once.**
- 7. Instead of running water to wash fruits and vegetables, fill a bowl or place an appropriate amount in the sink.** Save this water for plants.
- 8. If you must water your lawn or garden, do so very early in the morning or in the evening so that the water soaks in before the sun evaporates much of it.**
- 9. Collect water from your roof during rain to use on your lawn or garden.**
- 10. When washing your car, fill a bucket with soapy water, wash the entire car, then turn the hose on to rinse.**

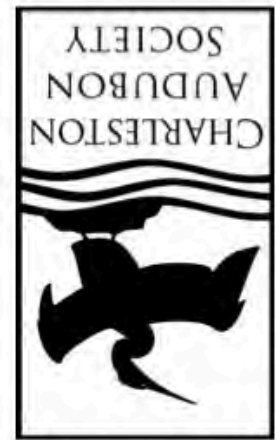
For 100 Tips to Save Water go to:

<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/index.php>

If you have any recycling or conservation tips you would like to share, please send to Ann Shahid at ashahid@audubon.org.

As Climate and Energy Outreach Coordinator (as well as Important Bird Areas Coordinator) for Audubon South Carolina, I would like to share an energy saving or recycling tip in each "Lesser Squawk." If any readers have tips they would like to share, please email them to me.

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.



The Charleston Audubon &
 Natural History Society
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THE LESSER SQUAWK

In this edition:

- Upcoming Lectures & Events
- *Lesser Squawk* Goes Electronic
- Species Highlight
- Bird-a-Thon
- Donation Opportunities
- Energy & Recycling Tips



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