



The Ocean Breeze

An official publication of America's Boating Club® Hilton Head
"For Boaters, By Boaters™"



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EVENTS CALENDAR

October 7: Executive Committee ZOOM mtg @ 4:30 PM

October 8: Circumnavigating Hilton Head Island Cruise

October 20: Circumnavigating Hilton Head Island Cruise

October 21: Tybee Island Cruise w/The Crab Shack

October 24: America's Boating Course - The Boathouse
5279 N. Okatie Hwy., Ridgeland, SC

November 5: Morgan Island Cruise



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FROM THE COMMANDER

Peter J. Dion, SN



Thanks to the efforts of several members, courses and cruises have been continuing even given the current virus situation. Eight members just completed the course -- Cruising and Cruise Planning. And, thanks to a few of our members (Paul Hoyte, Bob Newbert, and Chris Dattilo) who volunteered to conduct cruises, we were able to offer some cool "day cruises" in our Lowcountry waters. We are trying our best to offer you seminars, courses, and cruises despite the situation. I hope you will take advantage of them. More cruises are planned soon. Check out our website for future cruises.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined our club recently: Jos VanHout, Art and Kathy LaPoint, Brook Berlin, Ron Malone, Ellen Newman, and Gemma Gatti.

COBIA RESEARCH

Many of you fish our local waters for cobia. You may be interested to know that the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) is doing important research by inserting tags and receivers in the fish to help them understand the migration of the cobia. Read this link to learn about this important initiative: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwJXxtFnG>

CHANGE OF WATCHES

Every year our Squadron conducts a "Change of Watch" (COW) ceremony usually at a dinner meeting. This ceremony is very informal and establishes the ABCHH Board positions for the following year. This year our COW is scheduled for November 11. Details, as of now, are still to be determined because of COVID-19. We may have to hold it virtually given the situation at the time. More news on that later.

Our district (D26) COW is scheduled for October 30 and 31. As members of ABCHH you are invited to attend via ZOOM - just click on: District Fall Conference Overview and District Fall Conference Registration Form.

COAST GUARD SURVEY REQUEST

Are you an East Coast Boater who cruises skinny waters? If so, the Coast Guard needs your help with a short survey. To participate in the 5-minute online survey, which will help improve the Nation's shallow draft waterways ATON system, go directly to the Coast Guard website and survey link at: <https://www.uscgboating.org/multimedia/news-detail.php?id=538>

Fall is here...it's going to be great boating weather. See you on the water. Be safe!

FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



Tom Ryley
Education Officer



Brad Loescher
Asst. Education Officer

Dear Members,

Even before the challenges of dealing with COVID, the USPS and our Hilton Head squadron were moving forward to utilize online learning in addition to in-class learning, as well as combinations of the two, which is known as "blended learning." During the Boat Handling seminars in January and February, we were videoing the classes, and in some cases had people observing remotely. With the advent of COVID however, we were forced to rapidly advance our efforts, with the loss of physical venues for in-person classes.

Over the spring and summer, we conducted the Marine Electronics course entirely online, and then conducted four different seminars entirely online, using the squadrons ZOOM account. There was considerable learning as to what worked well, and what didn't work as well ... yet our ambition has always been to get back to giving our students the ability to participate in person, both for the quality of learning experience, and the social aspects of being able to meet and interact with fellow members of the squadron.

The good news is that with the reopening of the Senior Center, we are now able to offer the "in-person" option again, albeit with new protocols with respect to social distancing, facility cleaning, and limitations on attendance. . On the other hand, COVID remains persistently with us, which means that it will be important to continue to offer our members the option to participate in courses and seminars remotely. The first course where we have offered this explicit choice is Cruise and Cruise Planning, which began September 14, instructed by Peter Dion and Hal Wilson. The several sessions held so far have had some registrants both in class, and some participating from home, and again there has been experimentation to figure how to meet the needs of both most effectively.

As to going forward, our current plan is to try and have the "learning" option for all courses and seminars, (with the exception of the Americas Boating Course, which being an 8-hour course of generally new boaters, we practically feel we need to do solely in-person, though of course with the COVID protocols.) There may be a few other courses and seminars where "in-person" is also the only practical approach, such as "Knots and Lines" and some of the advanced courses involving extensive chart plotting, but we will determine that as we proceed. As a general principle, however, our plan is to try and give our members the ongoing choice between in-person and online education.

One distinction we do want to make, however, is that by "blended learning" and "online learning", our squadron leadership believes that both should be "real time" and "instructor led." Certainly, the

USPS is offering self-directed courses that students can enroll in and do on their own time, but this is being provided outside the aegis of our local Hilton Head squadron. Within our organization, we will continue to focus our efforts on education that allows **direct** engagement and questioning with our instructors, and which seeks to use education to not only build knowledge and skills, but also a connection with other members, and with the broader activities of our squadron.

As to our schedule for the fall, after Cruise and Cruise Planning is over, next up will be the ABC course on Saturday, October 24, at the Boathouse in Ridgeland. We would prefer to offer this closer to the island, but for the time being the Boathouse is the best available venue that has the necessary space and facilities to run an all day, in-person course. (Also, thanks again to David Hughes and Grant and Jennifer Kaple from the Hilton Head Boathouse for being so accommodating to us). If this session becomes "sold out" to the class limit of 25, we will offer it again in November.

Beyond ABC, we will also again offer all six seminars of the Boat Handling course prior to yearend. This course was very popular last winter, as it is very "practical skills" oriented, and is the logical follow on to ABC. The seminars can be taken individually, but to achieve credit for the full course, students must register for the course specifically, and also successfully complete the exam at the end. Graduates are then awarded the "S" designation for Seamanship. We would encourage all recent ABC participants to consider doing the Boat Handling course, as it is definitely geared to being safer and more comfortable out on our local waters, and is the "gateway" course to a number of our advanced course offerings.

As always, many thanks to our course and seminar instructors, without which we could not have our education program. The preparation time for them is significant, as well as the time to stand up and lead the sessions. Please remember to thank them for their significant efforts.

Boating Around Daufuskie Island

By Captain Paul Hoyte



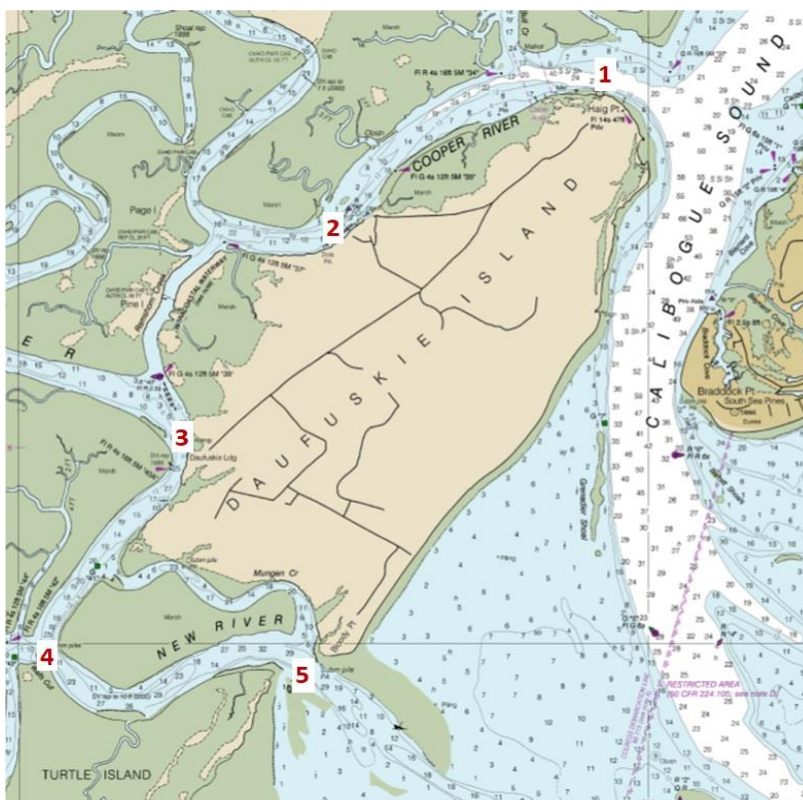
Daufuskie, in all its natural and unspoiled glory, is a beautiful representation of a sea island that's rooted in the history of the South. This mostly rustic and rural island is a favorite of locals and visitors, some of whom live on the island and others who visit the island for some adventure, golf, and the great local cooking that can be found in its eateries.

But today was not the time to be exploring by land, but to cruise around the island and admire its beauty from the water. On September 3rd, 11 boats of ABC cruisers, joined us to enjoy the scenery and get some navigation tips on how to successfully circumnavigate the island.



Once everyone arrived at the R32 marker, we were ready to go. Our narrator for this cruise was Nancy Stermer, who presented several bits of history and perspective at five locations on the island.

Our route took us down the Western side of the island, down the Cooper River.



1. The Haig Point Lighthouse, our first landmark and the focus of the narration, was built to guide captains navigating Calibogue Sound and ships from the Atlantic to Savannah.
2. We drove further south to the Freeport Marina, originally called Cooper River Landing, where the Daufuskie Crab Company is located. This is one of the favorite eateries on the island where several of the boaters and visitors alike go to sample the great island food, and kickoff their day of exploration.



Here we are approaching Freeport and catching up to hear the narration on the radio about the marina and the next set of docks - Melrose Landing.



← Taking off to the Beaufort County Dock



3. The Beaufort County Dock, which you may see referenced on nautical charts as Daufuskie Landing, is home to what was once Marshside Mama's, an iconic, rustic restaurant that defined the edgy vibe of remote Daufuskie. It is currently the starting point for a great walk to Lucy Belle's - another local favorite serving great Southern food.

We arrive at the New River and Cooper River → junction and gather up to get some navigation → tips before heading out to Bloody Point.



←Cruising down the New River gave us the opportunity to see Turtle Island - one of the last remaining undisturbed barrier-island

beaches in South Carolina. It is a protected island, important for endangered birds and other wildlife.

5. We arrive at Bloody Point, the southern-most tip of the island and the site of a violent 1715 battle that was the origin of this area's name. Again, Nancy provided some interesting history on the events that created this unique point of interest.



The next challenge -
facing the Atlantic.
Immediate observation -
no land in sight, but we
had to head out there ...
notice how calm it was???



The reason for the long ride to the southeast before turning north to head up the eastern shore of the island. The area circled in red can lead mariners into thinking it's easy and safe to cut across since there appears to be so much water.....wrong!!! Do that and you might have to wait until the next high tide to float off.

After having made the turn, we then sailed northward and picked up the Calibogue channel and made the safe return passing the southern tip of Hilton Head island.

It was exciting and enjoyable.
We hope to see some new faces
again when we do this again
next year.

Heading for lunch/home.

**Next trip: Circumnavigating
Hilton Head Island Cruise -
October 8 and 20.**



Wassaw Island Beach Party

By Bob Newbert, AP



“We may cancel even if skies are sunny”

--ABCHH Wassaw Island Cruise Invitation, August 25, 2020

How prophetic those words!

We moved our Wassaw Island adventure, originally scheduled for September 21, to September 24. Sure, skies were bright & clear on the 21st; but Ossabaw Sound, which is known for rough water, had 28 mph winds, 40 mph gusts and 6 ft. seas.

Good move on the move.

Unfortunately, we were without several members who could not join us on the new date due to schedule conflicts. Still, September 24 was a glorious day with blue sky, warm sun, and gentle breezes. As we said in our cruise invite: “If you liked Ossabaw Island, you will love Wassaw Island.”

And love it we did!

After a three-hour journey, we landed on Wassaw Island, an uninhabited, 10,000-acre National Wildlife Refuge. No people. No stores. No roads. Just “where the wild things are.”

Wassaw is a very young island having formed in 400 AD -- almost “yesterday” in geologic time. By contrast, neighboring islands are millions of years old. Wassaw is also the most primitive island on the Georgia coast with virgin forest that has never been cleared for timber, cotton, cattle, or agriculture of any kind. The US Fish & Wildlife Service manages Wassaw Island and their job is to keep it wild.

After putting ashore, we hiked across the island on a barely discernable trail that included climbing a 50 ft. high, vegetated sand dune – a mountain in the Lowcountry– to reach a deserted 7-mile, white sand beach.

We walked the beach, collected shells, and got up close & personal with ghost crabs. We picnicked. We swam. And we body surfed. We had a blast.

We also learned about sea turtles from a Caretta Research Project staffer on the island to collect protective fencing from now empty sea turtle nests. (The Caretta Research Project is an ongoing, 47-year study to ensure the long-term protection of sea turtles).

How lucky were we. Ten thousand uninhabited acres with miles of empty beach and we bump into the only other person on the island – a researcher on sea turtles. Here are highlights from what turned out to be a delightful, unplanned, classroom “field trip”:

- After making their mad dash to the safety of the ocean, hatchlings swim for days to get to the Gulf Stream.
- Once in the deep ocean, they head for the Azores or Sargasso Sea where they spend the next 10-years or so.
- They then head back to “home” waters staying offshore for another 20-years until maturity when they mate and come ashore (often on the beach where they hatched) to lay eggs 30-years after they first entered the water.
- Only 1 in 10,000 lives to return and breed.
- Females lay eggs into their 90’s.
- Temperature determines the sex of hatchlings. Warmer eggs on the top of the clutch become females and cooler eggs at the bottom become males. Chicks are “hot;” guys are “cool.”
- This is the opposite of alligator eggs where the guys are hot and the chicks are cool.

This year, the Caretta Research Project documented 230 sea turtle nests on Wassaw Island with 13,103 hatchlings. Statistically, only one or two will make it back 30-years from now.

We are going to do much better at America's Boating Club of Hilton Head, however. Our Wassaw Island Beach Party was one of the highlights of our year. We will definitely be back again, but perhaps not into our 90's. After all, the hike and climb up a sand dune could be a little tough on 90-year olds.



GEMMA GATTI, on her 1st ABCHH cruise, makes her way through the most primitive island on the Georgia coast.



GOING UP Wassaw Island's 50-foot mountain (Eric Sutherland and Bob Newbert)



COMING DOWN the mountain are ABCHH guests (front) Karen Andersen, Roberta and Joe Brackin.



MILES OF BEAUTIFUL BEACH on Wassaw Island



MARY RICHARDSON refuels after a hike, a climb, and a swim.



BEACH BOYS Eric Sutherland and Bob Newbert



THE PERFECT WINE PAIRING for potato chips on a deserted island (FROM RIGHT): Susan Sutherland, Eric Sutherland, and their Milwaukee guests Susan and Stacy Terris.



"MY WHAT BIG EYES YOU HAVE MY DEAR" - Ghost Crab which eats turtle eggs. We got right in his face, but he didn't blink. This is a crab with attitude.

BELOW: PETE DION with our “instructor” from the Caretta Research Project.

RIGHT: SEA TURTLE NEST protected from predators by the Caretta Research Project. (This photo is from Bob Newbert’s scouting trip to Wassaw Island on August 12.)



CRP
Caretta Research Project
Protecting Georgia's Sea Turtles Since 1973

2020 Turtle Activity Update

Counts as of 19 September 2020

Nests: 223 Loggerhead (4 Kemp's Ridley-Loggerhead hybrid) and 3 Green!

Nesting Turtles: 93 Loggerheads, 1 Green!

Nests Inventoried: 209

Hatchlings: 13,103

**YTD NESTING RESULTS on Wassaw Island
(as of September 19, 2020)**



WASSAW ADVENTURERS (L to R): Mary Richardson, Susan Sutherland, Stacy Terris, Eric Sutherland, Roberta Brackin, Joe Brackin, Gemma Gatti, Karen Anderson, Barb Sommers, Pete Dion, Debbie Dion, and Susan Terris.



MARY RICHARDSON & GEMMA GATTI aboard Pete and Debbie Dion's "Lady D."



FORMER COMMANDER Barb Sommers enjoying the cruise to Wassaw Island.



US FISH & WILDLIFE permits one boat to tie up on the outside of their dock. Others must raft up or put their boats ashore. We put Pete Dion's "Lady D" on the dock and rafted. Here, Gemma Gatti, Debbie Dion and Mary Richardson wave goodbye as rafters depart.

Buck and Middle Marsh Islands

By Christine Dattilo



The winds had been high for at least a week, but finally settled down to make for a perfect weather day on Wednesday, September 23rd. Nine boats set out to explore Middle Marsh and Buck Islands.

Down Middle Marsh Island we stopped and learned about farming Oysters. There we saw dozens of cages, each containing 4-6 bags of 150+ oyster singles (not clusters), growing in the pristine waters between the May and Cooper Rivers. In 18 months these oysters will become Oysters on The Half-Shell, prized by diners everywhere.

Our next stop was in front of the docks of Buck Island, where we dreamed of owning our own private island. It is for sale! Not only will you get 2 houses, 3 boats, a golf cart, but they also include a Helipad if you get tired of arriving by boat.

Our last stop was at Broad Creek Marina for a delicious lunch at Fish Camp. We brought out our charts, retraced our steps and navigational tips, and headed home after a great day on the water.

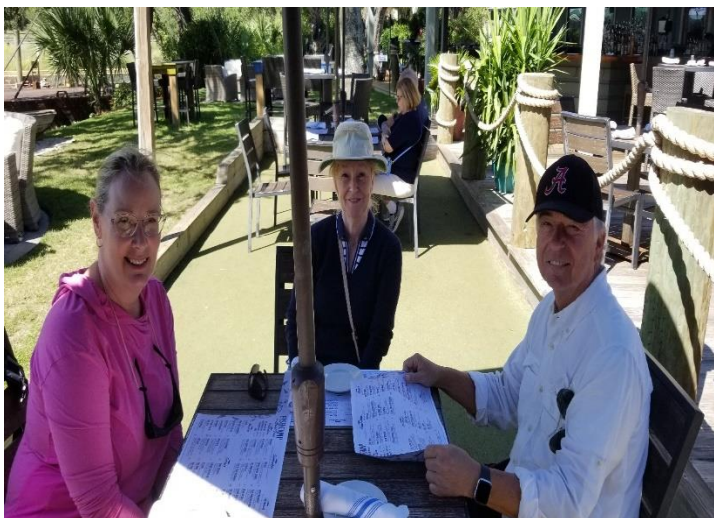


Joe Dattilo, Jim Murphy, Chris Dattilo,
Daniel Allen, Sarah Allen



Deborah Pepe, Michael Kozyr, Sohpie Kozyr, Al Pepe

PICTURES FOR THIS ARTICLE WERE SUBMITTED BY PAUL HOYTE.



Rebecca Jeffries, Tina Thompson, John Thompson



Paul and Nancy Hoyte



Jim and Jean Brennan with Nancy Stermer



Michael and Sophie Kozyr with Deborah and Al Pepe



Joe and Chris Dattilo aboard their new boat.



Boats cruising past oyster farms - Middle Marsh Channel