



Grounds & Landscape Committee Fall Update

Current Landscaping Projects:

- Refreshing the Clubhouse landscape: Two problem trees have been removed, opening up front yard and featuring the house more. Shrubs will be hard-pruned, new mulch and plants will be added over the course of 2 phases. The Greenery is undertaking this project and plans to be finished with Phase 1 by mid-October.
- Front gate entrance is also being redesigned by removing some overgrown shrubs, trimming trees, and bringing in new plants to provide texture and color. These changes will better highlight our signature three palms and entrance sign. New lighting is also being added. The oleander along right side of Mink Point entrance has recently been pruned too.
- De La Gaye dock pathway is scheduled to be improved with new edging and gravel path, shrubs will be pruned and new plantings will grace the entrance.
- Palm tree fronds have been pruned throughout the Islands of Beaufort

Common Animals In and Around Islands of Beaufort

We share our IOB community with a variety of “critters” that flourish in our coastal area habitat. The following information was provided by Dennis Dillard (aka “Critter Man”) who has worked with rehabilitation of baby orphaned raccoons, opossums (possums), and squirrels over the years.

Raccoons

- Raccoons breed in January and February and have their young in the spring (usually March/April). Typically, the babies stay with the mother until the fall. As the babies get older, they can often be seen on the marsh with their mother learning to gather food.
- Although raccoons are generally nocturnal, a mother raccoon will forage during the day. Contrary to popular belief, seeing a raccoon during the day is not indicative that the animal has rabies. The mother hunts during this time to protect her babies during the night from male raccoons (who have been known to kill unattended babies) and other predators.



Raccoons (continued)



- Raccoons are extremely tactile. They are considered very intelligent, nimble, and are great problem solvers. Be mindful of leaving easy-to-open containers that contain food. They will figure out a way to explore the contents and don't bother to clean up after themselves!
- While raccoons typically live 3-5 years, diseases including distemper and occasionally rabies can impact the population. If you see very young babies wandering alone, it is probable that something has happened to the mother (disease, killed by another animal, hit by a car, etc.).

Raccoons are very tactile, as these photos demonstrate. Not everyone has Dennis' special way with animals. Be careful when you interact with them but recognize these small animals have a special purpose in our habitat. And they can be very entertaining!



Possums

- Possums are the only marsupials found in North America. The young stay in their mothers pouch and nurse there for about 80 days. Afterwards, they often ride on their mother's back to get around.
- Even though some consider them creepy and ugly, they are very valuable to the environment because they eat rodents and consume ticks by the thousands. They also like to eat snakes....even the poisonous ones.



- When confronted by danger, possums have an involuntary reaction of playing dead ("playing possum.") Once the danger passes, the possum will regain consciousness and move on its way.
- Possums are immune to many diseases that often impact other mammals, including rabies, parvovirus, and feline hepatitis. Scientists believe this is due to their lower body temperature, compared to other mammals. They are usually even immune to the effects of snake venom, which is why they can eat poisonous snakes.

Squirrels

- In IOB, Eastern Grey squirrels abound! With our beautiful trees and nuts that many produce, squirrels have the perfect habitat here. They play a vital role in forest regeneration with their habit of burying seeds to save them for later....some of which eventually become trees.
- Squirrels communicate with chatter and by flicking their tail when danger is perceived. They are a food source for other wildlife in the area including hawks, raccoons, snakes, owls, and while seldom seen in our area, bobcats and foxes.
- Squirrels mate twice a year (early spring and mid-summer). After about 40-45 days, babies are born hairless and wean at about 10 weeks. During storms and very windy conditions, it is not uncommon to hear about the discovery of a nest that has blown out of the tree.
- Squirrels are most active during the morning and late afternoons. They like to avoid the mid-day heat. They are active year-round and do not hibernate.



Eastern Grey Squirrel



Rescued baby squirrels



A mother squirrel with baby in the wild

As mentioned in our June newsletter, If an animal is injured, you can contact Dennis at (404) 664-4967. If Dennis is unable to help he is part of a group of rehabbers in Beaufort County and can refer you to someone. Also, Port Royal Animal Hospital will take in orphaned babies or injured animals.

Please use the links below for references used and for more information on our local small animals:

<https://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/species/raccoon.html#:~:text=Populations%20are%20highest%20along%20the%20coast%20and%20decline%20steadily%20inland.&text=Raccoons%20commonly%20feed%20on%20crayfish,%2C%20berries%2C%20and%20wild%20grapes.>

<https://www.farmersalmanac.com/opossum-facts-27732>

<https://www.sctv.org/stories/2022/squirrels-50-facts-you-may-not-know>

<https://www.wildliferescueleague.org/animals/the-opossum-our-marvelous-marsupial-the-social-loner/>

https://charlestonmag.com/features/the_role_the_bushy_tailed_eastern_gray_squirrel_plays_in_the_ecosystem