



Bestselling novelist Mary Alice Monroe on her new book, her next project, and her upcoming fundraiser for the Beaufort County Open Land Trust and Nemours Wildlife Foundation.

By Margaret Evans, Editor

Mary Alice Monroe is what they call 'a force of nature.'

She's a powerful force *for* nature, too, having just finished the fourth and final novel in her "Lowcountry Summer" series, a family saga set on Sullivan's Island that addresses the plight of the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin. It's just the latest in a long and prolific career writing what Monroe calls "purpose-driven" environmental fiction.

About her decision to incorporate the dolphin into this particular series, the award-winning, *New York Times* best-selling author wrote on her blog a few years ago, "I have many species I want to write about, a long list. I wait for some sign from the universe, some tapping on my intuition, a whispering that tells me 'choose *this* one

now

.' One day, during a special meeting for the board members of the South Carolina Aquarium, I got 'the sign' when guest Philippe Cousteau urged me to write a book set against the issues threatening dolphins today. I had just seen the film

The Cove

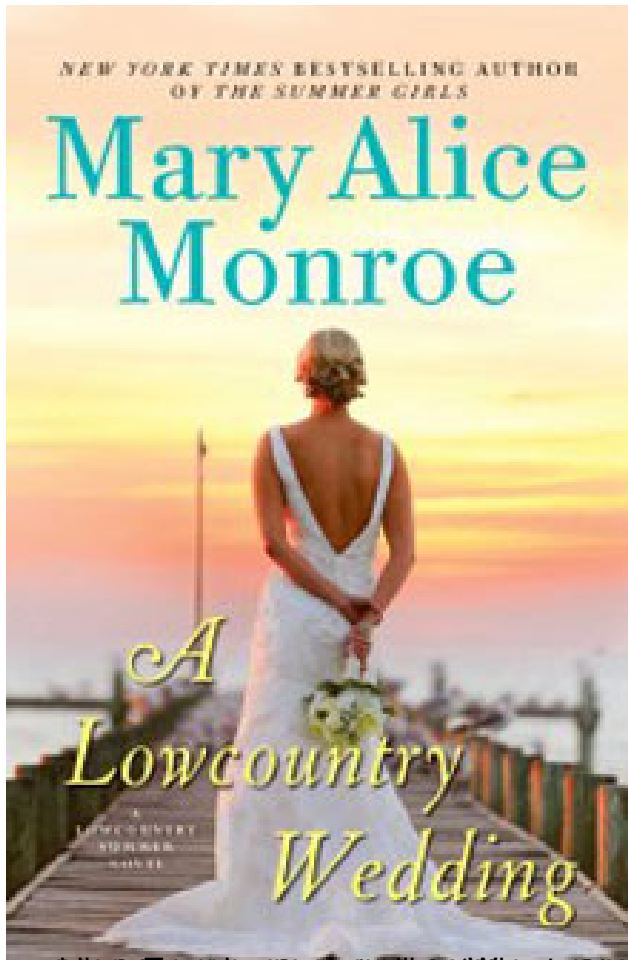
, and Dr. Pat Fair from NOAA had informed us that almost half of the dolphins living in Charleston's estuarine waters were sick. Shocking! So I cannonballed off that proverbial dock into the world of wild dolphins, and after three years of research surfaced with not one story but three!"

Monroe finished that planned "trilogy" with the publication of *The Summer's End* last May. But then something interesting happened.

"The trilogy was done . . . but I realized I wasn't. For me, the story just wasn't finished. I needed to see how things settled out."

So now the trilogy is a quartet. *A Lowcountry Wedding* will be out next month, completing the story of the Muir sisters in grand southern style.

"There were some engagements in the last book," says Monroe, who lives on a barrier island near Charleston. "In this one, I wanted to explore the idea of the Lowcountry



more information about this book and the author, please visit the Mary Alice Monroe Foundation website at www.maryalicemonro.org. You can also find more information about the Mary Alice Monroe Foundation at www.maryalicemonro.org.