



**Environmental Advisory Committee**  
4:00pm, Thursday, September 11, 2025  
City Hall  
Council Chambers  
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

**Public Comment:**

All citizens who wish to speak during the meeting must email their first and last name, address, and topic to Nicole DeNeane at [nicoled@iop.net](mailto:nicoled@iop.net) no later than **3:00 p.m. the business day before the meeting**. Citizens may also provide public comment here: <https://www.iop.net/public-comment-form>

**Agenda**

1. **Call to Order** and acknowledgement that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
2. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes – August 14, 2025**
3. **Citizen's Comments**
4. **Presentation – Mujeres Latinas and Waves of Change**
5. **Old Business**
  - a. Recommendations Matrix
  - b. Contract with Fisher Glass Recycling
5. **New Business**
  - a. Folly Beach's Sustainability Bucket List
6. **Miscellaneous**

Next meeting: Thursday, October 9, 2025, 4:00pm

7. **Adjournment**



## **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**4:00pm, Thursday, August 14, 2025**

**1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC**

**and broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>**

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. Call to order**

Present: Laura Lovins, Mary Pringle, Eric Cicora, Cindy Marrs, Sean Popson, Todd Murphy

Absent: Council Member Miars

Staff Present: Administrator Kerr, Asst. Director Asero

#### **2. Approval of previous meeting's minutes**

**MOTION: Ms. Popson made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2025 meetings, and Ms. Pringle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **3. Citizen's Comments**

Ms. Marianne Chalmers read from an email she sent to City Council: "I'm writing to share my observations about the recent placement of black trash cans at the ocean end of the 25th beach access. Living nearby, I've seen a clear and concerning impact on the surrounding dunes and beach grasses. Since the placement of the black cans at this location I've observed a sharp increase in people walking into and on the dunes- often to dispose of trash, store shoes, change clothes, or even use the area as a bathroom. Discarded items like broken chairs, umbrellas, and tents are now being left directly on the dunes, damaging the fragile grasses that protect our shoreline. I've learned there's discussion of building a corral for broken items at the ocean side. This will only magnify the problem- inviting more foot traffic and giving coyotes which have historically lived in these dunes, a perfect hiding spot. That creates not only environmental harm, but a safety risk for residents, visitors, and pets. I strongly recommend placing such a structure on the street side, away from the dunes, to prevent harm. I've been documenting these changes for several months and have attached a few photos here. I'd be happy to provide the full set to anyone interested. The longer the trash cans remain where they are, the greater the damage- and some of it may be irreversible. This small change will protect the fragile ecosystem, maintain safety and preserve the natural beauty residents and visitors enjoy."

Members of the volunteer group Mujeres Latinas came before the Committee to share the trash and toy bins they are proposing be placed at key beach access paths. Haydee Irizarary said the toy boxes could be on the beach for the beach season, and the trash buckets and bins would remain year round. Director Kerr said there have been intentional efforts made to keep things off

the beach, so these items would need to be behind the dunes. Ms. Lovins would like this issue to be on the September agenda.

Linda Rowe from the SC Aquarium spoke in support of this effort to keep the beach clean.

Susan Smith spoke briefly about the bucket trees in place on Folly Beach.

#### **4. Old Business**

##### **A. Recommendations Matrix**

Administrator Kerr said a space for an Earth Day event has been added to the Recreation Center calendar for 2026. He will get the specific date from Director Ferrell. The Committee will need to plan the event.

Administrator Kerr shared that he spoke to the IOP Chamber of Commerce who has reached out to the island restaurants about the possibility of them only giving out straws when asked. He will report the feedback from the restaurants to the Committee.

Mr. Cicora asked how a public education program related to sea level rise and resilient strategies could be developed. He shared an email from Susan Smith regarding such programming. Mr. Cicora wondered how to bring more public awareness to the City's resiliency projects such as the Waterway Boulevard path improvements.

Mr. Murphy said his interpretation of that recommendation was to help individuals understand what resiliency strategies they can implement in their own lives, such as installing a rain garden in their yard.

Administrator Kerr said that too much information can become "white noise" to the public. He said pushing out information about the City's resiliency efforts is part of the PR Officer's job and will also be part of the work for the Resilience Officer, when that position is filled.

Mr. Cicora will change the recommendation status to say the Committee will explore using the website to promote and educate the public about the Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan.

Ms. Lovins will attend the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative meeting next week.

The Committee discussed ways in which to educate the public about ways in which they can protect the beach. Several ideas, including the Good Neighbor brochure discussed earlier in the year, were considered.

##### **B. Water Quality Testing**

Referencing the water quality testing information in the meeting packet, Ms. Lovins detailed the costs involved in testing the water, noting that the outcome of the first test will indicate whether further DNA testing is necessary.

**MOTION: Mr. Murphy made a motion to approve the expenditure of up to \$6,780 for Fluidian and Lumin Ultra water quality testing on the island. Ms. Popson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**5. New Business -- none**

**EAC Participation at the Farmer's Market**

Ms. Lovins asked if anyone could cover the EAC table at the next Farmer's Market. She will be attending a meeting of the Salt Marsh Initiative. She shared a poster of ideas residents could reference to make their yards more eco-friendly.

Director Kerr said that the City received a grant for more composting bins. He will get them for next month's Farmer's Market.

**6. Miscellaneous Business**

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee is scheduled for Thursday, September 11, 2025 at 4pm.

**7. Adjournment**

Ms. Pringle made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Popson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane  
City Clerk

## Toy Bin & Bucket Tree History

Compiled by Susan Hill Smith/ IOP Cleanup Crew Cofounder

### No Toys Left Behind Bin at Front Beach

- Created in summer 2022 by Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew leaders in partnership with the City.
- Located in a nook between the City restroom building and the outdoor showers, across from Coconut Joe's, at the beach access in the 1100 block of Ocean Boulevard.
- Inspired by a similar bin in Wild Dunes - part of a coastal trend to answer the issue of forgotten toys that turn into litter and trash.
- Maintained by IOP Cleanup Crew with some support from employees who watch over the City facilities in that location.
- Allows countless toys to be re-used.
- Draws attention to the issue of left-behind toys and reminds young visitors and parents to keep track of things they bring to the beach.
- Provides those who clean up the beach a place with purpose to put toys, potentially boosting the # of toys removed from the ecosystem.
- Encourages families to rely on the bin rather than buying more toys that could wind up in the ecosystem or landfill.
- In 2021, before the toy bin was put in place, 1,197 toys were documented on IOP in the SC Aquarium's Litter Journal (3% of all beach litter items that year). In 2024, 955 toys were recorded in the IOP beach litter data (2% of all beach litter items). The toy counts have been a little up & down in the years before and in between, but seem to be trending downward overall, which is a positive sign.



### Fill A Bag Station at Front Beach

- Added in summer 2022 by realtor Natasha Viswanathan, around the same time as the toy bin in the same location with the City's approval.
- Part of a branded non-profit effort that began in Florida and has expanded to other states. <https://fillabag.co/fill-a-bag/>
- Is actually a post with hooks that can hold up to 4-5 white branded buckets (not bags) that are available for anyone who wants to help clean.
- Fill A Bag guidelines say bucket trees must be installed 5 to 10 feet from trash receptacles.
- The branding points users to a QR code for more info and provides simple illustrated directions on the bucket.
- Messaging that the buckets should be emptied in trash may not be strong enough.
- It's not uncommon for us to find trash in them, but we don't know if that's from users or passersby.

### Expansion

- From the start, IOP Cleanup Crew leaders hoped to spread the toy bin concept to other busy beach access paths if it was successful.
- The City's IOPThrives! Community Enrichment Task Force suggested that the City "explore" adding cleanup bucket trees, toy bins, and benches (to help visitors collect their things) at more "high traffic" beach access points "with placement closer to the road than the dunes."



- Once the City transitions to a new beach trash collection system with changes in the placement of trash receptacles, it will be easier to map out a plan for where to place bins and buckets.
- Good spots for adding bins, buckets & benches could be:
  - Breach Inlet or somewhere on the SE end once renourishment is finished
  - 21st Avenue
  - 25th Avenue
  - 34A? or another beach access in the 30s
- Placement will need to be worked out - each path is a little different - as will maintenance responsibilities.
- Mujeres Latinas' proposal could be helpful as they are not only offering to construct toy bins and bucket shelves (different than trees), they may be able to help us maintain them.
- Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew could potentially help clean and organize the bins, removing items that don't belong.
- The Task Force also recommended that the City "recruit volunteer neighborhood captains for regular cleanups of non-commercial sections of beach and island's interior." These captains could help maintain toy bins, buckets and benches.



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## Project WAVES OF CHANGE

*Empowering communities to protect the planet, one action at a time*

### ***Warm greetings from Mujeres Latinas de Carolina del Sur.***

We are excited to share a special community project that combines sustainability with joy — a heartfelt initiative designed to reduce plastic waste while bringing smiles to children at the beach.

The idea is simple, yet powerful: to place small wooden boxes near beach entrances where families can leave clean, gently used beach toys they no longer wish to take home. Other children can then borrow and enjoy them, promoting a culture of sharing, reusing, and caring for our environment.

This project supports the core environmental principles of **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle**, while also teaching children about generosity and responsibility through real-life actions.

To bring this project to life, we are seeking donations of wood or other necessary materials to help us build these boxes. Additionally, we are requesting monetary donations to cover labor costs for the people who will construct, design, and paint the boxes. Your support will not only contribute to a cleaner and more mindful beach environment but will also inspire others to take small, meaningful steps toward sustainability. We have included a detailed budget for the project for your review.

As a token of our appreciation, we would be honored to include your company's name on each box you or your organization help sponsor — recognizing your commitment to both community and environmental well-being.

Thank you for considering this proposal. Together, we can create a positive impact that reaches far beyond the shoreline.

Below is our proposed Action and Contingency Plan to guide the successful implementation and maintenance of the project during the first three months of operation.





## Mujeres Latinas de Carolina del Sur

Somos una organización sin fines de lucro, que motiva a la gente a valorar el medio ambiente, a salvaguardar y proteger la vida silvestre de CS. Las MLCS, están comprometidas a ayudar a nuestra comunidad de inmigrantes a formar la nueva generación de líderes que sean seguros, competentes, autosuficientes y orgullosos de la cultura que representan.

The following pages provide a detailed description of the project “**Waves of Change,**” as presented in the 2025 Forum.



## Beach Conservation Project 2025

1. Pilot Location: Isla de Palma Beach
2. Education, awareness, and environmental action
3. For our coastal areas



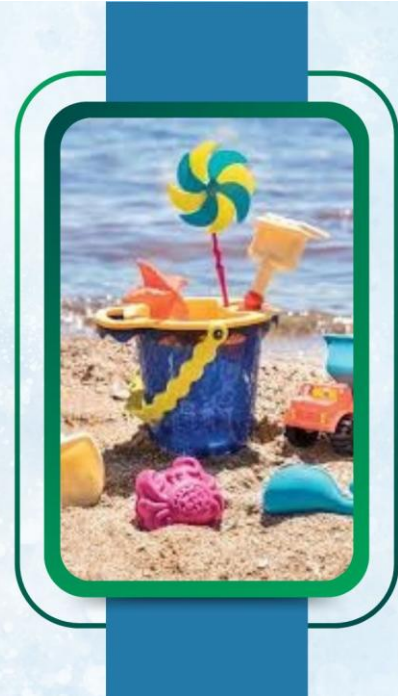




## Why this project?

During peak season, our beaches receive thousands of visitors. This activity generates a significant environmental impact, especially due to the abandonment of waste such as plastics, packaging, and toys.

We want to transform this behavior through concrete actions of education and shared environmental responsibility.



## Project Objectives

- Promote the responsible use of coastal areas
- Encourage environmental awareness in children and adults
- Transform habits through education and community action
- Reuse materials and reduce plastic waste on the beach



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## Pilot Project Location

### ISLE OF PALM

- Extension: 4 miles of coastline
- 6 environmental stations will be installed
- Each station will be located near the existing official trash collection points.



## What does each station include?

1 Wooden eco-friendly box with the message: "Use, enjoy, and reuse."

1 double hand waste bin dispenser for voluntary waste collection.

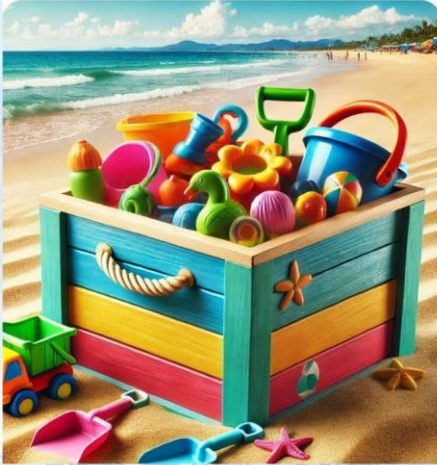






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## WAVES OF CHANGE These boxes help to:

- Collect forgotten or unused beach toys.
- Give them a second life so other children can enjoy them.
- Create a culture of respect, reuse, and community collaboration.



## WALK WITH A PURPOSE These boxes help to:

Every step counts.

1. It invites reflection on the impact we leave as we walk.
2. It conveys the idea of walking with awareness and commitment.
3. It fosters the connection between personal enjoyment and environmental responsibility.



## Commitment to sustainability

- All materials used will be made from reclaimed and donated wood
- Promoting a circular economy and minimizing environmental impact

## Invitation to join efforts

- Environmental education begins with simple actions that lead to big changes.
- We invite organizations, institutions, and citizens to join this collective effort to care for our beaches and the future of our environment.

## Theory of Change

### Value for the Community Strengthening Bonds

- Involves families, children, and walkers
- Encourages reuse and respect for the environment
- Highlights the Hispanic community's commitment to the environment.
- Latina women leading with love and dedication







## Benefits

- Encourage recycling and the spirit of community among children:
- Reduce the amount of plastic left on the sand:
- Promote responsible and purposeful tourism



### Final Objective

Empower communities to lead sustainability and environmental conservation initiatives in South Carolina.

### Strategies

- Community environmental education
- Active participation in local projects
- Partnerships with environmental institutions

### Expected Results

- Greater awareness in the community
- Reduction of waste in coastal areas
- Strengthening of community leadership

Small local actions with a community vision can create a great environmental impact.

This project represents a concrete step within our strategy for social and environmental change.





## *Mujeres Latinas de Carolina del Sur*

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## Action and Contingency Plan

### 1. Implementation Period

- Estimated duration: 2 to 3 months
- Location: Isle of Palms, Charleston, SC
- Objective: Ensure the efficient, safe, and continuous operation of the collection stations during weekends.

### 2. Weekly Operation with Volunteer Brigades

Activity	Details
Active days	Every weekend (Saturday and Sunday)
Volunteers per day	3 people per shift
Main responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Monitor use of the stations</li><li>- Basic cleaning of the stations</li><li>- Record observations and usage</li><li>- Provide educational and informational support to visitors</li></ul>
Suggested shifts	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

### 3. Volunteer Registration and Coordination

- The organization will maintain a digital volunteer registry, including assigned shifts, contact information, and specific roles.
- Each volunteer will receive basic training on waste management, safety protocols, and public interaction.
- Volunteers will sign a commitment form and be provided with identification materials (vests, badges).



#### 4. Natural Event Emergency Protocol

Situation	Action
Storm, hurricane, or high tide alerts	Continuous monitoring of alerts from NOAA, local authorities, and official media sources.
Early warning issued	Activation of the station withdrawal protocol: - Immediate notification to the logistics team and volunteers. - Coordination of transportation and storage.
Station removal	Each station will be disassembled and taken to a predefined secure storage facility. The priority is to protect structural integrity and avoid weather-related damage.
Communication with the authorities and public	Posting updates on social media and direct contact with coastal authorities about preventive actions taken.

#### 5. General Coordination

- Plan manager: Environmental project coordinator (name or position)
- Key support: Volunteer network, logistics team, and partner organizations
- Communication channels: Messaging groups (WhatsApp/Telegram), email, and phone calls will be used to activate or suspend activities.
- Weekly review: Data will be recorded regarding station usage, incidents, and suggestions for improvement.

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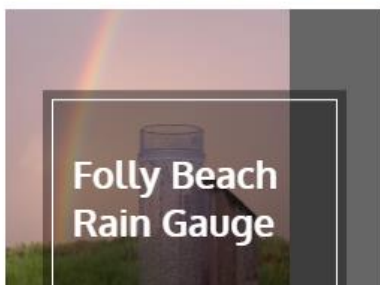
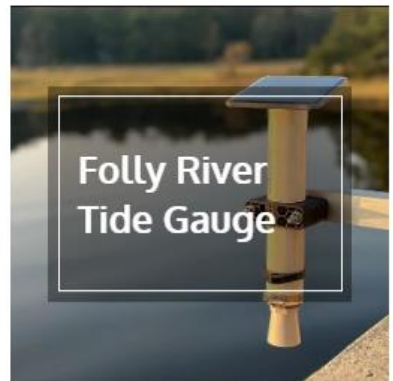
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- Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew could potentially help clean and organize the bins, removing items that don't belong.
- The Task Force also recommended that the City "recruit volunteer neighborhood captains for regular cleanups of non-commercial sections of beach and island's interior." These captains could help maintain toy bins, buckets and benches.



Initiative	Status	Next Step
Add an annual eco-themed event to the Recreation Department's annual calendar.	ongoing	On Calendar for Earth day 2026.Doug to
Adjust packaging ordinances to close loopholes and align with neighboring municipalities.	ongoing	Chamber of commerce canvassing members and provide feedback
Conduct a comprehensive water quality assessment.	Ongoing	Conducting Fluidion Test at 3 sites on island pending budget review by Douglas. 3 sites:
Develop a public education program on resilient strategies.	Ongoing	explore how to use the website to promote and educate sealevel rise adaptation plan
Develop plan to increase awareness of challenges and solutions that includes "Do No Harm" messaging for residents, visitors, developers and businesses.	ongoing	Get Wild Dunes Good Neighbor brochure to review and see how we can repurpose.
Educate the owners of septic systems in the proper maintenance and encourage owners to have their septic systems checked and serviced according to established	ongoing	tie to water quality testing PR
Encourage and provide incentives for residents, businesses, developers, Wild Dunes Resort and Homeowner Associations (HOA's) to increase native plants on residential and commercial properties.		
Facilitate more programming focused on understanding and protecting our natural environment (e.g. beach/saltmarsh/waterways, native plants, native and		
Include in Request for Proposals (RFPs) for landscaping.		
Involve public in South Carolina Aquarium's Searise sign project.		
Join the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative (SASMI).	Complete	Joined
Monitor DHEC/OCRM testing of ocean waters impacting the island		
More local promotions with links/QR codes pointing to iop.net "Beach Rules" – including tie-ins with Beach Shuttle.		
Partner with Chamber of Commerce and Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew on workshops for businesses on sustainability practices.		
Recruit volunteer neighborhood captains for regular cleanups of non-commercial sections of beach and island's interior.	investigating	Looking to
Secure more related media coverage.		
The City should continue to support tree-planting programs along streets and develop a long-term plan which prioritizes streets and identifies the types of trees to		
With guidance from local experts, emphasize native plants and gardens at all city parks and properties.		
Establish educational and volunteer programs to promote community involvement.		

# SUSTAINABILITY IN FOLLY BEACH

Find the full Sustainability Guide for Living on Folly Beach [here](#).



## **EAC UPDATE ON SOUTH ATLANTIC SALT MARSH INITIATIVE (SASMI) WORKSHOP AUGUST 21<sup>ST</sup> AT SCDNR, FORT JOHNSON**

Laura and Susan Hill Smith attended the SASMI workshop at SCDNR's Fort Johnson location from 10a-3p on Thursday, 8/21.

The Workshop started with opening remarks by Susanna Hopkins, the SC State Implementation Lead, and went into a brief presentation on SASMI's mission, current progress, and existing regional efforts.

There was a presentation by Denise Sanger with SCDNR on Marsh Migration Maps & Salt Marsh health metrics specific to research she has been doing in the ACE basin.

The group then had the opportunity after lunch to attend a breakout session in a choice of one of the four strategic focus areas based on the regional SASMI plan:

- Restoring Marsh
- Protecting Corridors
- Funding & Policy
- Education & Outreach

Laura attended the breakout group on protecting salt marsh corridors, and Susan attended the education and outreach group. Bradley Craig with SCDNR lead the protecting corridors group and Julie Binz & Olivia Greenslit with SCDNR lead the education and outreach group.

Laura connected with Catherine Min, the Watershed Coordinator with the SC Office of Resilience (SCORE), and had a follow-up zoom call on 9/2 to discuss ways she can help the EAC and IOP with their resilience planning initiatives.

Both Susan and I came away with lots of good information that we hope to be able to incorporate in the matrix item stating : "facilitate more programming focused on understanding the protection our natural environment i.e. beach/saltmarsh/waterways, native plants, native and endangered/threatened species".

## **EAC UPDATE ON WATER QUALITY TESTING**

Douglas Kerr and James Riddle with Woolpert talked through the next steps for the water quality testing on Wednesday, 8/27. Douglas signed the work agreement needed for the project to start, and also provided James prior water testing results from last year's outfall testing, as well as the testing that was done over 20 years ago.

James is targeting either the week of 9/8 or 9/22 for the testing, and Laura will work to coordinate with Woolpert and the City on the outfall sites and be present at the testing. We will have more information to share at the October EAC meeting.

# SEARISE PROJECT

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The city recently partnered with the South Carolina Aquarium to install SeaRise signs on the island to collect real time data about flooding. The blue signs feature a QR code and a yellow ruler. You can help report flooding by participating in the [SeaRise Project](#), located in the South Carolina Aquarium Citizen Science app.

## The SeaRise Project

The SeaRise Project is a place for citizen scientists to collect real-time data on flooding. Researchers use these photos and data to refine their flood models so we can more accurately predict future flooding and plan accordingly. The goal is to promote community-driven, collaborative solutions to increase resiliency to climate change and sea level rise. Citizens can play a crucial role in protecting Folly Beach from severe weather events, storm surges, and inland flooding by using these signs to monitor water levels.

If you notice flooding while passing one of these signs, simply scan the QR code with your smartphone camera to participate. The QR code will direct you to the SeaRise Project, where you can make an account and upload your photos and data. Your data will not only help scientists, but also inform policy makers in implementing effective flood mitigation strategies for Folly Beach.





## **Environmental signs for public dock update**

Susan and Laura received full approval from IOP City Council for the interpretive sign installation at the public dock at the 8/26 Council meeting.

Susan is finalizing the sign order with EnviroSigns, and Laura and Susan are working with Kaitlyn Hackathon on the text, illustrations and pictures for the signs.

Additionally, the Barrier Island Preservation Alliance, which is a 501-C3 charity organization, has agreed to be the entity that will be able to take in the funds from the proposed Islander 71 oyster roast fund raiser for the project on 11/1. Laura contacted Jon Bushnell with Islander 71 to let him know the fundraiser event could take place.

Susan and Laura are working towards the installation to be completed before Thanksgiving.

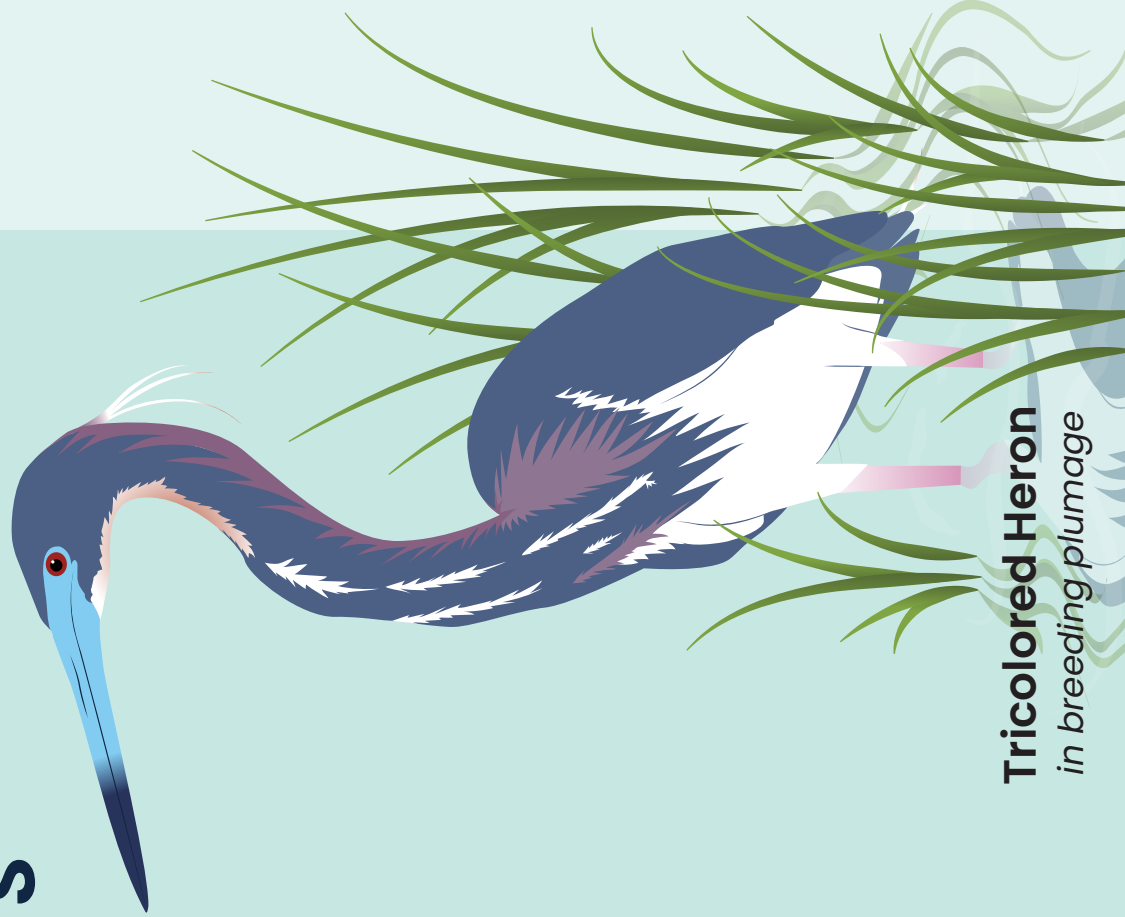


# Majestic Wading Birds

## These regal hunters rule the shallow waters

Expect to see wading birds stalking in the grass as you explore the salt marsh. With large feet and hollow bones, these stealthy predators glide atop pluff mud. Long legs allow them to hunt as tides rise. Herons and egrets spear fish with straight bills, while the ibis plucks crabs and crayfish from the mud with a curved bill. This salt marsh buffet also features shrimp, snails, frogs and insects.

During breeding season, “waders” gather in the treetops of swamps and marsh islands, where predators are rare. These colonies – called rookeries – allow them to socialize, nest and begin life anew.



**Tricolored Heron**  
*in breeding plumage*

## How to tell these feathered friends apart

Don't be fooled: Egrets and herons can tuck in their necks to appear shorter or extend their necks to be taller.



### White Ibis

**Length:** 22.1-26.8 in

The white ibis has a long bill that curves downward. Its bill, legs and skin turn bright red during mating season and are pink the rest of the year. Look for white ibises traveling in large V formations at sunrise and sunset in summer.



### Great Egret

**Length:** 37.0-40.9 in

The great egret has a thick yellow bill and black legs and feet. When breeding, the area between the eyes and bill is green, and feathery plumes called aigrettes trail from the neck, back and tail.



### Snowy Egret

**Length:** 22.1-26.0 in

The snowy egret is smaller and busier than the great egret. While similar in size to the white ibis, “snowies” have a black bill and legs. Their striking yellow feet look like golden dance slippers.



### Great Blue Heron

**Length:** 38.2-53.9 in

With enhanced night vision, the great blue heron can stalk prey 24/7. While they can be slow-moving and statue-like, they strike quickly when the time is right. The largest heron in North America, this wader can grow to have a wingspan over 6 feet.



### Little Blue Heron

**Length:** 22.1-29.1 in

This bird is half the size of the great blue heron – and a darker blue – with a deep-plum neck and head during mating season. To maintain its plumage, the little blue heron uses a unique grooming tool – a middle toe with comb-like “teeth”.



### Roseate Spoonbill

**Length:** 27.9-33.9 in

Once rare in South Carolina, more “spoonies” now visit our coast. Look for them around here from spring into summer. Similar to the flamingo, roseate spoonbills get their coloring from a diet rich in carotenoids that include shrimp.



### Wood Stork

**Length:** 33.5-45.3 in

Along with spoonbills and ibises, storks rely on their sense of touch when they hunt. When they come in contact with prey, their bills shut swiftly. The wood stork has the fastest bill snap of all: 25 milliseconds.

## Protecting Waders

The popularity of wading bird feathers in fashions of the 1800s led to overhunting and put waders at serious risk. By the 1900s, conservation efforts saved several species, including the great egret, now a symbol of the National Audubon Society.

Now, these birds face modern challenges. That includes development of wetlands where waders feed and nest, warming waters and declining fish numbers. You can help by respecting wetlands and designated wildlife areas. Don't disrupt wading birds. Give them space to thrive.