

Evolution of South Carolina Seabird Sanctuaries

Closures and Bird Protections

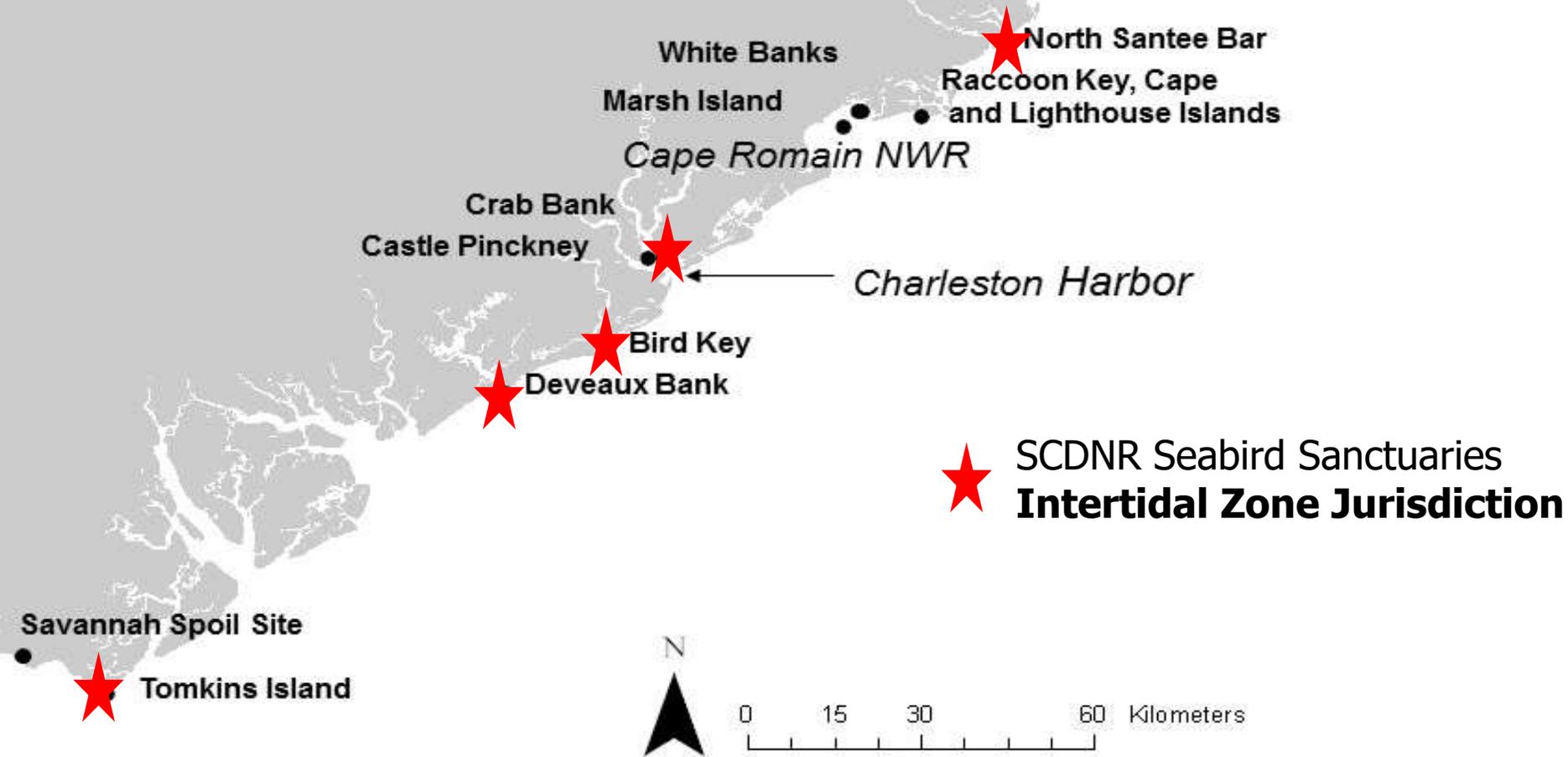
Felicia Sanders
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources





South Carolina Seabird Nesting Sites

Atlantic Ocean





2001 Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge



Janet Thibault



Janet Thibault

Deveaux Bank Seabird Sanctuary



Recipe for Conservation Success

Science

- Inventory resources
- Identify problems
- Identify solutions
 - Dog restrictions
 - Camping restrictions
 - Fireworks
 - Closures – to low tide line





Susan Zoltewicz



Abby McKay/Audubon Florida

Intertidal Zone

- Submerged lands between the high tide and low tide line (tidelands, tidal flats, submerged lands, submersible lands, intertidal lands, etc)
- Owned by the state of South Carolina



Acquire Public and Partner Support

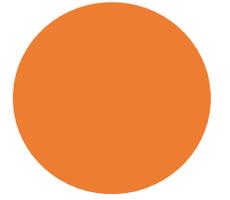


- Hands-on education
- Positive and hopeful narrative/story



SC Legislative Process to Pass a State Law

- SCDNR support
 - Division chiefs
 - Agency director
 - Board
 - Approves policy (rules, regulations and other policy changes)
 - Members from each congressional district, appointed by the governor
- Bill drafted by SCDNR staff
- General Assembly Committees (Natural Resources)
 - Information gathering
 - Recommendations
- Senate and House Representatives
 - Discussed
 - Amended
 - Voted on





Intertidal Zone and Accreted Lands/SC Department of Administration

South Carolina Sanctuaries

- **SECTION 50-11-860.** SCDNR can designate and establish sanctuaries via an agreement with a landowner (1925?)
- No hunting or trespassing upon these lands for 5 years from the date of the agreement.
- For example, 1986 Charleston Harbor Wildlife Sanctuary (It is unlawful for any person to hunt, trap, molest, or to attempt to take or molest in any manner, any wild bird, bird egg, or mammal within the sanctuary)



Seabird Sanctuaries

(created in 2006)

Take Note Violators Will Pay

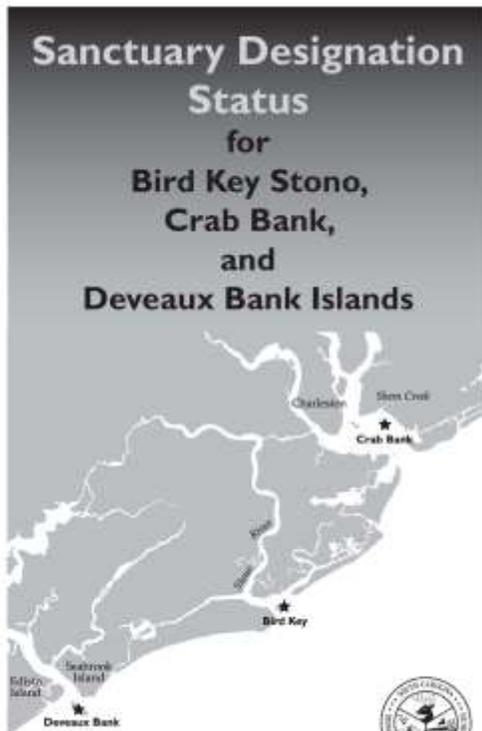
Penalties for trespassers violating new regulations on Bird Key Stono, Crab Bank, and Deveaux Bank Islands include fines up to \$465 and 30 days in jail.



For additional information, contact:
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New Regulations For Barrier Islands

Bird Key Stono and Crab Bank

- Closed to boat landing and public access March 15 – October 15
- Accessible to the public below the high water tidal line October 16 – March 14
- Dogs are prohibited year round

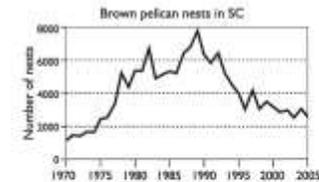
Deveaux Bank

- Closed to public access year round above the high water tidal line, except in designated recreational areas
- Dogs are prohibited year round

Sanctuary Designations approved by the South Carolina Budget and Control Board - March 21, 2006

Changes Are For The Birds!

Researchers have observed a significant decline in brown pelicans nesting in South Carolina. Other states are not experiencing this decline, and have recorded population increases. 2631 nests were noted in 2005, a record low since 1976. No pelicans nested on Bird Key in 2005. These islands are also used by migrant shorebirds during the non-breeding season as stopover and wintering areas.



Bird Key Stono, Crab Bank, and Deveaux Bank have significant value as seabird nesting, migration, and wintering areas. Seabird species using these islands include brown pelicans, least terns, royal terns, sandwich terns, and black skimmers. The birds find nesting territories and mate in March, build their nests and lay eggs in April and May, and many do not leave the nesting island until October.

- If approached by people or dogs, seabirds will leave their nest.
- Unprotected eggs are easy targets for gulls.
- Eggs are easily crushed underfoot.
- Dogs have an instinct to chase seabirds, which is particularly damaging to nesting colonies.



Deveaux Bank Seabird Sanctuary

- 2013
- 3600 Brown Pelican nests (67% of SC, 25% of Atlantic US)
- Up to 6000 Brown Pelican chicks
- Black Skimmers (1/2 SC)
- 20 pairs of AMOY
- Large colonies of nesting terns and wading
- No intertidal closures



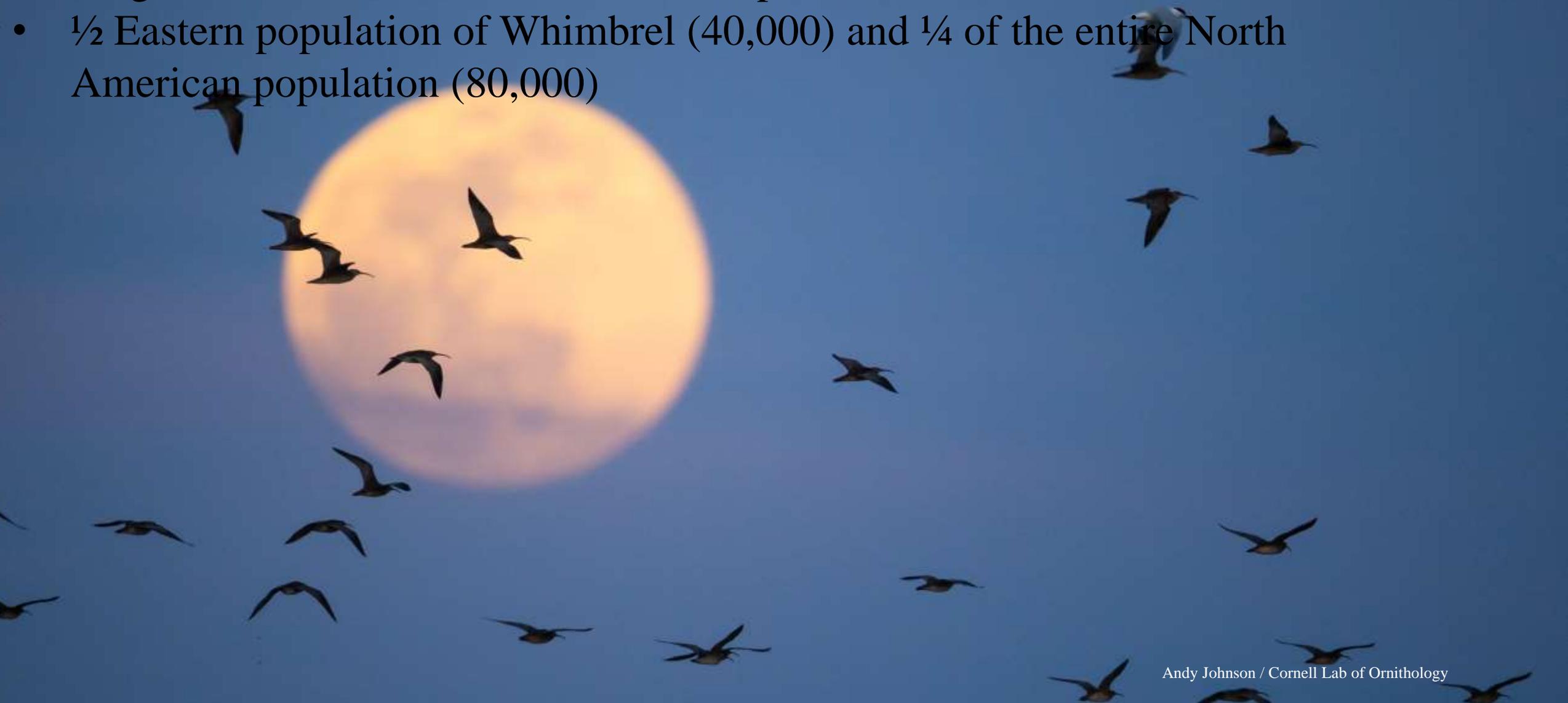
Andy Johnson / Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Compromise

- 2014 - 1/2 closed
- Allows public use

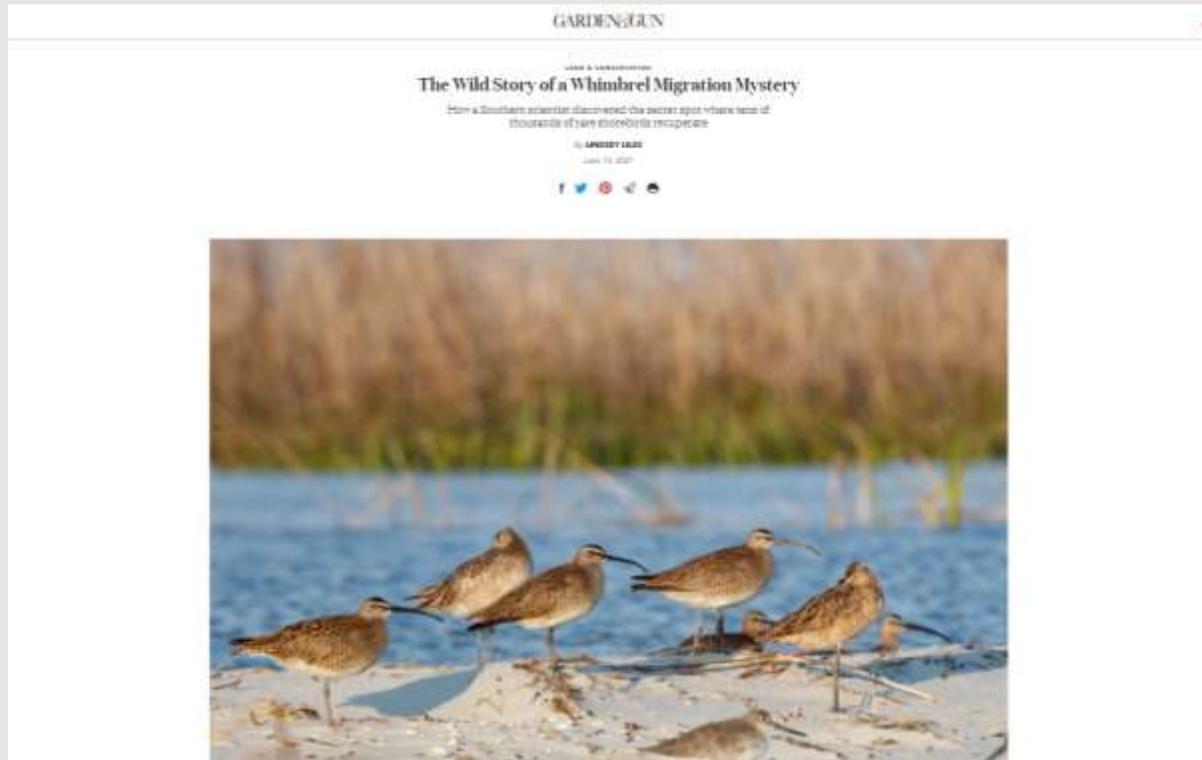


- Deveaux Bank supports ~ 20,000 Whimbrel during spring migration
- Largest known nocturnal roost for the species
- ½ Eastern population of Whimbrel (40,000) and ¼ of the entire North American population (80,000)





Media Coverage



- 2021
- *New York Times*
- *Garden & Gun*
- *Living Bird*
- Local news outlets



5 million views

FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025

BLOG · NEWS

DEVEAUX BANK OFFICIALLY CLOSED FOR COASTAL BIRDS

by Lily Abromeit



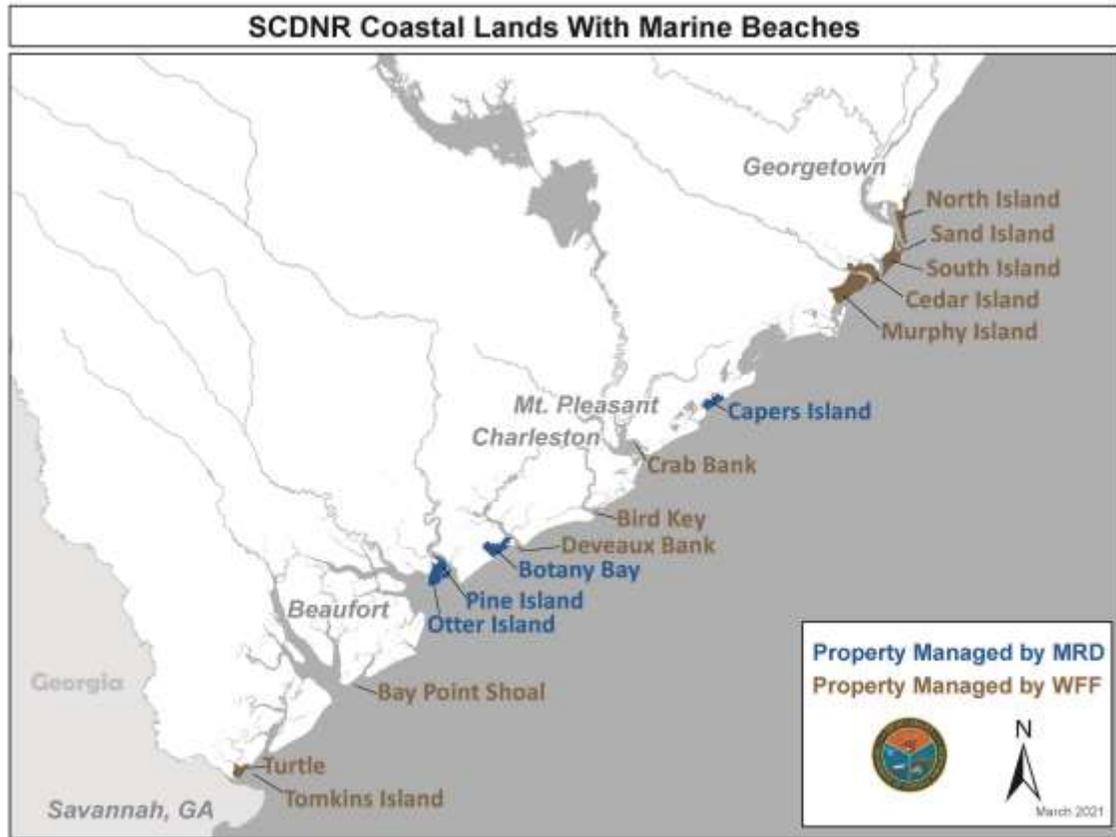
SC legislature passes annual closure of Deveaux Bank

This week, the South Carolina legislature officially approved a change to state regulation that closes Deveaux Bank to public access from March 15 to October 15 annually to protect nesting and migratory coastal birds!





Patience!



Continued Support for Shorebird Protection

- New Laws
- 10 Barrier Islands
- Complete or partial closures
- Dog restrictions
- Camping restrictions



Anything is Possible!



Mary-Catherine Martin



Janet Thibault



Camille Duquet

SCDNR Shorebird Team

And Thanks to Many Partners!!