

# Soundside Learning

## This Week On Core Sound

### A Day For Families At Core Sound

Earth Day offers fun, learning for all!

Saturday, April 9th at the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center will be a day you and your family won't want to miss. Over twenty of the region's most respected environmental education organizations are on tap to provide the public with unique opportunities to learn about all aspects of the natural world around us. From exotic, live waterfowl on display to hives of honeybees and fresh honey, this Earth Day is sure to have something for parents and children alike to enjoy.

These wonderful education exhibits will be punctuated by an opportunity to take a stroll along the Museum's Willow Pond Trail. The trail offers a pristine example of not only a maritime forest, but also a look back in time at what Harkers Island would have presented to those coming ashore from Shackleford Banks in the early 1900s when thickets of Yaupon Holly, beach briar, and live oaks made travel anywhere other than the shoreline almost impossible, if not miserable.

Springtime on the Willow Pond Trail - and all of Core Sound - is a truly breathtaking transformation as deciduous trees bloom anew, dragonfly nymphs ripple the surface of the pond, and our returning flock of white ibis carefully stalk their afternoon snack. This is truly a season of rebirth, an example of the Earth's regenerative power.

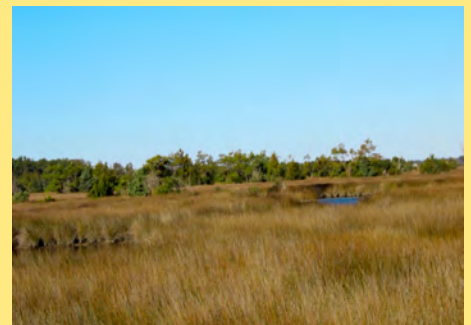
We hope you and your family will take this awesome opportunity and join us on the morning of Saturday, April 9th as we celebrate the coming of spring on Core Sound!



#### Coming to Core Sound Earth Day, 2022!

*The North Carolina Coastal Federation*

The North Carolina Coastal Federation is a nonprofit conservation group committed to the protection of North Carolina's beautiful coast. Through efforts like environmental cleanup, oyster reef nourishment, and the restoration of agricultural lands to their natural state, the North Carolina Coastal Federation helps keep the waters of eastern North Carolina at a high quality. On Saturday, April 9th this awesome group will be at the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center ready to help YOU learn about the coastal environment around us.



# Why Do Mulletts Jump?

Science may offer answer to age old question...

For Core Sounders, the coming of the first “summer mulletts” big enough to yield a tasty filet marks one of the happiest times of year. Yesterday afternoon, this author took a short walk down to the neighborhood creek, a walk I make often as the season turns from winter to spring and the water takes on a somewhat murkier tone brought on by newly revitalized phytoplankton in the water-column. I make this walk as often as I can in order to check on those coveted summer mulletts - small, early season jumping mulletts. For those who were raised on Core Sound, like myself, I imagine it could be proven that the sight of a mullet leaping into the air and returning to the water with its signature “belly flop” causes a significant release of serotonin in the brain - the only explanation possible for the immediate joy and excitement brought on by the event.



A Mullet Leaps on Core Sound  
*Photo: CSWM&HC Collection*

Over the last few weeks I have scanned the surface of the creek with disappointment as my walks have produced no sightings of the coveted jumpers. Yesterday, however as the sun was setting over a calm surface, I had the pleasure of counting a total of sixteen fish. My delight was immeasurable as I conjured up plans to dust off those summer mullet nets that had been resting in my garage for the last six months. As I sat gazing and counting, though, I began to wonder... Why does a mullet jump?

On returning from my walk, I did a little digging on the matter and came across a set of articles from Dr. Behzad Mahmoudi of the Florida Marine Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida. Dr. Mahmoudi actually specializes in the research of the jumping mullet, and offers some possible explanations.

Dr. Mahmoudi explains - and any seasoned Core Sound mullet fisherman can corroborate the fact - that mulletts tend to jump more frequently in the summer months or when forming large schools in the thousands of fish. The scientist explains that both of those variables - summer months and the formation of large schools - are always marked by a decreased amount of dissolved oxygen in the water. He contends that the most likely reason for mulletts jumping is that they are in the pursuit of oxygen! Essentially - they are just catching some air - literally!



## Be On The Lookout Next Week...

It was those same mulletts jumping - as if to tempt the fishermen after them - that lead a group of Core Sound Fishermen, and eventually their families, to pick up their lives and put down new roots along distant shores on Florida’s gulf coast in the 1880s. Holding fast to their Core Sound traditions, these men and women established one of the most vibrant fishing communities in Florida that remains in place to this day. Learn about their journey next week as we examine and celebrate a small- misplaced piece- of Core Sound!