The Dunes and Beach

Sand dunes are the first line of defense on our beaches against strong winds and powerful waves. These large hills of sand are held in place by a net-like system of roots provided by plants such as Sea Oats, Greenbriers, Bitter Sea Beach Grass, Beach Morning Glory, and Pennywort. These plants are low to the ground help them withstand the high winds and salt spray that comes with their proximity to the ocean.

The dunes of Bald Head Island is a beautiful and fragile habitat that is important to a number of different animals, such as ghost crabs, lizards, grazing deer, and nesting birds. If you've ever heard, "keep off the dunes!", that's mainly for the safety of shorebird nesting areas. Here on Bald Head, we have terns, plovers, sanderlings, and gulls. These birds have stilt-like legs to keep their feathers out of the water!

Check out the Frying Pan Shoals at Beach Access 39 for great birding and shell-finding opportunities!