

# THE SKIMMER



## Georgia 4-H at Camp Jekyll

### CAMP JEKYLL SUNSET

Photo by Bob Donnan



Hello friends of Georgia 4-H at Camp Jekyll!  
We are SO excited to bring you the 2023 edition of *The Skimmer*, our annual newsletter. Through these pages, you can take a journey through the salt marsh, meet some animal pals, and much more. So sit back, relax, and enjoy some fun facts! We are grateful for your support of our programming and hope to see you on Jekyll Island again soon.



### Table of Contents:

- 2 - Notes from the Director's Desk
- 3 - Animal Spotlights
- 4 & 5 - Marsh Madness
- 6 - STATEment Species
- 7 - Meet the 2022-23 Environmental Education Staff
- 8 - Final Thoughts

### Greetings from Jekyll Island!

# Notes from the Director's Desk!

Georgia 4-H at Camp Jekyll is excited to share that our recovery from the pandemic continues on a positive trajectory! We are pleased to have welcomed so many returning and new schools and students back to Jekyll Island for our Environmental Education Program. Operating again at all of our five 4-H Centers, Georgia 4-H Summer Camp has also returned across the state. Camp Jekyll hosted 6 weeks of Junior Camp (7th and 8th grade) in 2022, and we are looking forward to hosting Cloverleaf Camp (5th and 6th graders – and for some counties 4th grade as well) this summer. Please contact your county extension office for more information about summer camp including when and how to sign up! While the challenges of a tight labor market and inflation continue and impact all, we are thankful for our dedicated staff providing excellent customer service and continue to work hard to manage costs and keep our prices as low as possible while maintaining value rich experience. We have heard time and time again from group leaders, teachers, and parents how much the time spent at facilities like Camp Jekyll has been shown to be an important part of the development of the youth in their care and how much these experiences were missed during the pandemic. We look forward to seeing you and your group back at Camp Jekyll soon and hope that you will enjoy seeing some of our new center improvements during your next visit (from our newly installed game room, free little library, and aquarium exhibits). ~ Richard Chewning, Camp Jekyll Center Director



## Night Class Time at Camp Jekyll



Photo by Margaret Donnan

## Save the Date

**Registration for our GA  
4-H Environmental  
Education Program  
during the Fall 2024-  
Spring 2025 school year  
begins on August 23rd,  
2023 at 8 am EST.**



# ANIMAL SPOTLIGHTS

Meet some Camp Jekyll residents!



Photo by Bob Donnan

**American Alligators** (*Alligator mississippiensis*)

**Names:** Linda (& Bob, not pictured)

**Personal History:** In January of 2022, Bob & Linda were born at Gatorland Zoo in Orlando, Florida. They are siblings who have served as animal ambassadors for Camp Jekyll since May 2022.

**Interesting Facts:** Historically, hunting and habitat loss have severely impacted American alligator populations. Through conservation efforts, the species recovered from these threats in the second half of the 20th century,

Photo by Bob Donnan

**Loggerhead Sea Turtle** (*Caretta caretta*)

**Name:** Little Man

**Personal History:** Little Man was born in the summer of 2020 on the southern end of Jekyll Island, where visitors to the island improperly collected him and attempted to raise him in their bathtub. Noticing that Little Man wasn't doing too well, they called the Department of Natural Resources who brought Little Man to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center for emergency care. Once he regained some of his strength, we moved Little Man to live at Camp Jekyll. Our focus is for him to gain the muscle and hunting skills needed to return to the ocean during the summer of 2024.



# Marsh Madness

By Robin Green

Making the turn onto the Jekyll Island causeway, the first thing I noticed was miles of marsh grass on either side of the road. The species of trees, the size of bushes, and the types of flowers changed as I drove, but the marsh grass was a constant.

The Jekyll causeway is eight miles long; eight miles of marsh protects our island. **Our marsh is a sponge, it soaks up all the excess water from storms and floods.**

Stepping into the marsh, the first thing I noticed was the smell. The mud in the marsh is sulfur based and thick brown in color. **This mud comes from the decayed marsh grass and in turn, new grass will grow** using the nutrients from the mud; death in this ecosystem is followed by life.  
(continued on next page)

Twilight in the Marsh

Photo by Bob Donnan





### Life in the salt marsh is often small.

Juvenile fish, fiddler crabs, periwinkle snails, and sea pickles are all smaller than my pinkie finger. Blue crabs and diamondback terrapins are about the size of my hand. Spartina grass, sea-oxeye daisies, and the migratory birds are no taller than my waist. But the marsh has a lot of life. **Seventy-five percent of commercial fish species use the marsh as a nursery.** Both resident and migratory shorebirds use the marsh as hunting and resting grounds; no large predators leads to easy hunting for them.



Fiddler Crab!

Photo by Wheeler Ryder

Periwinkle Snail on Spartina Grass



Photo by Margaret Donnan

Though the number of species that live in the salt marsh is not as high as some other ecosystems like the maritime forest, species interactions are noteworthy. Common periwinkle snails eat the algae off of spartina grass so the grass can photosynthesize. Diamondback terrapins eat the fiddler crabs that can overpopulate the marsh and the common periwinkle snails that can overgraze the spartina grass when eating the algae. **The animals of the marsh regulate one another to keep the ecosystem alive and functioning.**

The marsh allows us our coastal livelihoods; by serving as a nursery, it increases the odds our commercial fish will survive until they are large enough for fishermen to catch. By acting as a sponge, it ensures our island doesn't flood. **We depend on the marsh which is why it is worth studying and conserving.**



# STATEment SPECIES

Photo by Shannon Collins



## State Reptile of Georgia -

### Gopher Tortoise

Gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) can be found along the Georgia coast as well as inland on the southern end of Georgia. They source adequate food and nesting sites in pine forests with an open understory and deep, well-drained soils.

**Fun Fact:** The holes dug by gopher tortoises provide homes and protection from fire to 350+ species!

## State Shell of Georgia -

### Knobbed Whelk

Knobbed whelks (*Busycon carica*) are marine snails found along the Georgia coastline and in waters as deep as 30 feet.

**Fun Fact:** All the minerals found in Georgia waters give the whelks their color!

Photo by Margaret Donnan



## State Tree of Georgia -

### Southern Live Oak

Live Oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) are found along the coast and the southern end of Georgia. They are common in mixed woodlands or pastures, and they can also be found bordering marshes or streams.

**Fun Fact:** Early American shipbuilders commonly used live oaks to make the structural parts of ships.

Photo by Margaret Donnan





# Meet the 2022-23 EE Staff!



## The TotalTREE Fantastic Team

Clockwise from Top Left: Log Troxell, Conor Evans, Abby Williams, John Milligan, Shannon Collins, Margaret Donnan, Wheeler Ryder, Katie Greene, Molly Lucey, Greg Kosik (Program Coordinator), Lindsay Miller, and Paige Rafferty. Photographer: Toria Rico, Program Specialist. Not Pictured: Richard Chewning, Center Director.



### Shannon Collins, Favorite Memory as an Environmental Educator:

"My favorite memory so far is from one of the first beach ecology classes I taught. As we were walking back on the boardwalk after class, a girl says to me, 'I think science is my new favorite subject.' I smiled and agreed that science is pretty cool."

### Wheeler Ryder, Favorite Memory as an Environmental Educator:

"I ended up teaching a beach class that I wasn't originally supposed to teach, and it turned out to be the most excellent beach class ever. I had a totally rad group of kids, and we explored the runnel on the beach during the low tide. We found copious amounts of hermit crabs, blue crabs, a butterfly sting ray, and saw dolphins that were 10 ft off the shore!"







**Thank you so much for reading the  
2023 edition of The Skimmer!**

We would love to stay connected with you throughout the year through social media.

Follow us on Facebook at Georgia 4-H at  
Camp Jekyll and visit our website at  
[georgia4h.org](http://georgia4h.org) to learn more about Georgia  
4-H, field studies, and summer camp!

**Our address:**

Camp Jekyll  
550 S. Beachview Dr.  
Jekyll Island, GA 31527



**DRIFTWOOD  
BEACH  
SUNRISE**

Photo by Bob Donnan