

Soundside Learning

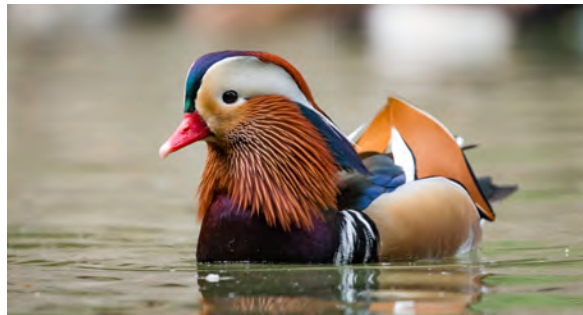
This Week On Core Sound

From Decoys to Live Birds

Core Sound Partners with Sylvan Heights

This past Friday Dr. Ike Southerland and I had the pleasure of traveling to the Sylvan Heights Bird Park to meet with their education staff and discuss the prospect of future partnerships with the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center. Situated on the outskirts of the town of Scotland Neck, the park itself is a beautiful spectacle of log-cabin style architecture and natural appeal. As we exited our vehicle in the parking lot, I was immediately struck by the beautiful melody of the thousands of birds within the park.

The Sylvan Heights Bird Park and Avian Breeding Center is host to the largest collection of rare waterfowl in the world. The team at Sylvan has an unparalleled reputation for their success in captive-breeding various species of endangered waterfowl after which they are then slow-released back into a wild habitat.



A Mandarin Duck rests on the pond of the Eurasian exhibit, Sylvan Heights Bird Park.
Photo: Sylvan Heights Bird Park Collection

The park's live bird exhibits are organized into "continents" with the various species of birds grouped according to their native habitats around the world. The exhibits are specifically tailored to mimic the actual habitats of the birds according to temperature, vegetation, shelter, and the diet. A visitor can observe American Flamingos mingling among Redheads and Canvasbacks in the North American exhibit, walk a few short steps to the Eurasian exhibit and see beautiful Mandarin Ducks strut proudly around groups of Tufted Ducks and the ornately colored Temminck's Tragopan. With the vast variety of birds housed within the park, a visit at almost any time of year is sure to produce a view of multiple species in their seasonal mating plumage, with everything from peacocks to flamingos performing unique mating rituals for all to see.

This coming April, we are proud to announce that the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center will be hosting the Sylvan Heights Bird Park and other partners across our region at our Earth Day events on April 8th and 9th which will be open to both school groups and the public. Later, Core Sound will return to Sylvan Heights to participate in their Earth Day events on April 23rd. In addition, our respective education teams are working on additional partnership programs to provide our audiences with opportunities experience world class decoys as well as live specimens.



Sound Reading
Material For You &
Your Child

*Misty of
Chincoteague*
By: Marguerite Henry

**A Complete
Teacher Reading
Guide Is Available!**
[Click Here to Access!](#)

On the island of Chincoteague, off the coasts of Virginia and Maryland, lives a centuries-old band of wild ponies. Among them is the most mysterious of all, Phantom, a rarely-seen mare that eludes all efforts to capture her—that is, until a young boy and girl lay eyes on her and determine that they can't live without her.

Among the Grass Lumps

Bay Scalloping Reopens in Core Sound

On January 14th, 2022 the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries issued a proclamation stipulating that the harvest of bay scallops in Core Sound would be opened on January 24th for the first time since 2009.

Bay scallops are almost always found among the eel grass beds of North Carolina's sounds and estuaries. In their larval state, scallops attach themselves to individual blades of seagrass via a byssal thread, which allows scallops and other bivalve mollusks to attach themselves to solid surfaces. As the scallop grows, they will eventually detach from the eelgrass and become mobile, one of the only bivalves with this ability.

The bay scallop fishery was extremely popular and profitable in the Back Sound area of Core Sound as well as in areas of Bogue and Pamlico Sounds through much of the 20th century. In 1928, nearly 1.5 million pounds of bay scallop meat was harvested from North Carolina waters. An industrial infrastructure of fishermen, dealers, shuckers and shippers developed around the fishery. Shucking houses dotted the shorelines of Bogue and Core Sounds where mounds of discarded shells are, with a few exceptions, all that remains of these iconic structures.



The remains of Sammie Willis' scallop house on Harkers Island, circa 2016. The building was demolished during Hurricane Florence, 2018.
Photo: CSWM&HC Collection

While men most often harvested the scallops, the shucking houses were dominated by tight-knit groups of women who opened the bivalves for hours on end and were paid by the gallon of scallops opened. These women were often from the same neighborhood, had close familial ties to one another, and even sang in the same church choirs on Sunday mornings. Scallop houses were a place of beautiful, marked contrast where the melodic singing of the women as they worked and the playful laughter of their children along the nearby shoreline was punctuated with the slinging of scallop guts and the smell of true seafood.

The very makeup of a scallop necessitates that they be opened soon after harvest. Unlike other bivalves like clams and oysters, the only edible part of the scallop is the adductor muscle. The "gut" containing the digestive organs of the scallop must be discarded during the shucking process as it is not edible. Due to their ability to "swim" by forcibly opening and closing, the adductor muscle of scallops tends to be much larger than that of oysters.

Like many things within the commercial fishing industry, the scallop industry has had to change and adapt. The children and grandchildren, now mothers and wives themselves, are opening these scallops in their kitchens and garages and telling the stories they've heard all their lives of the hard work and cold winds of the scallop houses along the shores of Harkers Island and other communities.

