

N.C. Coastal Reserve & National Estuarine Research Reserve

Tidal Flat

April 2014



The Reserve is looking forward to the warmer weather and an exciting season of research, education, and stewardship programs at our ten sites. This newsletter provides more information about public field trips, citizen science opportunities, and upcoming events at the Reserve. Also, please join Reserve staff for upcoming outreach events at the [Wilmington Earth Day Festival](#) and [Outer Banks Bioblitz](#) on April 26 and the [Beaufort Farmer's Market](#) on May 31. We look forward to a busy spring, and hope to see you at our sites!

Sincerely,
Rebecca Ellin
Reserve Program Manager

Coastal Connections at SciREN Teacher Workshop



At 5:30 p.m. on the night of the SciREN Teacher Workshop, the N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve outreach table was ready to go. Curriculum sheets and brochures were displayed, shells were arranged on a game board, and a display board showcased some of the Reserve's coolest creatures. By the time the networking event between teachers and scientists ended later that evening, hardly any materials were left! And what's better, those exchanges are leading to more exposure to marine science for students

in coastal North Carolina.

As part of the Scientific Research and Education Network's second annual Teacher Workshop, Education Coordinator Lori Davis and Communications Specialist Kate Brogan were invited to join researchers and staff from area universities, non-profit groups, and N.C. environmental agencies for a night of informal conversation with teachers interested in integrating marine science into their curricula. The event, which was held at the N.C. Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores, attracted more than 100 teachers who came to learn about the cutting edge coastal research taking place in the region and how to incorporate research-based curricula into their classrooms.

[Read more...](#)

Facebook Favorite: Dr. Carolyn Currin of NOAA measures marsh elevations as part of a long-term effort to understand how marshes respond to changing conditions at the Rachel Carson Reserve

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Website Redesign

Check out the new design of www.nccoastalreserve.net and [let us know](#) what you think!

Terrapin Tally!



Diamondback terrapins are a species of special concern in North Carolina, and very little population data is available. Participants are needed to paddle pre-planned routes and log terrapin sightings on their smartphones along the way.

[Learn more](#) about the Terrapin Tally, happening **May 3 at the Masonboro Island Reserve** by contacting AmeriCorps Member/Volunteer Coordinator [Maggie Geck](#) at 910-962-2324.

Upcoming Outreach Events



Feather Friends Program Protects Nesting Shorebirds



After a cold and snowy winter, volunteers came out in full force for the first stewardship event of the spring, held at the Masonboro Island Reserve on March 8. The Feather Friends event was the beginning of a seasonal effort to protect the nesting sites of shorebirds that use the beach habitat of Masonboro Island in the spring and summer months.

Among the species that the Feather Friends program will help to protect are American oystercatchers (*Haematopus palliatus*), least terns (*Sternula antillarum*), Wilson's plovers (*Charadrius wilsonia*), and willets (*Tringa semipalmata*). Three of these species (American oystercatcher, least tern, and Wilson's plover) are considered Species of

Special Concern in North Carolina, meaning they require monitoring to ensure sustainable populations. With over eight miles of sandy beaches available for nesting, Masonboro Island Reserve provides critical habitat for birds, including approximately 10% of the state's American oystercatcher breeding population, whose reproductive success relies heavily on avoiding nest disturbance.

[Read more...](#)

Summer Public Field Trips at Rachel Carson Reserve

Despite the snowy winter in North Carolina, warmer weather is on its way, bringing lots of opportunities to get outdoors and explore the Reserve! For readers who are residents or visitors to the Beaufort area, the Reserve's summer public field trip program offers an educational experience that is fun for all ages.



The public field trips to the Rachel Carson Reserve near Beaufort are held most Tuesday and Thursday mornings in June, July, and August. After meeting at the Reserve's headquarters on Pivers Island, participants will join U.S. Coast Guard-certified Captain Paula Gillikin and a Reserve volunteer

Interact with Reserve staff at these upcoming outreach events, and learn more about education programs and volunteer opportunities!

April 26: [Wilmington Earth Day Festival](#)

April 26: [Outer Banks Bioblitz](#)

May 31: [Beaufort Farmer's Market](#)



Summer Camp at the Rachel Carson Reserve



With summer just around the corner it is time to register for Summer Science Camp, hosted by the N.C. Maritime Museum and the N.C. Coastal Reserve! Campers will explore the natural and maritime history of coastal North Carolina through hands-on and field-based experiences. Programs are available for campers from preschool through 10th grade. Registration is open and sessions are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, please email maritime@ncdcr.gov.

Love Sea Turtles?



Volunteer to help monitor sea turtle nesting activity at the Masonboro Island Reserve! [A training session](#) for volunteers is scheduled for April 24 from 6:00-7:30 pm at the UNCW Center for Marine Science.

More Information

[Contact Us](#)

naturalist for exciting tours of the Rachel Carson Reserve. Three field trip options are scheduled this summer to accommodate a range of interests and age groups. Nature hikes, which occur during low tides, provide opportunities to see estuarine plants and animals up close while walking through mud flat, salt marsh, and sand dune habitats. Boardwalk trips take participants to the Rachel Carson Reserve's boardwalk located on Carrot Island, which is a prime location for wildlife viewing and birding. Circumnavigation cruises circle the Reserve by boat, and feature a trip to Middle Marsh, a pristine salt marsh ecosystem that serves as a living laboratory for several research institutions in the area.

[Read more...](#)

Facebook Favorite: Education Specialist Marie Davis snapped this photo while mapping the kayak routes for the Terrapin Tally on a cold January morning!



Water, Water Everywhere: A Guide to Currituck Banks Reserve

As a designated site of the North Carolina Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve, you may have guessed that the Currituck Banks Reserve has water, and lots of it. But what you may not have guessed is that this Reserve has three different types of water, each with specific characteristics that attract a diversity of unique plants and animals. Take a look at how these water bodies interact with the ecology of the Currituck Banks Reserve.



The ocean side of the Reserve consists of sandy dunes, wide beaches, and of course, the Atlantic Ocean. However, Currituck Banks is located near one of the most diverse areas of the Atlantic, where the warm Gulf Stream and cold Labrador Current mix to create habitat suitable for a wide range of species. Many species living at either northern or southern edge of their ranges overlap in this mixing area of the Atlantic, creating an abundance of fish and making this region of North Carolina a favorite spot for recreational anglers. On the Atlantic side of the Reserve, animals such as

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fox, deer, and rabbits roam the dunes, along with a herd of feral horses. Among all this wildlife, you will also see evidence of human activity, namely in the form of tire prints on the sand. Beach driving is legal in this area of the state, and all houses in the beach town of Carova are only accessible by 4WD on the beach road bordering the Reserve.

[Read more...](#)

Facebook Favorite: A horseshoe crab, missing its telson, in the surf at the Currituck Banks Reserve.



Oyster Workshop: Learning from the Past, Charting Future Restoration



Oysters have been an important resource in North Carolina for centuries. In addition to being a seafood staple, oysters help maintain water quality, provide habitat for commercially and recreationally valuable fish species, and help prevent shoreline erosion. Recognizing the many benefits of a healthy oyster population in our coastal waters, restoration efforts by a number of state agencies, non-profits, and academic institutions have been undertaken in the past twenty

years. These efforts follow a decline in oyster abundance due to habitat degradation and overharvesting. On March 12-13 restoration partners gathered in Beaufort to discuss lessons learned from past restoration projects and develop strategies to guide future restoration efforts.

[Read more...](#)

Facebook Favorite: Participants at the Clean Marina workshop hosted by the N.C. Coastal Training Program learn about managing marina operations to protect safety and environmental health.



Protecting Coastal Lands for Conservation: The Value of Partnerships and Proximity

The Emily and Richardson Preyer Buckridge Reserve is unique among the ten sites of the North Carolina Coastal Reserve. It is the largest Reserve property, covering more than 27,000 acres in Tyrell and Hyde Counties, and is the only Reserve located inland from the coast. But although unique in the Reserve system, the Buckridge Reserve is not alone in protecting and conserving wildlife in the East Dismal Swamp region of North Carolina.



The East Dismal Swamp is a wetlands complex of more than 320,000 acres in Dare, Tyrell, and Washington Counties, and includes habitats such as swamp forest, peatland Atlantic white cedar forest, and pond pine woodlands. Three other protected areas in the region, the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, and Pettigrew State Park, work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Buckridge Reserve to preserve these distinctive wetland ecosystems. Sharing land and wildlife management strategies ensures that these adjacent and proximate areas provide consistent and wide-ranging habitat for many unique flora and fauna.

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