

THE LESSER SQUAWK

www.charlestonaudubon.org

Newsletter of the
Charleston Audubon &
Natural History Society

DON'T MISS EVENTS!

*** Note Change of Venue:** All LECTURES will be held at 6:00 PM in the Biology Auditorium (room 101) in Duckett Hall on the campus of The Citadel ([map](#)). Free parking is available along the west and south sides of Summerall Field directly across the street from Duckett and Bond Halls. There is also free parking after 5:00 PM in faculty lots directly behind Bond Hall.

LECTURE (Nov 14th): "Winging it" in a Human World, with Patrick McMillan!

No matter where in the world you end up there seems to be one fact we can't escape: humans are everywhere, and it's not a recent phenomenon. The pressures placed on the world's systems have reached levels never before experienced. Our choices on one side of the globe can have profound impacts on the other. Join Patrick McMillan as he explores the intricate connections from end to end of the globe that can be traced to changes we see here in South Carolina. Choices matter and you can make a difference and all actions taken by humans aren't inherently bad.



Patrick is the host, co-creator, and writer for the award-winning ETV nature program "[Expeditions with Patrick McMillan](#)." For the past 15 years he has worked as a professional naturalist, biologist and educator, and he is Director of the Campbell Museum of Natural History at Clemson University. Although botany is his area of particular expertise, he is also well-respected for his work in ichthyology, herpetology and mammalogy. Patrick McMillan earned a B.S. in Biology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a PhD in Biological Sciences from Clemson University. Among his many honors, in 2005 he was awarded the distinctions of Conservation Partner of the Year by the Partnership for the Blue Ridge as well as Classified Employee of the Year by Clemson University. He also contributed to the book *Life at the Water's Edge*, which won the 2005 Renewable Natural Resources Foundation's Outstanding Achievement Award and was selected to receive one of ten South Carolina Notable State Document Awards for 2005.

We will begin at 6:00 PM as usual, with snacks and socializing before the presentation begins at 6:30; feel free to bring a snack to share.

Calendar of Events

Nov 10th, 7am-4pm

Field Trip: Savannah NWR

This refuge is a great place to see wintering waterfowl, as well as wading birds such as herons, egrets, bitterns, rails and shorebirds.

See article on page 3.

Nov 14th, 6-8pm

LECTURE: "Winging it" in a Human World, with Patrick McMillan!

Biology Auditorium (room 101) in Duckett Hall on the campus of the Citadel

See article to the left.

Give Us a Call!



Stay on top of upcoming events, even without internet access; we're trying out a telephone call-in system.

Call 843-720-9736 (843-720-WREN) each month to hear a listing of upcoming lectures, field trips, and other events.

President's Notes

Think of that [random historic site](#) on the edge of town that you never actually visit, or [the tax deduction you skip over](#) when asked about it by TurboTax, or the [geeky kid](#) in your high school class you never quite met, or even the [restaurant right next to your favorite pizza joint](#). We have a human tendency to look right past some things that are staring us in the face regularly, even though it might turn out that they can be fascinating and valuable in ways we didn't appreciate. Maybe the kid from high school eventually turns out to be someone famous, the restaurant is voted as "Best Lasagna" in the [City Paper](#), or the tax deduction turns out instead to be a tax credit worth hundreds of dollars. Our membership form at the end of this *Lesser Squawk* is similar in that you might also be tempted to read past it, yet it could bring you large [benefits](#).

For example, that form actually makes you a member of the National Audubon Society, which automatically brings membership in your local affiliate; if you live in Berkeley, Charleston, or Dorchester counties, that's us. Of course, National Audubon isn't *just* us: Audubon's national network currently includes more than [47 nature centers](#) and 150 sanctuaries nationwide, and membership gets you discounts at many of them. By now you've probably figured out the secret that we don't check the membership status of anyone coming to any CNHS event, but isn't it nice to know that you helped make sure they can happen? :-)

Perhaps the most tangible benefit of membership is your year-long subscription to the group's outstanding magazine, *Audubon*. In 2011, *Audubon Magazine* received an [Utne Reader Independent Press Award](#) for Best Environmental Coverage, and many of you are already aware of the high quality writing and photography it contains. On a local front, your membership also brings you a subscription to *The Lesser Squawk*, with articles of special relevance to the



Lowcountry and announcements of many local events.

The timing of my mention of this is intentional in two ways. First, even though your mom may have bought most holiday presents by roughly August at the latest, many of us delay until, umm, let's say 'rather later'. Membership makes a great gift and can be done quickly. Also, our annual oyster roast is coming up soon—December 9th, at Bowen's Island—and [membership forms](#) will be available there. If you do decide to purchase or renew a membership, please be SURE to include the code # C2ZU510Z on your check and your membership application form! That sends all of your first year's dues back to the Lowcountry and lets us [invest them here](#), in local projects.

With or without a membership (hopefully with :-)) please be sure to pack the house when we welcome [ETV star Patrick McMillan](#) on November 14th, and for our Oyster Roast Fundraiser/Holiday Party on December 9th. We also have a varied and exciting series of outings coming up, including trips to [Savannah NWR](#), [Poplar Grove](#), and our annual pilgrimage to [Huntington Beach State Park](#). Details of all these events are found elsewhere in this issue of the Squawk.

So, maybe look up that geeky kid from high school when you're surfing the web, wander away from the favored pizza joint a little, and maybe even start getting your paperwork ready for the upcoming tax season; get in the habit of not overlooking hidden gems like membership in our group. Join us!

Paul Nolan, Ph.D.
President, Charleston Audubon &
Natural History Society
paulnolancnhs@gmail.com

Calendar of Events

Dec 1st, 7am-1pm

FIELD TRIP: Poplar Grove

The Poplar Grove community in Ravenel, SC is a great place to look for winter sparrows, raptors, waterfowl and other birds.

See article on page 3 for more information.

Dec 9th, 2-5pm

EVENT: Oyster Roast Holiday Party & Fundraiser, Bowen's Island

Save the date! Our 5th annual holiday party & oyster roast fundraiser will be held at Bowen's Island, with the best of Lowcountry oysters, multiple kinds of chili, live music, lots of cool prizes to be for the silent auction, and beer will be available. Enjoy the best view of the marsh around while socializing and supporting a good cause. Credit cards will be accepted at the door or online beforehand.

For more information, see article on page 4.

Dec 15th, 7am-5pm

FIELD TRIP: Huntington Beach State Park

Over 300 species of birds have been recorded at the park and it's a great place to look for rarities such as Purple Sandpipers, Great Cormorants, and Piping Plovers.

See article on page 5 for more details.

Don't Miss Events!

FIELD TRIP (Nov 10th): Savannah NWR



We'll be visiting Savannah National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, November 10. This refuge is a great place to see wintering waterfowl, as well as wading birds such as herons, egrets, bitterns, rails and shorebirds. Raptors should also put on a good show. In addition, we have a good chance of seeing some early winter sparrows and perhaps a few late migrant or rare wintering warblers (last year

Wilson's Warblers made an appearance).

There is a four mile loop road (the Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive) that will take us past freshwater impoundments, salt marsh, tidal creeks and bottomland hardwood forests. The birding will be mostly from the roadside, so there will be a minimum amount of walking on this trip. The meeting time and place for the trip will be 7 AM in the Food Lion parking lot near the intersection of US Hwy 17 South and SC 165 in Ravenel, SC ([map](#)). We'll carpool from there for the 40 mile drive to the refuge. Bring food and water, your birding gear (especially a scope if you have one), and dress for the weather. There are restrooms but no picnic facilities on the site. Depending on conditions, we will continue birding until mid-afternoon, which should get us home before dark. If you plan to attend, please register with Andy Harrison prior to November 10 at parula23@aol.com or 795-6934.

FIELD TRIP (Dec 1st): Poplar Grove

Join us on Saturday, December 1 as we visit the Poplar Grove community in Ravenel, SC and look for winter sparrows, raptors, waterfowl and other birds. This 6000-acre property straddling the Charleston and Dorchester County line contains a variety of different habitats, including pine and mixed hardwood upland forests, cypress swamps, agricultural fields and fresh and saltwater features. The developed portion of the property is relatively small, and 3100 acres are under a conservation easement. On past trips to Poplar Grove, our group has observed between 50-60 bird species there.



We'll meet at 7 AM in Poplar Grove at the Boathouse ([map](#)). Bring food and water, your birding gear, bug spray and dress for the weather. We'll be birding mostly from the roadside with a minimum amount of walking. There are restrooms in the Boathouse. If you plan to attend, please register with Andy Harrison at parula23@aol.com or 795-6934 before December 1.

Calendar of Events

Jan 5th, 7am-3pm

EVENT: Christmas Bird Count

Stay tuned for details, but you can contact our CBC compiler, Jen Tyrrell at jennybluejay@gmail.com for details. We routinely have high numbers of both species and individual birds in our count circle, so please come join us for this fun event. Even better, this year it's free to participate in the count! No more \$5 fee to be collected. See you there :-)

For more details see article on page 5.

Jan 9th, 6-8pm

LECTURE: Amphibians in a changing world: Environmental stress and the future of frog populations

This talk will discuss research on the effects of two forms of environmental stress – pesticides and increased salinity – on the ecological and evolutionary potential of local frog populations.

For more details see article on page 5.

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.

EVENT (Dec 9th): Oyster Roast Holiday Party & Fundraiser



Photo by Cathy Johnson

We'll continue a long streak of fun oyster roasts at Bowen's Island, with live music from King City Records recording artist Wrenwood, beer (donations gladly accepted :-), chili, a silent auction, and of course plenty of world famous Lowcountry oysters. Still the best bargain in oyster roasts at \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door.

We'll send a flyer to all CNHS members and will post a mail-in registration on our webpage and facebook page in early November, but this year we can also take credit card payments through the PayPal link on the webpage and at the door. Come join us for great food, great music, and a great time!

FIELD TRIP (Dec 15th): Huntington Beach State Park

Our annual trip to Huntington Beach State Park, one of the best birding spots on the South Carolina coast, will take place on Saturday, December 15, from 7am-5pm. There are a variety of habitats on the property, including over 3000 acres of freshwater impoundments, salt marsh and ocean beach. We can usually count on seeing 60+ species of birds there, including various ducks and other waterfowl (in recent years

Redheads, Pintails and Canvasbacks have put in appearances on or near the Mullet Pond), wading birds, shorebirds, gulls, terns, eagles and other raptors, and sparrows. Occasionally we have gotten lucky and seen Red-breasted Nuthatches or Common Ground Doves near the feeders at the Education Center. Along the beach we could see Piping Plovers, and at the jetty we might encounter Purple Sandpipers or Great Cormorants. We should see Common and Red-throated Loons and possibly Bonaparte's Gulls there too.



Wear comfortable walking shoes, as the walk to the south jetty at Murrells Inlet is about 1.25 miles. Bring food and water, your birding gear (especially a scope if you have one), and dress for the weather. There is a covered picnic area as well as restrooms on the site. Note: there is a \$5.00 fee to enter the park (\$3.25 for seniors). We'll meet at 7:00 AM in our usual location, the Lowe's parking lot directly behind the IHOP on Hwy 17 North in Mt Pleasant ([map](#)). From there we'll carpool for the roughly one hour drive to HBSP. If you plan to attend, please

register with Andy Harrison prior to December 15 at parula23@aol.com



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EVENT (Jan 5th): Christmas Bird Count

Stay tuned for details, but you can contact our CBC compiler, Jen Tyrrell at jennybluejay@gmail.com for details. We routinely have high numbers of both species and individual birds in our count circle, so please come join us for this fun event. Even better, this year it's free to participate in the count! No more \$5 fee to be collected. See you there :-)

LECTURE (Jan 9th): Amphibians in a changing world: Environmental stress and the future of frog populations

As humans continue to modify the planet, natural habitats are increasingly degraded, with potentially dire consequences for native species. Here in the South Carolina lowcountry, freshwater habitats face a number of threats, from introduced species to chemical pollutants to rising sea levels. Amphibians are important members of terrestrial ecosystems, and many depend on freshwater habitats to complete their life cycle. This talk will discuss research on the effects of two forms of environmental stress – pesticides and increased salinity – on the ecological and evolutionary potential of local frog populations.



Allison Welch is an Assistant Professor of Biology at the College of Charleston. Allison completed her Ph.D. in Biology at the University of Missouri, studying behavioral and evolutionary ecology of frogs. She held postdoctoral appointments at the University of North Carolina and the University of Missouri before coming to the College of Charleston in 2005. Allison resides on James Island with her husband and their two children.

We will begin at 6:00 PM as usual, with snacks and socializing before the presentation begins at 6:30; feel free to bring a snack to share.

Citizen Science, Get Involved!



This month's Citizen Science spotlight shines on a new website called citizensort.org. This website provides a unique and innovative way to upload photographs of different plants, animals, and insects as a scientific dataset to learn about species distribution, taxonomy, and how we're changing the environment.

The website is organized into games that focus on identification of species. These games use a wide knowledge base of citizens to identify pictures submitted by other citizens. This website combines species classification and gaming into a fun skill building activity. It not only sharpens your ID skills, it is also addicting and helpful to scientists! If you have time, check it out! This could be a fun activity to do with students, kids, or grandkids!

• Jennifer Tyrrell; Jennifer.tyrrell@avianconservationcenter.org



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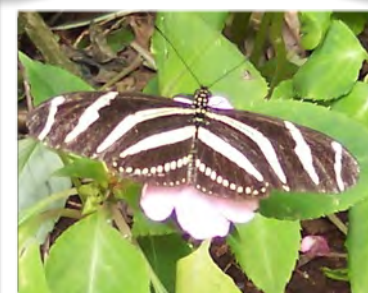
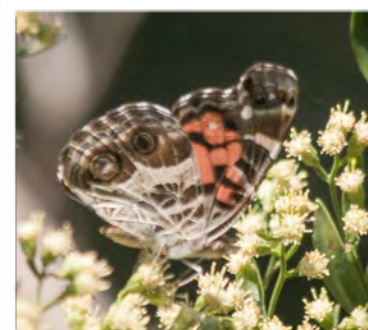
Species Highlight: Fall Butterflies

The blooming of the [groundsel, or salt myrtle trees \(Baccharis Hamifolia\)](#) brings a host of butterflies through the Lowcountry. Some are regular residents, others are passing through. Either way, it's a great time of year to get out and see what new species fall brings. I was delighted this week to discover a [Zebra Longwing](#) amongst the bushes. The caterpillars of the species feed on passionflower vines, and adults live an unusually long three months because they feed on both nectar and flowers.

Another common local butterfly is the [Cloudless sulfur](#). It can be found nectaring on the groundsel blossoms as well. These bright yellow butterflies are flitting everywhere right now. On the same bushes, you might find [American Lady Butterflies](#) and [Gulf Fritillaries](#). The latter of these has incredibly divergent colors on the top versus the bottom wings. They also use passionflower vines as a host plant. [Viceroy](#)s can be found on Willow Trees, and are often confused with the main showstopper of the season, the Monarch. Viceroy's have a black line across the hindwing and a single row of white dots in the black marginal band.

Monarchs have more numerous white spots and lack the black line on the hindwing. Many of the individual monarchs you see this time of year are actually migrating southward as part of an incredible migration, and local volunteers tag them to help scientists learn more about the species. [This article on the Dewees Island Blog](#) describes the hows and why's of tagging monarchs.

• Judy Drew Fairchild, *Adapted from Dewees Island Blog*



Photos Courtesy of Judy Fairchild
From top: Gulf Fritillary, American Lady, and Zebra Longwing

Other Interesting Events in the Lowcountry:

- [Nightwalks at Beidler Forest](#)
- [Bird of Prey Raptor Center](#)
- [Sewee Visitor & Environmental Education Center](#)

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Audubon & Natural History
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Smart Phone Apps for Nature Lovers

Leafsnap

While hiking through the woods, do you ever stop and wonder which plant you are stepping on or the type of flower along the path? Next time, bring along your iPhone, iPad, or Android phone and download the free Leafsnap app as an interactive field guide to determine the plant and tree species in your area.

Researchers from Columbia University, the University of Maryland, and the Smithsonian Institution have developed this unique application that allows users to take a snapshot of a nearby leaf and identify the plant. Within the app, you can create your own collection of the plants you have encountered and browse plants in your area. Be sure to bring along a piece of white paper as a background for the leaves you collect and enjoy starting an electronic collection of the many plant species found in the Charleston area.

Get more details at <http://leafsnap.com/>.

- Caitlin Black



Naturalist



Olympics

This *native* bird is the second species of this years *Naturalist Olympics*. The breast colors and barred feathers give it away (very distinctive around here). Send your answer to naturalistolympics@gmail.com. A third event--and the ID of the bird--will be announced in the next *Lesser Squawk*.

Thanks to everyone who competed in our Naturalist Olympics, as described in the September/October issue of *The Lesser Squawk*. No entrants correctly guessed the ID of the native fish, *dollar sunfish* (*Lepomis marginatus*).



Photo Courtesy of Pamela Corwin

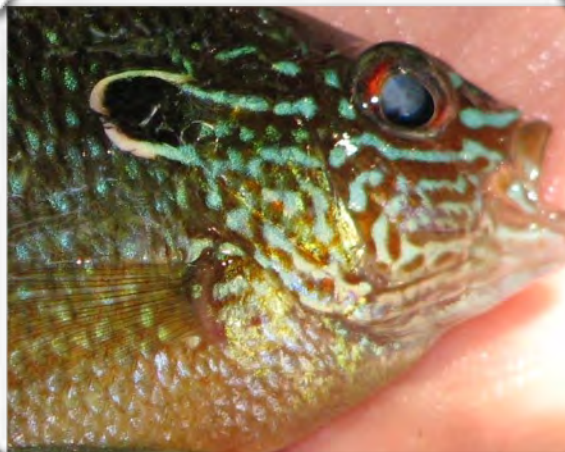


Photo Courtesy of Pamela Corwin

CNHS Supports Original Research

Part of the mission of the Charleston Natural History is 'support of original research'. To that end, we recently helped to sponsor the graduate student Research Colloquium put on by the Graduate Program in Marine Biology at Grice Marine Lab on Ft. Johnson. In addition to financial support of the programming, CNHS provided prize money for the best student research poster and for the runner-up. In the program at Grice, students generally develop posters outlining plans for the research they are beginning, allowing them to get valuable feedback from community of marine biologists that gathers for the Colloquium. We are very pleased to be a sponsor of this event and of these awards, and congratulate graduate students Amanda Kelly and Callie Crawford for being awarded Best Poster and Runner-up, respectively.

Here are summaries of the projects they are beginning:

LIFE HISTORY TRENDS OF GRAY TRIGGERFISH *BALISTES CAPRISCUS* IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC BIGHT FROM 1992-2012 Kelly, A. (GPMB, College of Charleston) and Shervette, V. (University of South Carolina Aiken)



Gray triggerfish *Balistes capriscus* is a commercially and recreationally-valued reef fish species. Over the past five years, average annual landings are approaching 700,000 lbs in U.S. Atlantic waters. Gray triggerfish are managed as part of the South Atlantic snapper grouper complex fishery. Many of the other species in the snapper grouper complex, including red snapper and gag grouper, are considered overfished and are being tightly regulated which has led to increased fishing pressure on alternative species including gray triggerfish. Despite the economic importance of this species, no published information exists concerning age, growth, and reproductive biology in Atlantic waters of the U.S. Fortunately, the Marine Resources Monitoring, Assessment, and Prediction (MARMAP) Program at SCDNR has been collecting life history data for this species as part of its reef-fish monitoring program over the past several decades.

For the current study, we are working with MARMAP to process age and reproduction samples from gray triggerfish in order to obtain the following objectives for the South Atlantic Bight population of this species: 1. Determine growth rates, population age structure, and sex ratios, and 2. Determine reproductive seasonality, size, and age at maturity. This information will be utilized in ongoing gray triggerfish stock assessment efforts by the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

LINKING MOLECULAR AND MORPHOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CHONDRICHTHYAN TREE OF LIFE Crawford, C. (GPMB, College of Charleston) and Naylor, G. (College of Charleston)

This project is part of a collaborative effort to develop a phylogenetic tree of life of modern Chondrichthyans. Chondrichthyans (sharks, rays, skates, and chimaeras) are a highly diverse taxonomic class inhabiting bodies of water all over the world, from the tropics to polar seas; some even inhabit freshwater lakes and rivers. As a lineage, Chondrichthyans split from the rest of the jawed vertebrates 450 million years ago, however the most recent common ancestor of modern elasmobranchs (sharks, skates, and rays), dates back to the Triassic (200 MYA). The proposed project will use Computed Tomography (CT) to explore morphological variation across phylogenetically diverse species of Chondrichthyans. The variation I observe in skeletal anatomy deduced from segmented CT scan data will be interpreted within the context of a recent estimate of phylogenetic relationships based on molecular data. My focus will be on morphology of the chondrocranium, gill arches, jaw, pelvic girdle and pectoral girdle.





Energy & Recycling Tips: AMAZING USES FOR VINEGAR

We spend unnecessary money on household cleaners, many of which are toxic. White vinegar will clean anything from windows to getting your hair squeaky clean after rinsing out your conditioner. Did you know vinegar can:

1. Help You Lose Weight

By drinking a mixture of one teaspoon of apple cider vinegar in a glass of water, with a bit of honey added for flavor, you can effectively control your appetite for several hours.

2. Prevent Static Cling Without Dryer Sheets

To prevent static cling, add one cup vinegar to each wash load. Now you can give up costly dryer sheets forever.

3. Remove Chewing Gum That's Stuck In Your Hair

Put ice on the gum to freeze it, then saturate the area that has the gum on it with vinegar. The rest of the gum will actually dissolve, and you can slide it off your hair. If the vinegar is heated first the process will work even faster. This same process will work on furniture or clothes, too.

4. Grow Beautiful Azaleas

Occasionally water plants with a mixture of two tablespoons vinegar to one quart water. The vinegar increases the soil acidity — Azaleas love acidic soil.

5. Freshen A Room

An open dish of white distilled vinegar will help remove unpleasant smells like paint or fish odors from a room.

6. Soothe A Sore Throat

 with a mixture of apple cider vinegar, water and honey.

7. Stop Athlete's Foot

 by soaking your feet in white distilled vinegar.

8. Stop The Hiccups

 by drinking a teaspoon of white distilled vinegar.

9. Extend The Life Of Your Pantyhose

Rinse your hose with water containing 1 tablespoon of white distilled vinegar, and they'll last longer.

10. Clean The Dishwasher

Run a cup of vinegar through the whole cycle once a month to reduce soap build up on the inner mechanisms and on glassware.

11. Clean And Restore Leather Goods

 by rubbing a cotton ball or cloth soaked in vinegar over them.

The vinegar will remove salt, dirt and stains while bringing back shine. And don't worry about the smell. Once dry, vinegar has no odor.

12. Prolong And Brighten Propane Lanterns

Soak new wicks for several hours in white vinegar and let them dry before inserting. Propane lanterns will burn longer and brighter on the same amount of fuel.

13. Remove Decals, Bumper Stickers And Price Tags

Soak a cloth in vinegar and cover the decal or bumper sticker for several minutes until the vinegar soaks in. The decals and bumper stickers should peel off easily.

14. Clear Mineral Deposits From Your Steam Iron

Fill the water tank with white vinegar. Turn the iron to the steam setting and steam-iron a soft cloth to clean the steam ports. Repeat the process with water, then thoroughly rinse out the inside of your iron.

15. Make A Rubber Chicken Bone

This is possibly my favorite way to use vinegar, mostly because it freaks people out. Soak a chicken bone in vinegar for several days and it will become rubbery and pliable. Perfect for scaring someone during Halloween.

Go to this site to download many more uses for vinegar: <http://www.vinegarbook.net/>

• Ann Shahid rashahid@att.net

MOST VIEWED

See what all the facebook fuss is about. Here's what our Charleston Audubon & Natural History Society facebook friends have been checking out this summer:

1. Ladybugs in slow motion are quite frightening
2. Pluff Mud Perspectives
3. Community Service & 25th Anniversary Celebration at McAlhany
4. Fight to Save the Spoon-billed Sandpiper from Extinction in Five Years
5. Carnivorous Pitcher Plant in Action
6. Destination of the week: Jackson Hole, Wyoming
7. Microscopic Photos
8. NatureShare's "I Thought We Knew Hummingbirds"
9. Extreme Animal Portraits: Wildlife Photographer of the Year Winners
10. NatureShare's "What Not to Lick - The Southern Toad"



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 <p>For only \$20* you get one-year subscriptions to <i>Audubon</i> magazine and <i>The Lesser Squawk</i>, and all the benefits of local and National Audubon Society membership. Renew for just \$35/year. *\$15 for Sr. Citizens and Students</p>	
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