

# New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



New Jersey  
Coastal Heritage Trail Route



Postcards became popular in the 1920s as a way to document vacations at the Shore. NPS

Visiting Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge is a refreshing change from the bustle of Atlantic City (seen on the horizon).

©Rob and Ann Simpson

## This Exit—A Road Less Traveled

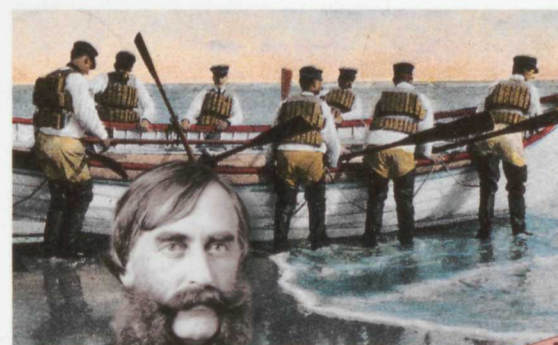
Mention New Jersey and people think of different things: the New Jersey Turnpike and Garden State Parkway, refineries and factories, casinos and entertainment, boardwalks and beaches. All are part of what makes up New Jersey—but there is more to this state than stereotypes and fleeting impressions.

Instead, picture a time about 8,000 years ago when Lenape Indians lived here, walking trails that later became highways. Envision the young state that fought for American independence (and the first to sign the Bill of Rights). Hear the stories of tall ships, lighthouses, shipwrecks, oystering, and coastal defense. Consider settling in a

new town to start a business, express your faith, or relax for a while. Imagine nature—the crash of waves or splash of a stream, the feel of a southerly breeze, the songs of birds and frogs, the scents of forests and wildflowers.

Think of these things the next time someone mentions New Jersey. Better yet, go see for yourself. In 1988 Congress established the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route to provide for your appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of the cultural and natural sites found along the coastal areas of New Jersey. Take the time, explore this Trail of discovery.

## MARITIME HISTORY



In 1848 New Jersey Congressman William A. Newell (left) spearheaded a bill to establish lifesaving stations along the East Coast. Federally funded, this Life-Saving Service later became the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Barnegat Bay sneakbox, designed by Hazelton Seamon in 1836, is a floating blind used by waterfowl hunters.



National Archives



Larry Morrison: sneakbox

**Building a Community**  
Fledgling New Jersey had a lot to offer new settlers and entrepreneurs: bountiful supplies of fish and marine resources, timber, ample water from a vast aquifer, agricultural land, and lots of sand—the key ingredient in making glass. Small villages grew into prosperous communities that provided products to the growing United States.

Rail transportation introduced in the 1850s bolstered inland industries, allowing faster delivery of fruits and vegetables and iron, wood, and glass commodities to eastern cities. You can still visit some of the communities that gave so much to the rest of the nation. Buy seafood in a 200-year-old fishing village; select fruit from a fourth-generation farm; or watch glassblowers at work.

Today, cranberries are harvested primarily by flooding bogs with water. Workers walk behind water reels (they resemble big eggbeaters) that stir up the water and dislodge the ripe fruit from the plants. The cranberries float to the surface, where they are removed and processed.

The Wheaton companies in Millville have been making specialty glass products since 1880. These bottles contained kidney and liver cures, ginger-root bitters, and whiskey.

**Trade, Navigation, Defense**  
Bounty from the ocean, bays, and rivers supported a brisk maritime industry for centuries. Oystering and fishing trades thrived. In the 1800s shipwrights used local timber, including the decay-resistant white cedar, to build a variety of working and sailing vessels. Lighthouses had operated along the coast since the late 1700s (the 1764 Sandy Hook Lighthouse is the nation's oldest operating light), but more maritime

traffic meant more shipwrecks. Mariners needed better navigational aids. The number of lighthouses increased, and by the 1890s lifesaving stations were located every 3½ miles along the coast.

Defending the coast and harbors from military attack over the years resulted in an innovative array of defense systems, including disappearing guns. Their stories live on at Fort Mott and at Sandy Hook.

## HISTORIC SETTLEMENTS



Bottles: Janet Wolf, NPS; Cranberries, NPS



Osprey

## WILDLIFE MIGRATION



Horseshoe crabs

**Birds, Marine Life, Insects**  
The New Jersey coast provides vital habitat for many species during their spring and fall migrations. Some birds fly short distances; but for the millions that travel thousands of miles, the chance to stop here—to eat and regain strength—is critical to their survival.

A spectacular sight is the spring shorebird migration. During the full moon in

late May and early June hundreds of thousands of helmet-shaped horseshoe crabs climb ashore along the Delaware Bay, where females together lay up to a billion eggs in shallow pits. Sanderlings, red knots, and other hungry migrating shorebirds gorge themselves on this delectable food.

Fish that live primarily in the ocean spawn in New

Jersey's bays and salt marshes. Whales, seals, and dolphins migrate north and south as seasons and water temperatures change.

Butterflies and dragonflies pass through here on their long journeys. Watch for them in wildlife management areas.

## RELAXATION AND INSPIRATION

**Coastal Areas Beckon**  
New Jersey enjoys a proud heritage as a place for those seeking a get-away—for fun in the sun, spiritual inspiration, or annual hunting and fishing trips with friends and family. With the introduction of train service in the 1850s, seaside resorts became popular destinations for city dwellers eager to get to the beaches and boardwalks. Today, Atlantic City is renowned for its entertainment and casinos, and seaside towns offer

relaxing vacations. Beginning in the 1600s people seeking an avenue for religious expression began settling here. Methodists, Quakers, and other religious groups built year-round communities. Summer religious resorts and camp meetings sprang up, a practice still flourishing. Hunting and sport fishing (a time-honored tradition since the 1800s) abounds in coastal forests, streams, and marshes.

The first Miss America, 16-year-old Margaret Gorman of Washington, D.C., 1921.

Monopoly Chance card. The board game, launched in 1935, introduced New Jersey place names to popular culture.

Whether angling for sea bass and bluefish in the surf, tuna and marlin in the Atlantic Ocean, or muskie and shad in the Delaware River, you can enjoy fishing within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route.

©Miss America Organization: M. Gorman; ©Hasbro, Inc.: Monopoly Chance card; ©Sally Weigand: surf fishing.



## COASTAL HABITATS



Salt marshes among the Earth's most productive ecosystems. Muskrats build dens in marsh banks to store food.

**Designing a Landscape**  
Ancient episodes of uplift, volcanic activity, faulting, glaciation, and erosion created the varied landscape you see along the New Jersey coast today.

The resulting barrier islands, dunes, bays, estuaries, fresh water, and salt marshes, ponds, swamps, bogs, and rivers provide vital breeding areas, nurseries, habitats, and refuges for plants and animals.

Traveling inland on the Trail you will see several types of forests including: red maple, ash, birch, and hardwoods that grow in wet, swampy conditions; white cedars also found in swamps; and pines and oaks in the Pinelands (also called barrens because other vegetation struggles to survive in the dry, sandy soil). Forest undergrowth varies, from blueberries, ferns, and insect-eating pitcher plants around the swamps and bogs to huck-

leberry thickets in the Pinelands. All attract birds, so watch and listen for warblers, grouse, nut-hatches, chickadees, woodpeckers, and owls.

New Jersey's 245,000 acres of salt marshes are a critical link in the coastal food chain. Their nutrient-rich muck and grasses provide habitat and food for crabs and other shellfish, baby fish, and shore and wading birds. Watch for turtles, muskrats, and egrets.

©The Pinelands Commission: tree frog; ©Brad Edwards Markel/The Nature Site: muskrat



# Exploring the Trail by Regions

**Planning Your Visit to New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route** The Trail stretches nearly 300 miles along the Atlantic seaboard, Delaware Bay, and Delaware River. It is divided into five regions: Sandy Hook, Barnegat Bay, Absecon, Cape May, and Delsea. The Trail is a route of discovery—a journey along roads less traveled and scenic byways that take you to a New Jersey worth exploring.

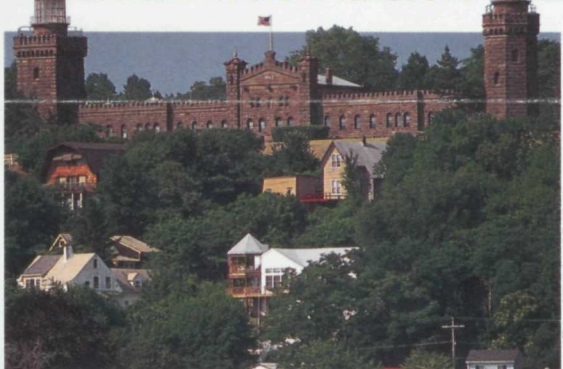
Each region has a *color-coded regional brochure* that focuses on Trail themes (see other side of this brochure), with descriptions of sites, a map of the region, directions, hours, and phone numbers. Get regional brochures at welcome centers, staffed sites, and at some local information centers, or write for them (addresses and map below). Find Trail information at [www.nps.gov/neje](http://www.nps.gov/neje). Watch for the Trail logo (right) on road signs and on exhibits at Trail destinations.



Tea Burning, 1774, Greenwich.



## SANDY HOOK REGION



N.J. Office of Travel and Tourism

*Twin Lights of Navesink (left) was the first lighthouse in the United States to use Fresnel lenses. Its beacons were visible for 70 miles.*

*The towers featured one stationary and one flashing light, making the lighthouse easy to distinguish at sea.*

You can escape the big city bustle in the Sandy Hook Region. Relaxing on a quiet beach is one way, but why not try something new?

You can visit the highest point on the Eastern Seaboard—Mount Mitchell at 266 feet above sea level. At Ocean Grove, the first religious resort established on the Shore, you will get a glimpse of camp meeting

life. Families live in tiny structures: canvas tents with a porch and sleeping and living area on a platform; a wooden shed with kitchen and bath in back. Nearby is the 6,000-seat Great Auditorium.

*Sandy Hook Region brochure* features parks, a national recreation area, maritime sites, and historic settlements.

## BARNEGAT BAY REGION

Along the Atlantic coast of Barnegat Bay a ribbon of barrier islands absorbs the force of pounding waves and helps protect developed areas from the perils of storms and flood waters. Communities here reflect their seafaring history and love of the ocean. Long Beach Island offers 18 miles of sand and sea. It is worth the trip up the 217 steps of the Barnegat Lighthouse

for a bird's-eye view of Island Beach State Park and the inlet. At Double Trouble State Park you can see the Pinelands, cedar swamps, and an 1800s village with a sawmill and cranberry-packing plant.

*Barnegat Bay Region brochure* features beach and inland parks, museums, marinas, wildlife areas, and historic settlements.

*Snow geese, brants, ducks, and other migratory waterfowl provide excellent hunting on Barnegat Bay. Duck hunters (right) head out, their sneakbox filled with decoys in tow.*

*The body of this American black duck decoy is made of high-density cork.*



Decoy: NPS. The Boat: Back: ©Barrington Arms Company

## ABSECON AND CAPE MAY REGIONS



*Hereford Inlet Lighthouse (far left) overlooks the channel that leads from the Atlantic Ocean to the Intracoastal Waterway. The 1874 Victorian building offered keepers unusually fine accommodations, including five fireplaces.*

*At Higbee Beach forests of holly and cedar, brushy fields, marshes, and freshwater ponds invite migrating birds—and birdwatchers (left).*

Each fall the Cape May peninsula acts as a funnel, concentrating millions of migratory birds, including about 60,000 raptors (birds of prey), as they cross Delaware Bay. Spring migration is not as spectacular, but you may see some birds already donning their colorful breeding plumage as they stop to reenergize before flying to summer breeding grounds. Absecon and Cape

May regions have more than birdwatching. Here New Jersey offered many firsts to the nation: boardwalks, saltwater taffy, Miss America, and Lucy, a 65-foot-tall wooden elephant.

*Absecon Region and Cape May Region brochure* (this brochure features both regions) has wildlife management areas, lighthouses, and historic homes.

It is quiet in the Delsea Region. Small towns dot the landscape, and vast fields of vegetables and flowers give credence to New Jersey as the Garden State. This bayshore area is perfect for a picnic or a hike along a stream.

Stop in Salem to see the 400-year-old white oak. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has

owned the tree and Friends Burial Ground since 1681. At Fort Mott State Park you can see an 1896 fort; its 750-foot-long parapets protected cannon from enemy ships on the Delaware River.

*Delsea Region brochure* features birdwatching areas, wetland and wildlife preserves, parks, marinas, and American Revolution and Civil War sites.

*The Bayshore Discovery Project operates the 1928 oyster schooner, A.J. Meerwald, New Jersey's official tall ship (right).*

*To stay on course mariners lined up the Finns Point Rear Range Light (far right) exactly behind a front range light (it no longer exists) located near Fort Mott. If a ship drifted out of the channel the rear light would appear, alerting the crew of danger.*



## DELSEA REGION

**Safety and Regulations** This is a vehicular trail, and that means roads. Motor vehicle laws are strictly enforced. Regulations differ among areas managed by federal, state, local, and private agencies. It is your responsibility to know the regulations.

**Park Partners and Administration** New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route is developed cooperatively by the National Park Service, New Jersey Division of Parks & Forestry, The Pinelands Commission, New Jersey Office of Travel and Tourism, and other federal, state, local, and private organizations working together to preserve New Jersey's natural and cultural heritage. The Trail continues to develop themes and sites for each region. Eventually each region will have a welcome center with information, films, and exhibits.

**For Regional Brochures and Information**  
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route  
P.O. Box 568  
Newport, NJ 08345  
856-447-0103  
[www.nps.gov/neje](http://www.nps.gov/neje)

New Jersey Office of Travel and Tourism  
P.O. Box 820  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0820  
609-292-2470; 800-847-4865  
[www.visitnj.org](http://www.visitnj.org)

©GPO:2002-491-282/40371  
Printed on recycled paper.

