



# SOUTH FORK NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM (SOFO)

Dear SOFO Families *and* Friends,  
Welcome to SOFO's July 17 Bi-Weekly Newsletter!

## NATURE NEWS

### HORSESHOE CRAB HATCHLING ALERT!

In late spring and early summer, horseshoe crabs arrive on the beach in masses to mate and lay their eggs. Peak spawning season is May and June in New York which makes now the best time to go out and see juvenile horseshoe crabs. In their hatchling stage, they are planktonic, which may make spotting them a bit tricky but not impossible. A full moon will bring a higher than normal tide which triggers the eggs to hatch. These newly hatched organisms will then be quickly swept out with the tide. If your timing is right and your eye is keen, you might just catch a glimpse. Horseshoe crabs will lay their eggs in the sand on the shore at high tide. Approximately four weeks later those that survived will hatch during a high tide and be swept back out to the tidal flats where they will stay for a few years, moving further offshore as they age. Horseshoe crab eggs are an important food source for migratory birds like the Red Knot so many will not make it to the hatchling stage. Those that survive the elements will go on to play a key ecological role, and remain pertinent in the biomedical and commercial fishery industries. This prehistoric marvel has survived five mass extinctions making continued research and protection of this species pertinent to our local ecosystem. Go out and witness these aquatic dinosaurs yourself today!



### NOT A SPIDER CRAB, BUT A CRAB-LIKE SPIDER

While you enjoy our beautiful summer weather at the beach, take a closer look in the bluffs. This spider, found locally, gets its name, ground crab spider, from its resemblance to crustaceans. Spiders in the genus *Xysticus* like this one do not build webs although they have the ability to spin silk. They are ambush predators and prefer to hunt near the ground; hence their name. Although their body shape may resemble that of the Badge Huntsman Spider, a distinguishing feature is the notably long four legs like a crab. To compliment these crab like arms, they are paired with incredibly strong claws which they use to grasp their prey. Although commonly seen in beach shrubs, this spider can be found in most low vegetation environments locally.



### MUSHROOM MARVELS

Now is a great time to head to the woods for a hike and stumble upon some summer mushrooms like *Geronema strombodes*, pictured here. This saprobic (feeding on dead-

wood) mushroom will fruit from late spring through early fall. Typically the caps have shallow to deep central depressions giving them umbrella-like funnel shaped caps. They have no distinctive odor or taste, a white spore print, and thin whitish to yellowish flesh. They can be quite large, around 11cm, although the ones pictured here are smaller and less mature. This species has a primarily tropical distribution but also occurs in Europe and eastern North America. This hot muggy weather might not be ideal for your BBQ but it is the perfect time to go out and look for mushrooms like this one, which you might find in your own backyard!

[JOIN / RENEW](#)

[DONATE](#)

SOFO is happy to announce that, in line with the issuance of the latest State Executive Order, we are now able to offer our outdoor nature walks for up to twenty-five (25) people, which includes our staff. Please note that we will at all times follow stringent six-foot distancing separation protocols required by the Department of Health for the safety of our participants and environmental educators. We will provide masks and gloves for all attendees. Please dress appropriately for tick protection. [Please check our website calendar for more details about upcoming nature walks.](#)

## JOIN OUR BACKYARD WATCH CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT

We are calling on all of our young environmentalists to observe and document nature awakening in your own backyards. We ask you to send us pictures of your findings with the date you discovered them, and your name and any notes you would like to include. We are happy to feature observations sent in by our fellow environmentalists with details about the nature sightings they shared with us. Please send your photographs and notes to [info@sofo.org](mailto:info@sofo.org). Stay safe and be on the look out for Nature news in your backyard!



SUBMITTED BY SANDRA HUNTER



SUBMITTED BY SANDRA HUNTER



SUBMITTED BY JOHN VAN SICKLE

### EYED CLICK BEETLE

(*Alaus oculatus*)

This striking insect is an Eyed Click Beetle. The Click Beetle family has some very interesting parts to their thorax and abdomen that helps them flip over when stranded on their backs. The resulting sounds and sudden flips are also thought to startle predators. The Eyed Click Beetle is the largest member of the family that is found in eastern North America, with an average size of 1 ¼ inches but as small as ¾ inch up to 1 ¾ inches. Their larva live in decaying wood and prey on other beetle larva feeding on the wood. The adults feed on nectar and plant juices.

### ROBIN'S CARPENTERWORM

(*Prionoxystus robiniae*)

This moth is a Robin's Carpen-

terworm, listed as widespread but uncommon from early mid-spring to late mid-fall. The caterpillars bore into the wood of living deciduous trees such as locust (named for Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)), oak, chestnut, ash, poplar, maple, and willow. The caterpillars take several years to complete metamorphosis, according to some sources, for an average of 3 to 4 years from egg through pupation.

### BUSH KATYDID

(*Scudderia*)

This is likely a young member of the Bush Katydid. Bush Katydids, like crickets and grasshoppers, grow through a process called incomplete metamorphosis, in which the young are born looking very similar to adults but usually

need to molt several times to grow wings in the final adult form. (Complete metamorphosis is the process of how butterflies and beetles attain their adult forms.) The young are called nymphs (instead of caterpillar or larva) and this one is so young that it doesn't have wing buds yet. Wing structure, tips of the abdomens in males and females, and songs are how adult Bush Katydids are identified with the species level. In a few weeks you should be able to identify the most likely species by song, although the best time to listen is August until too cold in October or November. A favorite resource for identifying insect songs is <http://songsofinsects.com/> run by Lang Elliot, who also has a book with audio CD under the same name.

## JULY CALENDAR

### ZOOM PRESENTATIONS

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 4:00pm** - Zoom Program: SOFO's Shark Research & Education Program Team

Update Panel Discussion with SOFO's Shark Research and Education Team

### OUTDOOR NATURE WALKS

**SATURDAY, JULY 18, 10:00am** - Young Birders Club

Club Leader: Rachel Speckenbach, SOFO Environmental Educator

**SATURDAY, JULY 18, 1:00pm** - Diamondback Terrapin Search by Land

Walk Leader: Paul King III, South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO)

Environmental Educator

**SUNDAY, JULY 19, 10:00am - 12:00pm** - Diamondback Terrapin Search by Sea

(BYO Kayak)

Program Leader: Melanie Meade: South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO)

Education and Outreach Coordinator

**SATURDAY, JULY 25, 10:00AM** - Young Environmentalists Society (YES!)

Club Leader: Mare Dianora, an educator and the mother of two young sons, is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice involves building community and exploring connections to home and place.

**SUNDAY, JULY 26, 10:30am** - Discovering Animal, Vegetable, & Mineral Treasures

at the Seashore

Program Leader: Melanie Meade, SOFO Education & Outreach Coordinator

## CHRIS PAPARO: FISH GUY

There is a nominal fee for these programs. [Please visit \[sofo.org/calendar/\]\(http://sofo.org/calendar/\) for more details.](#)

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 7:00pm** - Exploring Long Island's Underwater World

Program Presenter: Chris Paparo, the Fish Guy of Fish Guy Photos, is the Southampton Marine Science Center Manager at Stony Brook University's School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at its Southampton campus

## OUR YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALISTS SOCIETY (YES!) NEWS

Our YES! Group meets bi-weekly via Zoom. Click here to see the latest projects and activities!

[sofo.org/yes/](http://sofo.org/yes/)

## SOFO'S SHARK RESEARCH *and* EDUCATION PROGRAM NEWS

The sharks are back! Click here to follow the latest developments and upcoming shark tagging expeditions.

[sofo.org/sofos-shark-research-education-program/](http://sofo.org/sofos-shark-research-education-program/)

We remain very appreciative of your support, and we look forward to welcoming you back to the Museum as soon as we can. Please watch for announcements on our social media pages [facebook.com/sofomuseum](https://www.facebook.com/sofomuseum) and [instagram.com/sofomuseum](https://www.instagram.com/sofomuseum), and feel free to email us at [info@sofo.org](mailto:info@sofo.org) so we can keep connecting as we all continue to explore our natural world and strive to raise environmental awareness by providing the inspiration and tools for all of us to become caring and responsible stewards of our planet.