

Soundside Learning

This Week On Core Sound

New Opportunities At Core Sound

Program blends heritage with art!

The Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center is both proud and excited to announce the beginning of a new adult education opportunity to be enjoyed by all! *Core Sound on Canvas* will provide those in attendance with the opportunity to eat, paint, and remember various aspects of Down East culture and life from years gone by. This program will highlight the unique heritage, people, and culture of Down East through first-hand accounts of community members who *lived* this history, dealing with topics from famed local fishing vessels and fish houses to iconic community landmarks such as ferries and ballparks.

Each session of *Core Sound on Canvas* will feature dinner, stories told by special guests, and a session of painting. Each night will be centered around a topic unique to Core Sound's history. Dinner will give way to a short session of stories and first-hand accounts from the past told by those on the front lines and will be followed by a guided painting session to commemorate the topic of the evening. Local artist Willis Irvine will carefully lead each attendee through the painting of their very own Core Sound Canvas - an artistic glimpse into those days gone by on Core Sound.

The Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center will host spring, summer and fall sessions during 2022 on April 29th, July 29th, and October 28th, respectively. These will be followed by six winter sessions from mid January through mid March of 2023. Registration for attendees can be completed via our [Facebook](#) page. Painting will be limited to 30 individuals per session while dinner and stories are open to all! If you would like to be added to the "first to know" contact list for Core Sound on Canvas, please email education@coresound.com.



Core Sound On Canvas,
February-March 2022
Photo: CSWM&HC Collection

Springtime On Core Sound

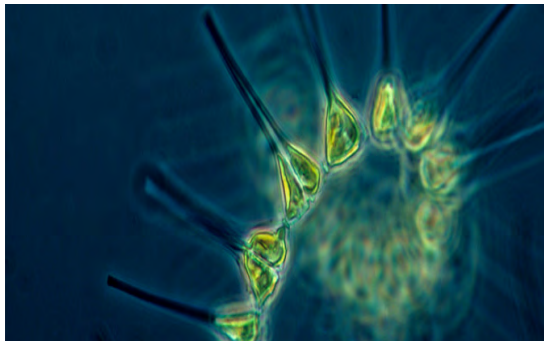
Estuaries begin life anew

For those who have grown up gazing across the waters of Core Sound there is no more welcome a transformation than to see winter's cold, blustery gales and "gin clear" waters give way to spring's Southwesterly winds and the first run of summer shrimp. Sink netters will begin venturing out of cold, morning harbors only to return to a hot and humid afternoon dock with a bounty of fresh sea mullet on deck as those fish and others make their annual springtime migrations back to northern sanctuaries.

Marsh grasses transition from their grayish-brown winter pigment to the more vibrant green as they begin to teem with recently hatched nymphs, which will soon morph into hordes of dragonflies buzzing about the water's surface.

Perhaps the most amazing springtime rebirth occurs *within* the water column. Anyone who has spent any amount of time on Core Sound from the months of November to March can attest to the amazing clarity of the sound's waters. This clarity is due to a lack of phytoplankton in the water.

Phytoplankton are plant-like organisms that live near the water's surface. They are autotrophic - self feeders - deriving all of their nutrients from photosynthesis. With the onset of



Phytoplankton photographed under a microscope
Photo: NOAA.Gov

colder temperatures in the late fall, phytoplankton either die off or enter into a sort of hibernation stage marked by decreased rates of photosynthetic activity. These decreased rates of photosynthesis cause the phytoplankton to lose their greenish-brown coloration, thus giving us those crystal clear wintertime waters. As temperatures begin to slowly increase in March and through April, these microscopic organisms provide the ecological "kickstart" to our marine estuaries. Increased rates of photosynthesis once again bring back those "thicker" waters of summer as the phytoplankton regain their usual coloration.

These organisms are essential to life in our marine estuaries. Not only do they convert carbon dioxide to oxygen through photosynthesis - much like land-based plants - they are also the basis of the marine food chain. Zooplankton and fish larvae depend upon these phytoplankton for food. These small, heterotrophic organisms are then preyed upon by shrimp, mullet, and so on.

As we transition into a new season on Core Sound, be on the lookout for these harbingers of spring and as the water begins to slowly warm and darken, think of those tiny phytoplankton making everything else in our estuaries possible.

Keeping Up With The Stargazers!

You can find the Crystal Coast Stargazers through the month of March at the following events:

March 19 – Telescope and Astrophotography Workshop – Fort Macon State Park Visitors Center – 1:00-5:00 PM – Various models of telescopes will be setup by Crystal Coast Stargazers with the members providing information and recommendations for amateur astronomers. Additionally, NASA Solar System Ambassador Brandon Porter will be presenting a program on the basics of astrophotography.

March 26 – Cape Lookout National Seashore Astronomy Night –7:30 PM – Harkers Island Visitor Center – NASA Solar System Ambassador Brandon Porter will provide an introduction to the celestial objects in the night sky, followed by stargazing through club members' telescopes.

On Friday, April 8th and Saturday, April 9th you can find the Stargazers at the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center for our celebration of Earth Day! Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about and use state-of-the-art solar viewing telescopes provided by the Crystal Coast Stargazers!