

From: SC News from SCIWAY <sciway-news@sc-news.net>  
To: Kester, Tonykester@aging.sc.gov  
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Subject: Greenville's Euphoria2015 + Charleston's Crab Bank Sanctuary

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## { SC's September Calendar + Our Featured SC Event }

September 18 — This year's **September Calendar of SC Events** is brought to you by Greenville's 25th anniversary **euphoria** celebration. Founded by platinum-selling singer and songwriter Edwin McCain and restaurateur Carl Sobocinski, **euphoria** educates, entices, enlightens, and entertains. This anticipated weekend-long event includes exclusive tasting events, cooking demonstrations, seminars, as well as multi-course dinners and live musical performances. Dedicated to education, **euphoria** features domestic and international wines, celebrity chefs, master sommeliers, and recording artists. Every September, **euphoria** shines a spotlight on Greenville, one of South Carolina's thriving Culinary and Arts Communities. Greenville, situated at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, stands out with its award-winning downtown, vast entertainment options, and diverse population.

**[See all the other great South Carolina events coming up in September.](#)**

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## { A Sacred Space: Crab Bank Seabird Sanctuary }

Situated in the **Charleston** Harbor between two iconic landmarks – **Shem Creek** and **Fort Mifflin** – rests a narrow strip of land called **Crab Bank**. The 22-acre islet was documented on maps more than 250 years ago as a sand bar. By the 1950s the sand bar had become an island. As dredge spoil from Shem Creek accreted, the bank built up with sediment. Vulnerable to erosion caused by ship passing wakes, the island's shape and size frequently shift. However, Crab Bank has not been completely submerged since before 1979, the first year it was high enough to be used as a nesting ground for seabirds.

( [Vanessa Kauffmann](#) © Do Not Use Without Written Consent )

Since that pivotal time, Crab Bank has proven to be one of the state's most prolific seabird nests. Fifteen different **species of birds**, including **brown pelicans** (seen below), black skimmers, roseate spoonbills, and American oystercatchers, use the island for breeding during the summer nesting season. Others, such as double-breasted cormorants and ring-billed gulls, rest and feed on the island in winter. One of the reasons for Crab Bank's success as a nesting colony is the island's natural vegetation, which keeps birds and nests safe from predators such as raccoons.

( [Vanessa Kauffmann](#) © Do Not Use Without Written Consent )

The need to protect wildlife within the Charleston Harbor was recognized in 1986 with the creation of the Charleston Harbor Wildlife Sanctuary, which prohibited people from hunting, taking, or physically disrupting mammals and birds, including eggs, within the harbor. Yet, this designation did not prevent people and their canine friends from exploring Crab Bank and inadvertently disturbing the nesting birds. The island's proximity to the local beaches and Shem Creek (seen below with Crab Bank just off the shore) made it a popular stop for boaters and paddlers.

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One particular problem facing the nests was the exposure of eggs to the scorching sun when people and their dogs would come ashore, scaring away nesting birds. Visitors would also accidentally crush eggs while walking, as the seabirds build their nests on the ground. The solution came in 2005 when the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources designated Crab Bank, along with Deveau Island, Edisto Island and Bird Key off Folly Beach, as a seabird sanctuary.

( [Vanessa Kauffmann](#) © Do Not Use Without Written Consent )

Today people are no longer allowed on the island from March 15th through October 15th, which is the official nesting season. During the remaining months, the island is open only to hikers. Pets and camping remain strictly prohibited at all times. The island is monitored by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

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Since Crab Bank became a bird sanctuary, populations have increased dramatically. In its first sanctuary, Crab Bank's number of royal tern nests rose from 346 to 1,639. Other species shown a significant jump in nest numbers. Royal terns can be seen in the below photo.

( [Vanessa Kauffmann](#) © Do Not Use Without Written Consent )

Though the island itself is mostly inaccessible, people are invited to explore it from the water in motorized boats. However, boaters are advised to avoid creating wakes, which aid the experience of approaching Crab Bank Seabird Sanctuary during nesting season can be overwhelming to the senses, with thousands of birds calling in the breeze, feeding from their parents' mouth overhead, and guarding their nests.

( [Vanessa Kauffmann](#) © Do Not Use Without Written Consent )

Paddlers can usually hear the birds before they see them, and when they approach the island

witness a flurry of activity. The experience of watching wildlife thrive on this small yet important land is encouraging to those who value the ecology of the South Carolina Lowcountry.

( [Vanessa Kauffmann](#) © Do Not Use Without Written Consent )

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## { [Vanessa Kauffmann: A True Friend](#) }

*This month we're pleased to feature [Vanessa Kauffmann](#), the artist behind each of the photos.*

I don't know Vanessa Kauffmann's middle name, but it may as well be Amazing. Not only is she exquisite, but her heart is kind beyond compare. Once, when my best friend Louisa was dying, she volunteered to come [take pictures](#) of us, free of charge.

( [Vanessa Kauffmann](#) © Do Not Use Without Written Consent )

Vanessa, a fearless flyer, has been contributing both ground and [aerial photography](#) to the Carolina Picture Project for years. Despite the fact that she's stunningly talented, she's far from arrogant. On the contrary, she remains one of the most patient, easy-going, and generous artists I've ever met.

Vanessa may also be the most *exciting* artist I've met. In fact, her middle name could just as well be Adventure, because her roaming spirit knows no bounds. Vanessa thinks nothing of hopping in a helicopter or roaming through fields in a pair of boots to capture that perfect shot. Once she even flew the [Blue Angels' "Fat Albert" C-130](#) while documenting the MCAS Beaufort Airshow for SCIPP that's dedication!

Although she originally hails from South Africa, Vanessa shares a special love for our state's [culture](#), often turning her lens to [local agriculture](#) and other increasingly rare trades such as [sustainable farming](#) and [shrimping](#). She has been a good friend to the Lowcountry's Gullah community, [commemorations](#) and native lifeways, and she also acts as a photographer of record for [Plantation](#). A recent project, devoted to [Southern summer crops](#), had her driving 700 miles to capture photos of Upstate farms in one weekend!

Then again, weekends are seldom ordinary events in Vanessa's world, as any one of them could find her along the backroads of South Carolina, finding miracles in the places most of us pass by every day. As you can see from [her images in the SC Picture Project](#), her work possesses a magical luminosity, and no matter which humble barn or ancient oak she captures, we are all there for it.

– [Robin](#)

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