The State Bird



Photo courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources—Joey Frazier

Carolina Wren

The Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) is a member of the family Troglodytidae. It is present in all areas in South Carolina from the coast to the highest mountain. The song; which may be interpreted as tea-ket-tle, tea-ket-tle, tea-ket-tle, tea-ket-tle; may be heard the year-round, day and night, in all kinds of weather.

The Carolina Wren is slightly smaller than an English Sparrow and has a conspicuous white stripe over the eyes. The back of its body is rufous-red with underparts somewhat lighter in color. The tail, which is finely barred with black, is held erect when the bird is excited.

Note: Prior to 1939 "The Carolina Wren" had been unofficially recognized as the State Bird of S.C. In 1939, the General Assembly passed Act No. 311 designating the Mockingbird as the official Bird of the State. Act No. 693, 1948, was passed repealing the 1939 Act and designating the Carolina Wren as the official State Bird instead of the Mockingbird.

The State Flower

The Yellow Jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) was officially adopted by the General Assembly on February 1, 1924, for the following reasons: it is indigenous to every nook and corner of the State; it is the first premonitor of coming Spring; its fragrance greets us first in the woodland and its delicate flower suggests the pureness of gold; its perpetual return out of the dead Winter suggests the lesson of constancy in, loyalty to, and patriotism in the service of the State.



Photo courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources—Joey Frazier

Yellow Jessamine

"No flower that blooms holds such perfume, As kindness and sympathy won. Wherever there grows the sheltering pine Is clinging a Yellow Jessamine vine."

From "Legend of the Yellow Jessamine," by Mrs. Teresa Strickland of Anderson, S.C., when the flower was made the emblem of Dixie Chapter, U.D.C., about 1906.

The "Carolina or Yellow Jessamine" is defined by the New International Encyclopedia as "A climbing plant which grows upon trees and fences and bears a profusion of yellow, funnel-shaped flowers an inch in diameter, with a fragrance similar to that of the true Jasmine." Its odor on a damp evening or morning fills the atmosphere with a rare and delicate sweetness.

"As fair as Southern Chivalry, As pure as truth, and shaped like stars"...

The State Flag



Asked by the Revolutionary Council of Safety on January 26, 1776, to design a flag for the use of South Carolina troops, Col. William Moultrie chose a blue which matched the color of their uniforms and a crescent which reproduced the silver emblem worn on the front of their caps. The palmetto tree was added later to represent Moultrie's heroic defense of the palmetto-log fort on Sullivan's Island against the attack of the British fleet on June 28, 1776.

South Carolina needed a national flag after it seceded from the Union on December 20, 1860. The General Assembly considered a wide range of designs, but on January 28, 1861, added the palmetto to Moultrie's original design, thereby officially creating the flag as we know it today. A resolution proposing changing the color to "royal purple" as a memorial to the Confederate dead was resoundingly defeated in 1899, leaving the flag's Revolutionary War symbolism intact.

By statute the flag shall be displayed "upon the inside of every public school building in this State so that all school children shall be instructed in proper respect for the flag," and daily except in rainy weather, from a staff upon the State House and from a staff upon each county courthouse. The State Flag is also to be displayed in accordance with rules set by the State Superintendent of Education, on the grounds of educational institutions supported in whole or in part, by funds derived from the State. It is also prescribed that any person who mutilates, injures, or desecrates the State Flag, wherever displayed, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not more than $100 or by imprisonment for not more than 30 days, or both.

The State Tree

Adopted as the "Official State Tree of the State of South Carolina" by Joint Resolution No. 63, approved March 17, 1939.

The South Carolina Palmetto is classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as "Inodes Palmetto (also called Sabal Palmetto) and commonly known as the Cabbage Palmetto." It has long been closely associated with the history of South Carolina, being represented on the State Flag as well as on the State Seal, where it is symbolical of the defeat of the British fleet by the fort, built of Palmetto logs, on Sullivan's Island.



Palmetto

The Palmetto is an attractive feature of the coastal areas of South Carolina and is also found in Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina. The large leafbud is highly prized as a salad vegetable for use in making pickles or relishes, and in Florida some use has been made of the fibers from the leaf bases. Such uses, however, are wasteful since the palm must be destroyed in either case and years must lapse before it can be replaced.
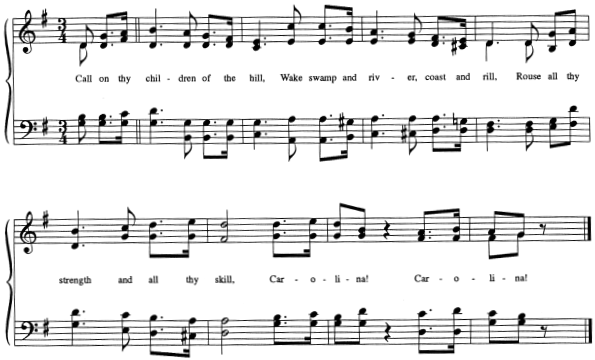
The Salute to the Flag of South Carolina

"I salute the Flag of South Carolina and pledge to the Palmetto State love, loyalty, and faith."

(Written in 1950 by Mrs. John Raymond Carson of Chester and adopted by the 1966 General Assembly upon the request of the Wade Hampton Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.)

The State Songs
"Carolina"

Words by Henry Timrod — Music by Anne Custis Burgess
Edited by G. R. Goodwin



Hold up the glories of thy dead;
Say how thy elder children bled,
And point to Eutaw's battle-bed.
Carolina! Carolina!

Thy skirts indeed the foe may part,
Thy robe be pierced with sword and dart,
They shall not touch thy noble heart,
Carolina! Carolina!

Throw thy bold banner to the breeze!
Front with thy ranks the threatening seas
Like thine own proud armorial trees,
Carolina! Carolina!

Girt with such wills to do and bear,
Assured in right, and mailed in prayer,
Thou wilt not bow thee to despair,
Carolina! Carolina!

Acting on the memorial of the South Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution that the patriotic song "Carolina," written by Henry Timrod, South Carolina's most beloved poet, set to music by Miss Anne Custis Burgess, be made "legally the State Song," the General Assembly, on February 11, 1911, adopted Senator W. L. Mauldin's Concurrent Resolution that it "be accented and declared to be the State Song of South Carolina."

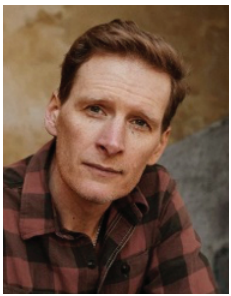
"South Carolina on My Mind"

"South Carolina on My Mind" created, sung, and recorded by Hank Martin and Buzz Arledge, native South Carolinians, was designated by Act No. 302, 1984, as an official State Song.

"Carolina When I Die"

Written by Patrick Davis, "Carolina When I Die" was designated as an Official State Song by Act No. 206, 2026.

Poet Laureate



Patrick Davis

Patrick Davis is an American songwriter, performer, television host, and the Poet Laureate of South Carolina. Over two decades on the road, he has built a career defined by storytelling, a strong sense of place, and songs that speak to home. His work has been recorded by artists including Guy Clark, Jimmy Buffett, Darius Rucker, Jewel, Imelda May, Morgan Wallen, and Robert Randolph, while his own catalog has earned him a devoted following nationwide. Davis is also the host of the national PBS/APT/ETV series *Southern Songwriters with Patrick Davis*, the founder of the exclusive *Songwriters in Paradise* series and the writer and performer of "Carolina When I Die," now officially recognized as a South Carolina State Song.

The State Stone

The General Assembly by Act No. 345 in 1969, adopted the Blue Granite as the official Stone of the State. The Act stated that "the blue granite stone of this State has been widely used to beautify all areas of South Carolina."



Blue Granite

The State Animal



Photo by Phillip Jones
Courtesy of S.C. Wildlife Magazine

Whitetail Deer

The whitetail deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) is South Carolina's State Animal, designated by Act No. 1334 in 1972. This species of deer is one of the greatest game animals in North America and our state's most sought after game. The whitetail deer is quite plentiful in South Carolina and some areas of the State have the longest deer-hunting season and most liberal bag limit in the United States. Every county in South Carolina features an open season on deer.

The State Fish



Photo courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources—Joey Frazier

Striped Bass

The Striped Bass (*Morone saxatilis*), designated by Act No. 1333, 1972, is South Carolina's State Fish. The state's most famous game fish, its large size and aggressive nature make it an angler's favorite. The Santee Cooper Lakes were the original home of the landlocked Striped Bass. Some of the best Striped Bass fishing in the world can be found in these lakes, with many stripers weighing 30 to 40 pounds. These great game fish have also been stocked in all of the state's major reservoirs.

The State Popular Music

South Carolina Beach Music

Beach Music Logo

Beach Music is the official popular music of South Carolina, designated by Act No. 15, 2001. Beach music has contributed tremendously to the enjoyment of our citizens and has become synonymous with the Shag.

The State Dance

The Shag is the official Dance of the State, designated by Act No. 329, 1984. The Shag, one of the great developments of terpsichorean culture and native to this State, is performed to music known as rhythm and blues. Both the music and dance are structured on time signature and can be performed to almost any tempo, as long as the basic step is maintained and kept in time to the music.



Shag Logo

The State Wild Game Bird

The wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) is South Carolina's official State Wild Game Bird, designated by Act No. 508 in 1976. The wild turkey is a bird of the deep woods and hardwood forests. It is a prized game bird and is considered a table delicacy. Wild turkeys are hunted only during the spring season and are found throughout the State, primarily on game management lands.



Photo by Nancy Lee
Courtesy of the National Wild Turkey Federation

Wild Turkey

The State Fruit



Peach

The General Assembly declared the peach as the official Fruit of the State by Act No. 360 in 1984. South Carolina is the nation's leading peach producer and shipper east of the Mississippi River.

The State Shell

Photo courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources—Joey Frazier



Oliva sayana

The Lettered Olive (*Oliva sayana*) was designated the official Shell of the State by Act No. 360 in 1984. Dr. Edmund Ravenel of Charleston, S.C., an early pioneer in conchology, found and named the Lettered Olive shell which is quite prolific along the S.C. Coast.

The State Beverage



Milk

Milk was designated as the official State Beverage by Act No. 360 in 1984.

The State Reptile

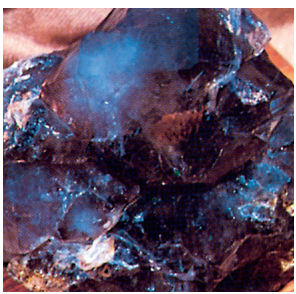


Photo courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources—Joey Pinzior

Loggerhead Sea Turtle

The Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) was designated as the official Reptile of the State by the General Assembly on June 1, 1988, by Act No. 588. Loggerhead Sea Turtles are recognized as a threatened specie and the destruction of their nesting habitat further threatens them with extinction. They perform extended migration between their feeding grounds and rookeries, and S.C. is considered to have some of the most pristine nesting areas used by Loggerhead Sea Turtles on the eastern coast.

The State Gem Stone



Amethyst

The Amethyst was designated as the official State Gem Stone by the General Assembly June 24, 1969, by Act No. 345. "S.C. is one of three states where the gem stone Amethyst of good quality is found in the U.S.; the curator of mineralogy for the Smithsonian Institute has graded one of the largest early specimens from this State as the finest seen in this country; such stone now holds first place in the Amethyst section in the institute...is the most prized type of quartz for its wide use and various shades and hue from deep orchid color."

The State Dog



© Sam Holland

Boykin Spaniel

The Boykin Spaniel designated by Act No. 31, 1985, is the official Dog of the State. The Boykin Spaniel is the only dog which was originally bred for S.C. hunters by South Carolinians and has developed into a breed of superb hunting instincts and mild temperament. They are highly regarded as pets and hunting dogs.

The State Insect



Photo courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources—Joey Frazier

Carolina Mantid

The Carolina Mantid, *Stagmomantis carolina* (Johannson), or praying mantis, was designated the State Insect by the General Assembly by Act No. 591 of 1988 for the following reasons: it is a native, beneficial insect that is easily recognizable throughout the State; it symbolizes the importance of the natural science of entomology and its special role in all forms of agriculture in helping to control harmful insects; and it provides a perfect specimen of living science for the children of this State.

The State Botanical Garden

The Botanical Garden at Clemson University was designated South Carolina's State Botanical Garden by Act No. 288 of 1992. Considered one of the state's most beautiful and diverse public gardens, its 250 acres are home to wildflower, fern, bog and turf gardens, a pioneer village, a braille trail, and a special garden for the walking impaired. Considered an outstanding educational resource, the Garden has more than 100,000 visitors each year who come to observe, study, and explore nature's endless wonders. The Garden hosts numerous cultural events throughout the year, offering a glorious setting "where nature and culture meet."



Botanical Garden Logo

The State Butterfly

The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, (*Papilio glaucus*) was designated the official Butterfly of the State by Act No. 319 in 1994. The first known painting was done in 1587 by John White, a commander in Sir Walter Raleigh's Expedition to the colonies. The Garden Club of South Carolina has identified the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail of particular interest to South Carolinians because it serves as a pollinator in orchards and gardens. It can be seen in deciduous woods, along streams, rivers and wooded swamps, and in towns and cities throughout South Carolina.



Photo courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources—Jeep Frazier

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly

The State American Folk Dance



Square Dancing

The General Assembly designated the Square Dance as the official American Folk Dance of the State by Act No. 329 in 1994. Square dancing is a traditional form of family recreation in South Carolina and is an activity for young and old, which has been recorded throughout South Carolina's history. Square dancing is the American Folk Dance which is called, cued, or prompted to the dancers and includes squares, rounds, clogging, contra, line, and heritage dances.

The State Hospitality Beverage



© Sam Holland

Tea

South Carolina grown tea was designated the official Hospitality Beverage of the State by Act No. 31, 1995. South Carolina is the first place in the United States where tea was grown having been planted in the Lowcountry outside of Charleston in 1799 at what is now Middleton Place. Now the direct descendants of those very plants have been restored to their former grandeur at the Charleston Tea Plantation, a lush, subtropical tea farm, nestled on a serene sea island near the historic City of Charleston.

The State Railroad Museum

The General Assembly designated the S.C. Railroad Museum in Fairfield County as the official Railroad Museum of the State of S.C. by Act No. 155, Part II, Sec. 60 in 1997. The Museum possesses a unique collection of over 50 items of antique rolling stock and locomotives. This includes the only remaining steam locomotive built expressly for use in the Palmetto State.



Hampton and Branchville Railroad #44

The State Music

The General Assembly designated the Spiritual as the official music of the State by Act No. 64 in 1999. The Spiritual is a song originating in the slave era that deals primarily with a religious or sacred theme. Much of this music originated along the coastal regions of South Carolina which was a major port of entry for slaves in North America. Performances of The Hallelujah Singers, a popular South Carolina singing group, characterize this type music.



Spiritual Singers