



# SCAN *South Carolina Association of Naturalists*

Post Office Box 5651, Columbia, South Carolina 29250-5651

March 2021

Hello All!

For our February outing, we cruised down to the coast to Grove Plantation, part of the Ernest F. Hollings ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge in Charleston County. The weather was gorgeous, with sunny skies and highs reaching 80°F. Several of us acquired our first sunburns of the year! (oops!)



Attendees included:

Alison Smith	Caroline Eastman	Janet McSwain	Paul Kalbach
Allison Bowden	Chris Sermons	Jeff Kline	Peter Nyikos
Amber Von Harten	Claudia Stratmann	Jerry Bright	Ron Ahle
Angela Valvasori	Cynthia Giles	Johannes Stratmann	Sharleen Johnson
Annette Rayburn	David Schuetrum	Julianna Nyikos	Sharon Yomtob
Brian Westley	Emily Perkins	Kim McManus	Todd Johnston
Brusi Alexander	Forrest Westley	Lee Morris	Tom Austin
Cara Marris	Hal Giles	Leighton Register	
Carol Jaworski	Hillary Sizemore	Marcus Sizemore	

We gathered at the parking area near the entrance gate to Grove Plantation for introductions and a quick orientation. Southern Regional Director Marcus Sizemore provided a quick overview of the available trails. After a group photo, we split up into smaller groups and scattered across the property.

My group headed down the entrance road towards the Grove Plantation House, now the US Fish and Wildlife Service headquarters. Grand old oak trees surrounding the house provided wonderful opportunities for birding. Beyond the house, a pond held Pied-billed Grebes. Moving further back, multiple impoundments could be viewed from the dikes surrounding them. In the distance, we could see thousands of ducks enjoying the safety of the closed area.



*L to R: Grove Plantation House, one of several impoundments, ducks relocating en masse*

After skirting along the dikes, we settled in for lunch in the shade of yet another beautiful oak tree. Then we walked the tree line back towards the parking area. The field yielded many thistle plants just starting to leaf out. The wooded area contained many birds, quite a few dwarf palmettos, and a few green anoles.



*L to R: A Column Stinkhorn emerging, Dave Schuetrum documenting the day, Summer Snowflake*

I've heard reports that other groups also had a beautiful day, exploring trails in different directions from the parking area. Water beetles, freshwater worms, cricket frogs, alligators and damselflies were documented in some of the wetter swampy areas.

One group of intrepid explorers added on a side trip to Bear Island, also within the ACE Basin. They found a nice assortment of birds, including Tundra Swans, White Ibis, and Wood Ducks feeding in the ponds and impoundments.

Overall, it was a fantastic day with lots of new folks bringing fresh eyes to our explorations.

Our next outing will be to the Aiken Gopher Tortoise Heritage Preserve on March 27. This will be our third visit, with previous outings being in the late summer and fall: November 2002 and September 2011. Western Regional Director Lee Morris has prepared a great overview for us. Due to limited parking space, we're still working out details on where to meet for the initial morning gathering. Keep an eye on your inbox for updates.

Please remember that as of January 14, 2021, the CDC guidelines for outdoor activities are to stay at least 6 feet apart from people who don't live with you. If that is not feasible, wear your mask.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/participate-in-activities.html>

See you soon!

*Kim McManus*

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**Aiken Gopher Tortoise Heritage Preserve**  
**1858 Oak Ridge Club Rd, Williston, SC 29853**  
**Aiken County**  
**Saturday, March 27, 2021 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM**

This month we are going to the Aiken Gopher Tortoise Heritage Preserve/Wildlife Management Area (AGTHP). As the name implies, this area is excellent habitat for the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), which is typically found in sandy-soiled, longleaf pine/wiregrass communities. The gopher tortoise is the only species of tortoise east of the Mississippi River and is a keystone species, providing habitat for over 300 other species in the long (30 foot) underground burrows they dig. The gopher tortoise is federally threatened/state-listed endangered; AGTHP is the Northern-most location for this species. As these tortoises are rare, attempts to repopulate this area with them is on-going.

The preserve actually contains three general areas with different habitats. North of Oak Ridge Club Road, the habitat starts off with longleaf pine communities and slowly transitions to mixed forest with lots of undergrowth (northern portion). South of Oak Ridge Club Road is longleaf pine community. In this area are the remnants of pens where young gopher tortoises were acclimated to the area. There are also three red-cockaded woodpeckers clusters (orange spots on the map). This area gradually moves downhill (southwards) towards Spring Branch stream and Hallmans Pond. The Spring Branch stream and Hallmans Pond are also accessible from the Southern parking areas on Long Cane Road (off of Centerwood Road). Hallmans Pond currently sports a beaver dam. A number of birds should be out and binoculars are highly suggested. Mammal tracks and some insects (dragonflies/damselflies, butterflies/moths, grasshoppers) have been spotted recently, and early spring flowers are beginning to bloom.

A few things to be aware of: the roads through the Preserve are ploughed sand, so caution is advised when driving down them as there are soft spots and ruts. There are eight parking areas around the preserve (marked as blue dots on the trail map), but they will not hold a large number of cars, so SCANNers will have to spread out to park after our initial meeting. Parking on the roads is NOT recommended for any length of time as there is no shoulder.

Trails are shown on the map below. The red lines mark out plowed firebreaks that are usually used for walking trails. Blue lines are unplowed trails, but visitors can still use them. There are few trails through parts of the property to limit disturbing the tortoises. Both types of trails have areas of deep sand which can make walking a bit strenuous. Cell phone coverage is spotty in places. There are no bathroom facilities on the property (and very few populated centers nearby) so plan accordingly.

Parking information for our initial gathering is pending as parking areas are very limited in space, so stay tuned for that information. At this gathering, we will hopefully be joined by Hunter Young, the Heritage Preserve Biologist for Region 3 (SC Department of Natural Resources), whom many will recognize as our well-versed guide at Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve in January. If you have any questions about the preserve, have them ready!

**Directions:**

1858 Oak Ridge Club Road, Williston, SC 29853

**Lat:** 33.50314893567487 **Long:** -81.41751171457207

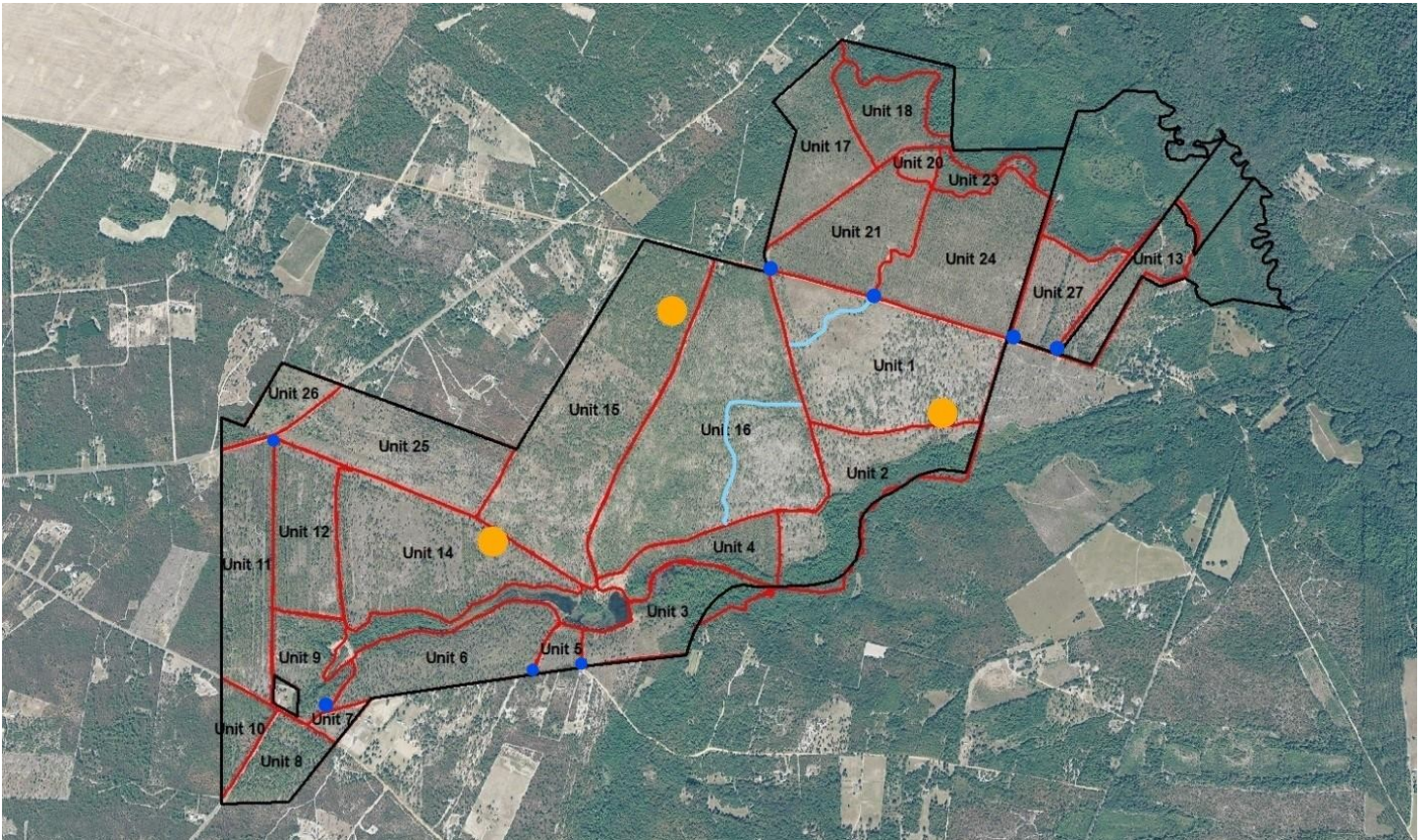
*These directions are for the Oak Ridge Club Road area generally. Consult the map for locations of the parking areas around the preserve.*

From Columbia: take I-20 west towards Augusta. Get off at Exit 39 (US 178) and turn left. Continue on 178 to Fairview Crossroads. Turn right onto SC 113 (Wagener Hwy); after about 500 feet SC 113 will veer left. SC 113 will travel through Wagener. Follow SC 113 – it will eventually become S Dixie Rd/2-38 – until it dead-ends (7 miles). Turn right onto Veterans Road/2-22 and drive approximately 5 miles. Oak Ridge Club Road will be on the right, just past a bridge over a creek.



From Charleston: take I-26 west to exit 154. Head west on 301 through Orangeburg through Edisto (the town). At the Y-intersection, veer right, following SC 4. Follow SC 4 through Springfield. About 6 miles from Springfield SC 4 intersects with Veterans Road/2-22. Turn left on Veterans Road. Follow it for approximately 2 miles. Oak Ridge Club Road will be on the right, just past a bridge over a creek.

Lee Morris  
Western Regional Director



**Grove Plantation  
Charleston Co., SC  
February 27, 2021**

This list was produced by SCAN from sightings produced by SCAN members and is subject to revision as needed. An asterisk (\*) indicates a new sighting for SCAN. Send any changes or corrections to Tom Jones. \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate exactly to which flora/fauna list you are referring. Thank you.

**LICHENS**

Cryptothecia rubrocincta  
Usnea sp.

**FLORA**

**Resurrection Fern**  
*Pleopeltis michauxiana*

**Snowflake**  
*Leucojum aestivum*

**Dwarf Palmetto**  
*Sabal minor*

**Spanish-moss**  
*Tillandsia usneoides*

**Sweet Gum**  
*Liquidambar styraciflua*

**Live Oak**  
*Quercus virginiana*

**Common Blue Violet**  
*Viola sororia*

**Popcorn Tree**  
*Triadica sebifera*

**Marshcress**  
*Rorippa* sp.

**Thistle**  
*Cirsium* sp.

**Dwarf-dandelion**  
*Krigia* sp.

**Columned Stinkhorn**  
*Clathrus columnatus*

**FAUNA**

**Sludge Worm**  
*Tubifex* sp.

**Common Pill Bug**  
*Armadillidium vulgare*

**Long-jawed Orbweaver**  
*Tetragnatha* sp.

**Cattail Toothpick Grasshopper**  
*Leptysma marginicollis*

**Mischievous Bird Grasshopper**  
*Schistocerca damnifica*

**Backswimmer**  
*Notonecta* sp.

**Honey Bee**  
*Apis mellifera*

**Chironomid Midge**  
\* *Chironomus* sp.

**Fragile Forktail**  
*Ichnura posita*

**Rambur's Forktail**  
*Ichnura ramburi*

**Predacious Diving Beetle**  
*Thermonectus basillaris basillaris*

**Patent-leather Beetle**  
*Odontotaenius disjunctus*

**Smartweed Flea Beetle**  
*Disonycha pensylvanica*

**Sleepy Orange**  
*Abaeis nicippe*

**Bagworm Moth**  
\* *Oiketocinae*, Subfamily of  
*Psychidae*

**Celery Leaf-tier Moth**  
\* *Udea rubigalis*

**Eastern Mosquitofish**  
*Gambusia holbrooki*

**Southern Cricket Frog**  
*Acris gryllus*

**American Alligator**  
*Alligator mississippiensis*

**Pied-billed Grebe**  
*Podilymbus podiceps*

**Double-crested Cormorant**  
*Phalacrocorax auritus*

**Tricolored Heron**  
*Egretta tricolor*

**Little Blue Heron**  
*Egretta caerulea*

**Snowy Egret**  
*Egretta thula*

**Great Blue Heron**  
*Ardea herodias*

**Great Egret**  
*Ardea alba*

**Mallard**  
*Anas platyrhynchos*

**Northern Shoveler**  
*Spatula clypeata*

**Blue-winged Teal**  
*Spatula discors*

**Common Gallinule**  
*Gallinula galeata*

**American Coot**  
*Fulica americana*

**Ring-billed Gull**  
*Larus delawarensis*

**Turkey Vulture**  
*Cathartes aura*

**Black Vulture**  
*Coragyps atratus*

**Bald Eagle**  
*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

**Cooper's Hawk**  
*Accipiter cooperii*

**Red-shouldered Hawk**  
*Buteo lineatus*

**Osprey**  
*Pandion haliaetus*

**American Kestrel**  
*Falco sparverius*

**Mourning Dove**  
*Zenaida macroura*

**Belted Kingfisher**  
*Megasceryle alcyon*

**Red-bellied Woodpecker**  
*Melanerpes carolinus*

**Red-headed Woodpecker**  
*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*

**Northern Flicker**  
*Colaptes auratus*

**Downy Woodpecker**  
*Dryobates pubescens*

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**  
*Sphyrapicus varius*

**Pileated Woodpecker**  
*Dryocopus pileatus*

**Eastern Phoebe**  
*Sayornis phoebe*

**Blue Jay**  
*Cyanocitta cristata*

**American Crow**  
*Corvus brachyrhynchos*

**Tufted Titmouse**  
*Baeolophus bicolor*

**Carolina Chickadee**  
*Poecile carolinensis*

**White-breasted Nuthatch**  
*Sitta carolinensis*

**Carolina Wren**  
*Thryothorus ludovicianus*

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**  
*Regulus calendula*

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**  
*Polioptila caerulea*

**Eastern Bluebird**  
*Sialia sialis*

**Gray Catbird**  
*Dumetella carolinensis*

**Northern Mockingbird**  
*Mimus polyglottos*

**White-eyed Vireo**  
*Vireo griseus*

**Blue-headed Vireo**  
*Vireo solitarius*

**Black-and-white Warbler**  
*Mniotilta varia*

**Yellow-rumped Warbler**

*Setophaga coronata*

**Yellow-throated Warbler**

*Setophaga dominica*

**Pine Warbler**

*Setophaga pinus*

**Orange-crowned Warbler**

*Leiothlypis celata*

**Northern Cardinal**

*Cardinalis cardinalis*

**Song Sparrow**

*Melospiza melodia*

**Chipping Sparrow**

*Spizella passerina*

**Swamp Sparrow**

*Melospiza georgiana*

**Red-winged Blackbird**

*Agelaius phoeniceus*

**American Raccoon**

*Procyon lotor*