1. **NAME**
   - **COMMON:** Buzzard's Island
   - **AND/OR HISTORIC:** (38CH23)

2. **LOCATION**
   - **STREET AND NUMBER:**
   - **CITY OR TOWN:** Mount Pleasant
   - **STATE:** South Carolina
   - **COUNTY:** Charleston
   - **CODE:** 09

3. **CLASSIFICATION**
   - **CATEGORY:** Site
   - **OWNERSHIP:** Public
   - **STATUS:** Occupied
   - **ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:** Yes
     - **PRESENT USE:** None

4. **OWNER OF PROPERTY**
   - [Blank]

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**
   - **COUNTY COURTHOUSE:** Charleston
   - **STATE:** South Carolina
   - **CODE:** 39

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**
   - **TITLE OF SURVEY:** None
   - **DATE OF SURVEY:** [Blank]
   - **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:** [Blank]
Buzzard's Island is a prehistoric Indian shell midden deposited in a ring shape. The average diameter from crest to crest is about 100 feet. The perimeter and central area are overgrown by trees. The midden is predominantly oyster shell with lesser amounts of other molluscs. Pottery sherds are common on the outside edges of the ring, which are subject to wave action during highest tides and storms. A limited amount of excavation was undertaken here years ago, and the pits are barely distinguishable. The ring appears to be largely intact.
Buzzard's Island is one of 20 or more prehistoric shell rings located from the central coast of South Carolina to the central coast of Georgia, a distance of about 150 miles. All are believed to date early in the second millennium B.C., and they contain some of the earliest pottery known in North America. Only very limited excavations have been undertaken in a few of these rings. Consequently, the function of the ring shape is unknown, although the rings appear to be carefully planned and systematically deposited structures. As such, they also present one of the earliest records of sedentary life among people who must have lived entirely by foraging. The shell rings can be expected to yield valuable information about past habitats on the coast, both from their rich content of food refuse and from their relationships to modern environments. Most are situated about 5 feet above present mean sea level, but the relationship to sea level at the time of occupation is unknown. It seems unlikely that sea level was a great deal higher about 4000 years ago than at present from the evidence of these lowlying rings. An unknown number of shell ring sites has been lost to marine erosion and to borrowing shell for road building; many of the remaining rings show the effects of unauthorized digging.

Buzzard's Island is the subject of a short note by the Charleston Museum (Bragg 1925). The museum collection includes a number of worked shell artifacts from the site. It appears to be one of the larger shell rings known (in diameter, but not in height). The site has never been dated.