

# THE LESSER SQUAWK

Newsletter of the  
Charleston Audubon &  
Natural History Society

## DON'T MISS EVENTS!

\* **Note Change of Venue:** All LECTURES will be held at 6 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 PM in faculty lots directly behind Bond Hall.

### EVENT (May 5<sup>th</sup>): Spring Bird Count & Bird-a-thon Fundraiser

Don't miss the Spring Bird Count & Bird-a-thon Fundraiser on Sunday, May 5th. Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. See the flyer on pages 3 & 4 for more details.

### LECTURE (May 8<sup>th</sup>): All My Sparrows: The Soap Opera in Your Backyard

Birds, like humans, have individually different (and predictable) [behavioral types](#) - in humans, we call these different behavioral types "personalities". What does it mean to say that individual birds have different "personalities", and how do these differences in behavioral types affect their lives? I'll share what I've learned (so far) about these questions, focusing on behavioral differences among male [song sparrows](#), and the consequences for their ability to obtain and defend their territories.



It's been several years (maybe even 4?) since we've been fortunate enough to have [Dr. Melissa Hughes](#) speak about her research, and there's a lot to tell. She is an Associate Professor of animal behavior and ornithology at the CofC, having been there since 2001. Melissa earned a Ph.D. from Duke in 1994 and has authored numerous publications in the field of animal communication, aggression and mate choice in song sparrows (in Pennsylvania), and on the biology of snapping shrimp (in the Charleston harbor).

## Calendar of Events

### Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup>, 7am-3pm

#### EVENT: Spring Bird Count & Bird-a-thon Fundraiser

See flyer on pages 3 & 4 for details.

### Wednesday May 8<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm

#### LECTURE: All My Sparrows: The Soap Opera in Your Backyard

See article to the left for details.

### Saturday & Sunday May 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>

#### EVENT: Bio-Blitz

For more information, see page 6.

### Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 7:30am - 2:30pm

#### FIELD TRIP: Briar's Creek

For more information, see page 5.

# President's Notes

Between the local birds and those annual visitors 'from off', the South Carolina Lowcountry has no shortage of colors darting about. Think of the red cardinals, blue egrets, green herons, white ibis, and that one-bird color wheel, the painted bunting, and your mind's eye will see a virtual rainbow racing figuratively across the landscape. Later this year they'll be joined by a literal race of color, a 5k (3.1 miles) footrace at the Coastal Carolina Fair, called [Run or Dye](#), in which participants' initially white shirts are pelted with dyes as they move through the course. Check it out, and sign up to walk or run it—if you register by May 11th, be sure to use the code RODCNHS10 during registration. The organizers will give you a \$10 discount from your registration fee and will donate \$5 to our group for each person using the code. Share this code with all your friends, and help us raise some funds while having fun.

You can also help support us by participating in, and/or making a pledge to, our upcoming Bird-A-Thon, held in conjunction with our annual spring bird count. On Sunday, May 5th we'll fan out across [the same count circle that we census annually](#) during the [Christmas Bird Count](#). It's always a fun time, and interesting to see the differences in the bird community between the winter and spring. Beginners are welcome, and being paired with more-seasoned birders can be a great way to improve your ID skills. For more information on

how to sign up or how to make a pledge, [click here](#).

As always, we'll strive to make sure that all donations and other funds raised in these events are used to maximum impact. We've recently invested in the supplies needed to continue the "Seniors and Songbirds" programs presented in local assisted living centers, and designed & printed a set of "[Lowcountry Bird Bingo](#)" cards to be used during bird walks with the youngest set of cub scouts. In collaboration with the [Wild Birds Unlimited](#) store in West Ashley (see the box elsewhere in this issue of *The Lesser Squawk* announcing the celebration of their new ownership), we were also able to give each scout a laminated bird ID guide to keep. Of course, we'll continue to organize quality lectures and field trips, both in the coming month and when we resume programming in September, along with ongoing improvements at our McAlhany Nature Preserve (MNP). As a brief aside, I have to mention that the heavy rains this spring have brought a [bonanza of water](#) down the Edisto River and into our oxbow lake; the overflow into the bottomland forest at MNP has been a spectacle to behold, and was captured in video form by Carl Miller. Check out the excellent video he put together by following the link elsewhere in this Squawk, or by [clicking here](#).

Finally, it's time once again to elect a slate of officers for the group, on which we'll take a vote



at the May 8th meeting. Steve Moore and Jenny McCarthy Tyrrell have agreed to continue serving as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, and I urge you to show them your support. I want to thank Patrick Markham for his outstanding service as Vice-President over the last two years, and hope you'll do the same when you see him on outings and at our meetings. Dr. Jessica Hardesty Norris is a newcomer to the Lowcountry, but not to avian conservation groups or to natural history, having earned a Ph.D. in Tropical Ecology and worked for the [American Bird Conservancy](#) before moving to Charleston with her husband and family last year; she's agreed to run for Vice-President of CNHS. I'll run for President of the group one more time as we transition to a leadership role for Dr. Norris. Please join us at the meeting on May 8th for an excellent lecture by Dr. Melissa Hughes of C of C, but also to vote on this slate of candidates.

Paul Nolan  
[paulnolancnhs@gmail.com](mailto:paulnolancnhs@gmail.com)



Charleston's Natural History  
Society Since 1905

# BIRDATHON

## AND Spring Bird Count

May 5, 2013

[www.CharlestonAudubon.org](http://www.CharlestonAudubon.org)

### PARTICIPATION

There are three easy ways to participate:

#### 1. MAKE A PLEDGE

You can pledge a fixed amount (\$15, \$30 or \$50, for example) or pledge a specific amount per species identified. (We usually observe between 140 and 160 species on a Spring Count). Make your pledge via e-mail to [parula23@aol.com](mailto:parula23@aol.com) (please put **Spring Bird Count** in the subject line) or mail-in the pledge form (see reverse).

You may pay using PayPal through the links on our website – whether you pledge-per-species, or choose to make a fixed donation, PayPal is a safe, secure way to make your donation – no PayPal account is required.

#### 2. SIGN-UP SPONSORS

Don't hesitate to ask friends, relatives and neighbors to support the Birdathon! You can distribute copies of the small pledge form for donations, or have sponsors sign-up on the larger form and collect their pledged amounts after the Spring Count (totals will be available 7-10 days after the May 5th Count.)

Extra forms can be downloaded from the website: [www.charlestonaudubon.org](http://www.charlestonaudubon.org).

#### 3. JOIN THE COUNT

Anyone, whether you're an experienced birder or just getting started, is encouraged to participate in the Spring Count. Groups – each led by an experienced birder – will record the numbers of species and individual birds they identify in their assigned territory over the course of the day. Afterward all of the team reports are compiled into a single report.

To join the count, please contact Andy Harrison who is coordinating this year's Count and Birdathon: Call 795-6934 or email [parula23@aol.com](mailto:parula23@aol.com)

The Charleston Spring Bird Count and Birdathon is just around the corner! This year's event will be held on Sunday, May 5. Our chapter has conducted the Spring Count for many years, and the data we collect is extremely valuable in detecting long-term trends in bird populations. The money we raise during the Birdathon will be used to support ongoing work at our McAlhany Nature Preserve (MNP) and other local chapter activities. There have been many recent changes at MNP, including vast improvements to the cabin facilities and the completion of the loop section of the entrance road near the cabin. We are also getting ready to perform another late winter/early spring prescribed burn in Units 3 and 4 of our longleaf pine/native grass restoration area on the north side of Wire Road.

Our 15-mile diameter "count circle" (the same area used on the Charleston Christmas Bird Count) is divided into territories and groups of observers – led by experienced birders – record the numbers of species and individuals they see or hear in their territory over the course of the day. This is birding with a purpose, but it is usually a lot of fun, too!

Sign up for the count: Birders of all skill levels are welcome to participate on the Spring Count. And becoming involved in a count is a good way to improve your birding abilities! Contact the compiler, Andy Harrison, at 795-6934 or [parula23@aol.com](mailto:parula23@aol.com) for more information.

### AND AFTERWARD...

Our birding party with the highest species total and the donor making the largest contribution to the Birdathon will receive special recognition for their accomplishment. Please be patient when awaiting results – tabulating the data and verifying any unusual sightings after the count day may take a week or more (after all, we want to maintain a high-quality dataset for the long-term record).

Whether you join us for the Spring Count or make a donation in support of the Birdathon (or both), you will be taking part in a very worthy cause.

– Thanks very much!



## Charleston Natural History Society 2013 Birdathon and Spring Count Pledge Form

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

eMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Sending your donation now?

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

The Charleston Natural History Society

CHECK  
ONE

### MY PLEDGE

☐

I would like to pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ per species  
seen during the 2013 Birdathon. (i.e. if we find  
135 species, a \$.25 pledge would equal \$33.75)

☐

I would like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the  
2013 Birdathon effort. (i.e. \$25, \$50, \$75...)

Please Mail all pledges/donations to:

Andy Harrison  
CNHS Birdathon Coordinator  
35 Cross Creek Drive, APT. P-7  
Charleston, SC 29412

Use the form below to sign-up sponsors and take their pledges. (You can use a pad or make your own form as long as you collect all the data.) Contact the Birdathon coordinator, Andy Harrison (at 795-6934 or by eMail at [parula23@aol.com](mailto:parula23@aol.com)) and you'll be contacted after the count is compiled so that you can calculate and collect your sponsors' pledges.

Use the form above to make a pledge or donate a fixed amount. Donations may be paid online with PayPal, or sent immediately. If you return a pledge, you will be contacted, by phone or email, after the Spring Count totals have been compiled, and asked to fulfill the pledge amount.



## Charleston Natural History Society 2013 Birdathon and Spring Count Pledge Sign-Up

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE #	PLEDGE INFO			PAID Y/N	NEW AUDUBON MEMBER?
			\$/per species	fixed donation	TOTAL		

After collecting all pledges and donations, please mail them, along with your name and contact information, and this form, to:

Andy Harrison, CNHS Birdathon Coordinator, 35 Cross Creek Drive, APT. P-7, Charleston, SC 29412

## Don't Miss Events!

For our final field trip of the year we'll return to bird at [Briar's Creek](#). Located on Johns Island, Briar's Creek is a 900-acre residential community and golf course that has retained much of the property in its natural state. Since the planning stages, Briar's Creek has worked with [Audubon International](#) to develop the community as an environmentally friendly sanctuary.

In addition to a large lake, there are freshwater swamps, salt marsh and upland wooded areas that provide habitat for a variety of birds. On the first [Sea Islands Christmas Bird Count](#) on January 4, the Briar's Creek field party recorded 44 species in just a few hours there – highlights that morning included 10 Sedge Wrens in a grassy wetland area, 4 Blue-headed Vireos in one small patch of woods, and great looks at several Bald Eagles and Red-shouldered Hawks. On this trip we may observe some late spring migrants and summer resident songbirds in addition to various raptors and numerous herons, egrets and other wading birds.

We'll meet in the shopping center parking lot at the intersection of Folly Road (SC 171) and Maybank Hwy (SC 700) on James Island ([map](#)) at 7:30 AM and carpool from there to Briar's Creek. Bring water, snacks, lunch, insect repellent and your birding gear. There are restroom facilities on the property. We will probably continue birding through mid-afternoon. To register for this trip, contact Andy Harrison at [parula23@aol.com](mailto:parula23@aol.com) or 843-795-6934 by May 15 (so that we can give our host an idea of how many people to expect).



Photo: Sarah Latshaw

## Citizen Scientist Spotlight: Nest

This issue's citizen science spotlight will shine on a project with the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) called [Nest Watch](#). This program helps scientists measure Nature's Success! It's very simple and allows you to make use of what you are probably already doing, watching the nesting birds around your home or workplace.

All you need to do is visit [nestwatch.org](http://nestwatch.org) and get certified. Then go find a nest, and there should be plenty around soon! Schedule to visit your nest site every 3-4 days and monitor changes. Then report your data using Nest Watch's online data reporting tool. This program offers interesting articles and data, as well as a newsletter. It's easy and fun!

- Jenny McCarthy Tyrrell



## CNHS Board

### President:

Dr. Paul Nolan  
[paulnolancnhs@gmail.com](mailto:paulnolancnhs@gmail.com)

### Vice President:

Patrick Markham  
[pjmarkham@aol.com](mailto:pjmarkham@aol.com)

### Secretary & Citizen Science Coordinator:

Jenny McCarthy Tyrrell  
[jmccarthey23@gmail.com](mailto:jmccarthey23@gmail.com)

### Treasurer:

Steve Moore

### Outings & Conservation Chair:

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[parula23@aol.com](mailto:parula23@aol.com)

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### Webmaster:

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[steve@bleezarde.com](mailto:steve@bleezarde.com)

### Social Media Coordinator:

Brian Rogers

### Lesser Squalie Editor:

Sarah Latshaw  
[paintedbuntinglady@gmail.com](mailto:paintedbuntinglady@gmail.com)

## Bio-Blitz: McAlhany Nature Preserve

Come and join us on May 11th-12th, 2013 for a Bio-Blitz at McAlhany Nature Preserve (MNP). The Bio-Blitz will begin at 9 am Saturday (May 11th) and continue through Sunday (May 12th) ending around 5pm. We have had interest from multiple colleges, universities, naturalists, and other organizations spanning from Virginia to Alabama.

In order for this to be a successful event, numerous participants are needed whether you are an expert or just have a love for the outdoors. We need your help, so come and join us for a great time outdoors exploring the property. I will be at the MNP starting May 10th and will remain through May 12th to accommodate anyone that may want to come early. Even if you can only spend a little time with us, we would greatly appreciate your participation. Participants are welcome to campout at MNP, which has numerous tent sites available. We have a well-equipped cabin with a fully equipped kitchen, a full bath, lounge area, two bedrooms with bunk beds, and a screened in porch. On Saturday we will have a cookout for lunch as we take a break from the blitz. During the evening join us around the campfire to relax and enjoy swap stories. Later in the evening, night walks may be led around the property.

Spring time has taken hold with a wonderful transformation of the property. The forest along with the wetlands has come alive with an explosion of life and activity. Numerous species of birds can be observed or heard throughout the forest. Barred Owls are frequently calling around the Oxbow lake. Many species of reptiles and amphibians can be found as you walk the trails on MNP.

Currently, the [herpetofauna study](#) taking place on the property is yielding outstanding results. There are 11 drift fences and 50 minnow traps spread throughout the property. The large amount of rainfall since January has allowed water to stay in most of the alluvial wetlands. Warm temperatures and periodic rain fall has influenced the movement of the reptiles and amphibians. This combination of events has led to large capture rates during this past week. [Mole Salamanders](#) (*Ambystoma talpoideum*), [Atlantic Coast Slimy Salamanders](#) (*Plethodon chlorobryonis*), [Two-Toed Amphiumas](#) (*Amphiuma means*), [Southern Copperheads](#) (*Agkistrodon contortrix contortrix*) and [Southern Ringneck Snakes](#) (*Diadophis punctatus punctatus*) have been the most frequently captured species over the past two weeks. Numerous fences lizards and ground skinks can be observed on the property. Large choruses of multiple frog and toad species can be heard during the evening. [North American Amphibian Monitoring Program](#) (NAAMP) sampling techniques are being used to document the different species of frogs and toads.

Please RSVP to Brian Reid ([bkrcoach@yahoo.com](mailto:bkrcoach@yahoo.com)) with the number of people who will be attending, so we can bring enough food, but also to give us a feel for the type of biodiversity you feel comfortable inventorying (e.g. birds, terrestrial plants, aquatic plants, aquatic insects, butterflies, moths, reptiles, amphibians, etc).

•Brian Reid



facebook

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searching for Charleston  
Audubon & Natural History  
Society





# Naturalist



## Olympics

This perennial, flowering, herbaceous plant is found only in the southeastern region of the United States. Significant habitat loss has occurred through clearing of forests for agricultural and pine farm uses, which led to this plant being officially listed as an endangered species. Do you know this plant, the fourth species of this year's *Naturalist Olympics*. *Naturalist Olympics*? Send your answer to [naturalistolympics@gmail.com](mailto:naturalistolympics@gmail.com). A fifth event--and the ID of the plant--will be announced in the next *Lesser Squawk*.

Thanks to everyone who competed in our Naturalist Olympics, as described in the March/April issue of *The Lesser Squawk*. Because a few entrants correctly guessed the ID of the skull, a *river otter* (*Lontra canadensis*), the contest is still wide open.



Photo Courtesy of Pamela Corwin



Photo Courtesy of Pamela Corwin

Find an injured Bird of Prey or Shorebird?

Call the **Center for Birds of Prey**:

(843) 971-7474.



They have volunteers throughout the county to meet and help transport injured birds. If they don't take the birds (ie: songbirds), they have a list of bird rehabilitators in the area that may be able to help.

### Other Interesting Events in the Lowcountry:

- Beidler Forest Night Walks
- First Flush Festival, Charleston Tea Plantation
- Birds of Prey Raptor Center
- Charleston County Parks

twitter 

Follow us on twitter @chsaudubon



To watch the video, [click here](#).



Re-Grand Opening Saturday,  
May 11  
St. Andrews Shopping Center  
975 Savannah Hwy ([map](#))  
Charleston, SC 29407

We will be having a drawing for a free Wild Birds Unlimited “Eliminator” Squirrel proof feeder. Over \$100 value and a Cypress Nest Bluebird House, a \$40.00 value



Bring in your old bird feeder and receive \$20 off a new one. Old feeders will be donated to Charles Towne Landing and Caw Caw County Park.

**Store Hours:**

Monday-Friday 10-6  
Saturday 10-5  
Sunday 12-5



# PAINTED BUNTING WALKS

at the Center for Birds of Prey

**Every Saturday in May at 8am**

Join our resident experts for a special birding walk in search of the colorful Painted Bunting

This two hour birding walk will begin at 8am at Guest Services and will progress throughout the Center's grounds in search of migrating Painted Buntings who come to the area to nest and reproduce.

Participants may also see Summer Tanagers, Cuckoos, a variety of Warblers and a wading bird rookery with nesting Ibis, Heron, and Egrets.

\$20 participation fee includes the walk as well as access to the 10:30am program and flight demonstration. Advance registration is required - space is limited.



**The Center for Birds of Prey**  
4872 Seewee Rd., Awendaw, SC 29429  
843-971-7474

[www.thecenterforbirdsofprey.org](http://www.thecenterforbirdsofprey.org)





## Energy & Recycling Tips: 6 Uses for Silica Gel Packets (you know, the little packets that come in bottles of vitamins and other packaged goods)

Ever wonder what you can do with these little things other than throw them away? Ask your family and friends to start saving them for you. **Just make sure that you keep these out of the reach of children, they are not to be eaten!**



1. **To save your cell phone from water damage.** If you drop your cell phone in water, quickly pull it out, dry it off, remove the memory card, and put it in a Ziploc bag filled with silica gel packets that you have stockpiled. Supposedly this works better than the rice trick for saving your cell phone, just try to restrain yourself and not turn it on until a few days later because it could cause an electrical short and ruin your phone.
2. **To help keep photos safe and free from moisture.** If you get photos wet, air dry them first, then put into a bag with gel packets.
3. **To keep collectibles in mint condition.** If anyone in your family collects stamps, baseball cards, coins, etc., it's great to add some packets in with your collectibles to make sure they stay moisture-free.
4. **To keep important documents safe.** Whether you have important documents (birth certificates, social security cards, etc.) stored in files in a desk, cabinet, box, or envelopes, you can add a few packets of silica gel to keep them protected.
5. **To use in each container in your basement, garage, or storage unit to absorb excess moisture.** Use them everywhere.
6. **To help preserve your ornaments and Christmas decorations.** These get pulled out of boxes only once a year, so using silica gel packets in your Christmas boxes is a smart idea.

Okay, I'm adding a few more tips!

7. **To remove a musty smell from an old book.** Yes, you're right, put in ziploc bag and add silica gel packets.
8. I haven't tried this yet, but I'll just bet they would **keep sterling silver free of tarnish.**
9. If they have completed their purpose and are full of moisture, regenerate them in a 200 degree oven for about two hours and store them in an airtight Ziploc bag until you need them.

I'm sure you can think of other uses, so please e-mail them to me and I will include in a future newsletter.

• Ann Shahid [rashahid@att.net](mailto: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 recently:

1. To all the Fire, Police, EMS and First Responders in Texas
2. When your grandchildren ask you...
3. Dragonfly Predation
4. Lowcountry Bird Bingo
5. Hurricane Disaster Relief for Birds
6. Wetland Restoration at McAlhany Nature Preserve
7. Transitioning into Spring!
8. Parc Perlière's Nesting Bluebirds!
9. "Nature never hurries. Atom by atom, little by little she achieves her work."
10. John James Audubon And 'The Birds Of America.'



New Members, Renewals, Gift Memberships	
 <p>For only \$20* you get one-year subscriptions to <i>Audubon</i> magazine and <i>The Lesser Squawb</i>, and all the benefits of local and National Audubon Society membership. Renew for just \$35/year. *\$15 for Sr. Citizens and Students</p>	
CHECK ONE: <input type="checkbox"/> NEW MEMBER <input type="checkbox"/> GIFT MEMBERSHIP <input type="checkbox"/> RENEWAL	
THIS IS A GIFT FROM:	
NAME _____	
ADDRESS _____	
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____	
MAIL THIS COUPON AND YOUR CHECK TO:	
National Audubon Society PO Box 422250 Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250	
THIS MEMBERSHIP IS FOR:	
NAME _____	
ADDRESS _____	
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____	
# _____	
[ RENEWALS MUST INCLUDE THE 20-DIGIT MEMBER NUMBER FROM YOUR AUDUBON ADDRESS LABEL ]	
Checks payable to <b>National Audubon Society</b> . Include our chapter code on your check: C3ZU510Z	