

THE LESSER SQUAWK

www.charlestonaudubon.org

Newsletter of the
Charleston Audubon &
Natural History Society

DON'T MISS EVENTS!

FIELD TRIP (March 8th): Santee Coastal Reserve

On Saturday, March 8 we'll visit the Santee Coastal Reserve Wildlife Management Area. Owned and managed by the state since its purchase and donation by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 1974, this 24,000-acre property contains a diverse array of habitats, including longleaf pine and mixed hardwood forests; Carolina Bays; tidal, brackish and freshwater wetlands; and agricultural fields. Included within the property is the Washo Reserve, a 1040-acre cypress lake and surrounding upland buffer that is owned by TNC and co-managed by TNC and the SC Department of Natural Resources.



Photo courtesy of Michael Griffin

Late winter/early spring is a good time to bird at Santee Coastal Reserve, because during most of the warmer months of the year the biting insects can be fierce here. However, we can expect to see some lingering ducks (last year at this time many birders observed a Eurasian Wigeon that visited one of the impoundments for a few weeks), shorebirds, wading birds (a pair of Reddish Egrets also graced the same impoundment as the Wigeon) and various raptors. We may also see some of our winter songbirds, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and perhaps an early spring migrant or two.



Photo courtesy of Michael Griffin

We'll meet at 7AM in the Lowe's parking lot directly behind the IHOP on Hwy 17 North in Mt. Pleasant ([map](#)). From there we'll carpool for the drive to Santee Coastal Reserve. Bring food and water, bug spray, your birding gear (especially a scope if you have one), and dress for the weather. If you plan to attend, please register with Andy Harrison prior to March 8 at parula23@aol.com or 795-6934.

Calendar of Events

Saturday, Mar 8th, 7am

FIELD TRIP: Santee Coastal Reserve

For more information, see article to the left.

Wednesday, Mar 12th, 6pm

LECTURE: Restoration of Longleaf Pine Forest around the Francis Marion National Forest

For more information, see article on page 3.

Saturday, Mar 22nd, 7am

FIELD TRIP: Bonneau Ferry WMA

For more information, see article on page 3.

Wednesday, Apr 9th, 6pm

LECTURE: Natural History of the reptiles and amphibians at McAlhany Natural Preserve

For more information, see article on page 3.

Saturday, Apr 12th, 9am

FIELD TRIP: McAlhany Nature Preserve

For more information, see article on page 4.

President's Notes

Two steps forward, and one step back, still adds up at least to some progress. We've done great work at our McAlhany Nature Preserve over the last couple of years, both in developing the cabin into a field station for education and research and in furthering our goals of habitat restoration and preservation. Improvements there are continuing thanks to several crews of volunteers. The 'one step back' came recently when the ice storm that brought the Charleston area to a standstill coated much of the Preserve in ice. [Many trees have fallen, crushing our main gate beyond repair](#), rendering the trails impassable, and compromising the firebreaks needed to conduct prescribed burns, but fortunately sparing the field station and its outbuildings. Sadly, many of our restored longleaf pines are currently bent severely or even had their tops snapped off under the weight. Only time will tell how much damage was done to them.

Several crews of volunteers have already responded, clearing the main road and beginning to clear the firebreaks of trees that have fallen across them; the power is back on as of Feb. 28, but we still face broken water pipes as I write this on March 2nd. On Monday, Feb. 17, I hiked the whole system of trails and firebreaks and recorded 35-40 blockages substantial enough that they'll need work by a team of volunteers, and many or most of them will demand the use of a chainsaw. We organized a volunteer day to begin clearing the trails and firebreaks, and had a great response. Fifteen volunteers fanned out across the southern units of the preserve and managed to clear nearly all of the trails. However, we still need to clear the firebreaks in the northern units and will organize another event for late March. We especially need chainsaws and people experienced at operating them. Bring those, along with work gloves, hand saws, limb loppers etc and please come join us. We'll provide a cook out lunch similar to previous events. If you can help, please email me at paulnolancnhs@gmail.com so I can



plan on how best to allocate resources (and so I can buy enough food :-)

Our other programming, meanwhile, is going like gangbusters. After a brief hiatus, the Seniors & Songbirds program is starting again, bringing interactive environmental presentations to senior centers in the area. Through a new collaboration with Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU) and [Keep Charleston Beautiful](#), we're in the process of developing a bluebird trail to provide nesting sites for those declining birds. Hopefully, the West Ashley Greenway will soon be home to multiple new bluebird families; get in touch with the staff at [WBU in West Ashley](#) if you want to volunteer to help. Of course, we have lots to look forward to in our regular programming as well, with a full series of lectures and field trips yet to come in the last of the winter and the spring. We'll essentially finish off our program year with a reprise of the highly successful Bio-Blitz conducted last year, in which we attempted to inventory all species living on the McAlhany Nature Preserve. Read the article in this issue to learn how to get involved. Given the extensive damage to the trees there, I suspect we'll record the beginning of boom times for the resident woodpeckers; maybe that will be the silver lining from this event, representing one of the 'two steps forward'.

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

Calendar of Events

Sunday, May 4th, 7am

EVENT: Charleston Spring Bird Count

For more information, see article on page 4.

Wednesday, May 14th, 6pm

LECTURE: Deveaux Bank: Challenges Local and Global by Dana Beach

Dana Beach speaks about the history and ecology of Deveaux Bank, and discusses the threats it has faced and the prospects for the future. Beach will have 120 of the most stunning photographs imaginable of the island and the birds that use it. Read more in his book to be published this spring.

Sunday, May 4th, 7am


EVENT: BioBlitz II

For more information, see article on page 4.

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.

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.

LECTURE (Mar 12th): Restoration of Longleaf Pine Forest around the Francis Marion National Forest

Longleaf Pine forest once dominated the coastal plain from Southeastern Virginia to Eastern Texas. Today it is estimated that only 2 to 3 percent of this exceptional forest remains. This is a unique ecosystem, one of the most diverse, and possibly the most endangered, in North America. It is right in our backyards and yet most of us are unaware of it, or the threat to its survival. There is a growing, concerted effort to restore portions of Longleaf Pine forest. One area of focus is centered around the Francis Marion National Forest. Join us in welcoming Steve Moore, on **Wednesday, March 12th from 6-8pm**, and hear why we should be concerned about the demise of Longleaf Pine and what is being done to restore this marvelous forest.



Photo courtesy of Charleston Audubon

Steve is a native of Georgetown, South Carolina and currently lives on Johns Island. He graduated from the University of South Carolina and worked for South Carolina's Coastal Zone Management Program for over twenty six years. For over fourteen of those years he oversaw the salt water permitting program, and spent eight as the Director of Planning. Since 2008 Steve has worked for the South Carolina Wildlife Federation. His focus has been on mobilizing support for federal climate and energy legislation, garnering support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, promoting expansion of Longleaf Pine plantings, and working to ensure that bioenergy production in South Carolina is sustainable. 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 (Mar 22nd): Bonneau Ferry WMA

Bonneau Ferry Wildlife Management Area offers its visitors 10,700 acres of pine savannahs, bottomland hardwoods, wildlife openings, wetlands and reservoirs. The property was purchased from MeadWestvaco in 2004, and since then the SC Department of Natural Resources has managed it for both game and non-game species, including Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and Bald Eagles. Visitors can also see a number of interesting cultural attributes, including the ruins of the Comingtee Plantation House (circa 1738) and the Rice Mill. The Childsbury Heritage Preserve is located nearby.

On our March 22 outing we can expect to see a few lingering winter songbirds, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, wading birds and various raptors. By this time some of our early spring migrants (Yellow-throated Warbler and Northern Parula, for example) should have arrived and begun singing. Bonneau Ferry is not visited by birders as often as most other Lowcountry WMAs, and so this is a good chance for us to explore the area and perhaps add to birding knowledge of the property.

For this trip, we'll meet at 7AM in the Lowe's parking lot directly behind the IHOP on Hwy 17 North in Mt Pleasant ([map](#)), and we'll carpool from there to Bonneau Ferry. Bring food and water, bug spray, your birding gear, and dress for the weather. If you plan to attend, please register with Andy Harrison prior to March 22 at parula23@aol.com or 795-6934.

LECTURE (Apr 9th): Natural History of the reptiles and amphibians at McAlhany Natural Preserve

Join us in welcoming Brian Reid, on **Wednesday, April 9th from 6-8pm**, to hear the results from the herpetofauna study at McAlhany Nature Preserve along with the discussion of our first Bio Blitz last May, and the future Bio Blitz this May.

Brian earned a B.S. in biology from Francis Marion University in 1996 and M.A. in biology from The Citadel in 2012. He has conducted research related to the biodiversity of Neotropical rainforests in Ecuador, ecology of the eastern diamondback rattlesnake, and population distribution of the banded water snake and diamondback terrapin. He is an active participant in the South Carolina component of the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program and principal investigator for a herpetofauna study at the McAlhany Nature Preserve near St. George, SC. Brian is a science teacher at Colleton County High School where he has taught for 17 years. 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.



Charleston Audubon Society



Charleston Audubon Society

FIELD TRIP (Apr 12th): McAlhany Nature Preserve

On Saturday, April 12 Brian Reid will lead our group on a reptile and amphibian walk at McAlhany Nature Preserve (MNP). A herpetologist and science teacher, Brian has been conducting herpetofauna surveys at MNP for the past two years. He also organized the very successful BioBlitz that was held there in May 2013 (and is planning another BioBlitz for late May 2014). On the walk Brian will demonstrate some of his survey techniques, including the use of drift fences and cover boards. Some of the common herps we are likely to encounter include: Marbled Salamander, Southern Two-lined Salamander, Southern Toad, Green Treefrog, American Alligator, Yellow-bellied Slider, Eastern Fence Lizard, Five-lined Skink, Ground Skink, Black Racer, and Yellow Rat Snake. However, these are only a few of the nearly 60 species that have been documented on the property.



Photo courtesy of Charleston Audubon

We'll meet Brian in front of the cabin at MNP ([map](#)) around 9 AM Saturday morning. Bring water, snacks, lunch, binoculars and weather-appropriate clothing. Those who wish to carpool can meet Andy Harrison at 7:30 AM in the Westwood Plaza parking lot behind the Burger King ([map](#)). In any case, if you plan to join the walk please register with Andy Harrison prior to April 12 at parula23@aol.com or 843-795-6934.

FIELD TRIP (Apr 19th): Edisto Nature Trail



SCGreatOutdoors.com

On Saturday, April 19 we'll bird the Edisto Nature Trail in Jacksonboro, SC. This is a 1.5 mile, easy loop on property that is owned and managed by MeadWestvaco. The trail winds through areas of mature pine, mixed hardwoods and cypress/tupelo forest. A number of interesting historic landmarks are identified along the trail, including the King's Highway, an old railroad tram and the site of a phosphate mining operation. There is also a short spur trail, the Pon Pon Spur, which takes visitors to an overlook on the Edisto River.

Spring migration should be in full swing by the time of our trip. The Edisto Nature Trail is one of the best places in the Lowcountry to see and hear Kentucky and Swainson's Warblers, and if we're lucky we may observe one or both of these two species. We should also see (and hear) a variety of other songbirds, including

Hooded, Northern Parula, and Yellow-throated Warblers. There is a chance we may see White Ibis, Wood Storks or even a Swallow-tailed or Mississippi Kite circling overhead.

We'll meet at 7 AM in the Food Lion parking lot in Ravenel, SC ([map](#)). Bring food and water, your birding gear, and dress for the weather. Because it's Easter weekend, this will probably be a half day trip, but participants are welcome to stay longer if they wish. If you plan to attend, please register with Andy Harrison prior to April 19 at parula23@aol.com or 795-6934.

EVENT (May 4th): Charleston Spring Bird Count

Our annual Spring Bird Count and Birdathon will take place on the same circle as our Christmas Bird Count, using the same territories. Contact Andy Harrison, SBC compiler, at parula23@aol.com for more details.

We'll meet at 7 AM at the Mama Brown's BBQ and Kangaroo gas station in Mt. Pleasant ([map](#)), unless your territory leader has made other arrangements with Andy. See you soon, and good birding!



Photo courtesy of Sarah Latshaw

EVENT (May 24th-25th): Bio-Blitz at McAlhany

On May 24th-25th, 2014 we will host a second Bio-Blitz at McAlhany Nature Preserve (MNP). The Nature Preserve has a vast diversity of organisms and habitats on the 367 acre property, including upland wetlands, non-alluvial swamp, bottomland hardwood, xeric pine forest, and mesic hardwood/pine forest. Other features include the first-order stream Cattle Creek, a long leaf pine/ wire grass savanna, a 9-acre oxbow lake, numerous vernal pools and seasonally-flooded cypress swamp, and is bordered by 1.5 miles of Edisto River frontage. The purpose of the Bio-Blitz is to involve specialists in all areas of biology to document the biodiversity and to provide a comprehensive flora and fauna species list.

The Bio-Blitz will begin at 9 am Saturday (May 24th) and continue through Sunday (May 25th) ending around 5pm. Participants are welcome to campout at one of our numerous tent sites. 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. We will have a cook out Saturday for lunch serving hamburgers, veggie burgers, hotdogs, and sides. We will have at least some coolers and a full-sized refrigerator available to store food but, of course, feel free to bring your own cooler if you'd like.

We would like everyone to have a lot of fun, enjoy the wilderness, and help out with our project. Hopefully, this will be a great time for everyone getting out into the habitat and provide us with valuable information about the flora and fauna of MNP.

Please RSVP to Brian Reid (bkrcoach@yahoo.com) with the number of people who will be attending, and with the type of biodiversity you feel comfortable inventorying (e.g. birds, terrestrial plants, aquatic plants, aquatic insects, butterflies, moths, reptiles, amphibians, etc)

For some more details, please see our facebook page for this event at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/238457609611448/> (you don't need to be on facebook to see the description).



Photo courtesy of Charleston Audubon



Photo courtesy of Charleston Audubon



Photo courtesy of Charleston Audubon

SENIORS & SONGBIRDS



Photo courtesy of Ann Tiller

Ms. Amy is a former member of one of our birding groups. This picture was taken when she was 93 and she lived many years after that. While her husband was serving in WWII, Ms Amy never missed a day of bird watching at her window. For years, she recorded the comings and goings of her backyard visitors. She said her daily visits to the window provided a sense of continuity and beauty through a difficult time.

Ms. Henderson was one of the most passionate participants in the program. She always brought a mason jar of bird eggs to our meetings. She lived on a plantation as a child and she and her sister were avidly interested in birds and their eggs. She remembers watching her sister stand on the back of a horse while reaching up with a silver teaspoon. Her father allowed her to get one egg from each nest and that was for identification. Ms. Amy's jar was filled with those egg shells.

At her window she took meticulous records and when the war was over, she turned her records in to the University of SC Archives (Her daughter is not sure how to find them). PS. The Ovenbird bird came on the same day of each year.

- Ann Tiller

CNHS Board

President:

Dr. Paul Nolan
paulnolancnhs@gmail.com

Vice President:

Dr. Jessica Hardesty Norris

Secretary & Citizen Science Coordinator:

Jenny McCarthy Tyrrell
jmccarthey23@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Steve Moore

Outings Chair:

Andy Harrison
parula23@aol.com

Programs & Conservation Chair:

Mary Kennerty

Webmaster:

Steve Bleezarde
steve@bleezarde.com

Social Media Coordinator:

Douglas Stewart

Lesser Squalk Editor:

Sarah Latshaw
paintedbuntinglady@gmail.com

Follow us



@CHSAudubon

Citizen Science, Get Involved!

Citizen Science doesn't always have to be about observing the world around you. In this edition I'll show you a citizen science project that looks into the past, specifically weather and climate conditions that were recorded in ship logs from United States



vessels from the mid nineteenth century. The project "Old Weather" uses citizen scientists to review ship logs for valuable weather and climate information.

This project helps climate scientists to gather more information about historical weather variability to help us understand more about our present weather variability. The transcribed data aids in building more reliable climate models so we have a better idea about what constitutes as weather extremes. As the citizen scientist you will read and record ship logs into a digitized format. Every turn of the page is another adventure at sea!

Currently there are 21 vessels you can follow and transcribe logs for. If you're looking for a mix of science and history, this could be your ticket! Check out their interesting background videos on the project, then log in and get started!

- Jennifer McCarthy Tyrrell

Bluebirds over South Carolina

Jim Burke is the co-founder and president of the South Carolina Bluebird Society. He is also vice president of the North American Bluebird Society. During his fun and educational presentation you will learn all about the four basic things needed to attract bluebirds to your property and discover the fun in monitoring a bluebird box or a nestbox trail. Jim's presentation features lots of beautiful photographs! We will provide coffee, doughnuts, and goody bags. As a bonus, everything you need to attract bluebirds to your yard will be discounted at our store for this event only.



Photo courtesy of Wildbirds Unlimited

This presentation is very popular and reservations are requested but not required. Call 843-216-8800 to reserve your spot.

For more information visit:

mtpleasant.wbu.com or <https://www.facebook.com/events/480127565424961/>.

Smart Phone Apps for Nature Lovers



If you're a seafood lover, you may also care to be up-to-date on the "best choice" sustainable catches in your region--seafood that is most abundant and well-managed to preserve biodiversity throughout our oceans. In fact, if you already know about the Seafood Watch program, which is supported by our own South Carolina Aquarium, you may already be carrying one of their handy miniature brochures inside your pocket book.

Whether you're an existing "user" of this guide or if you're interested in finding and eating seafood more responsibly, you may want to check out the [Seafood Watch](#) app (found in the AppStore or Google play), developed by Monterey Bay Aquarium in California.

• Emma Paz

Naturalist



Olympics

This month's naturalist Olympics photo is South Carolina's only current wild cat. Cougars were wiped out decades ago. Notice the spots in the fur.

Do you know the answer? Send your best guess to naturalistolympics@gmail.com. A fourth event--and the ID of the mammal--will be announced in the next *Lesser Squawk*. Thanks to everyone who competed in our Naturalist Olympics, as described in the Winter issue of *The Lesser Squawk*. The answer to the third clue in the last edition of Naturalist Olympics, was [copperhead](#) (*Agkistrodon contortrix*) and [canebreak rattlesnake](#) (*Crotalus horridus*).



Photo Courtesy of Pamela Corwin



Photo Courtesy of Pamela Corwin

Other Interesting Events in the Lowcountry:

- SC Native Plant Society Spring Native Plant Sale
- Nightwalks at Beidler Forest
- Bird of Prey Raptor Center
- Sewee Visitor & Environmental Education Center
- Charleston County Parks & Recreation Commission



New Members, Renewals, Gift Memberships	
 <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>	
CHECK ONE: <input type="checkbox"/> NEW MEMBER <input type="checkbox"/> GIFT MEMBERSHIP <input type="checkbox"/> RENEWAL	
THIS IS A GIFT FROM:	THIS MEMBERSHIP IS FOR:
NAME _____	NAME _____
ADDRESS _____	ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____	CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
MAIL THIS COUPON AND YOUR CHECK TO:	# _____
National Audubon Society PO Box 422250 Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250	[RENEWALS MUST INCLUDE THE 20-DIGIT MEMBER NUMBER FROM YOUR AUDUBON ADDRESS LABEL]
Checks payable to National Audubon Society . Include our chapter code on your check: C4ZU510Z	