

Cape Cod

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



National Seashore
Massachusetts



Beach at Herring Cove

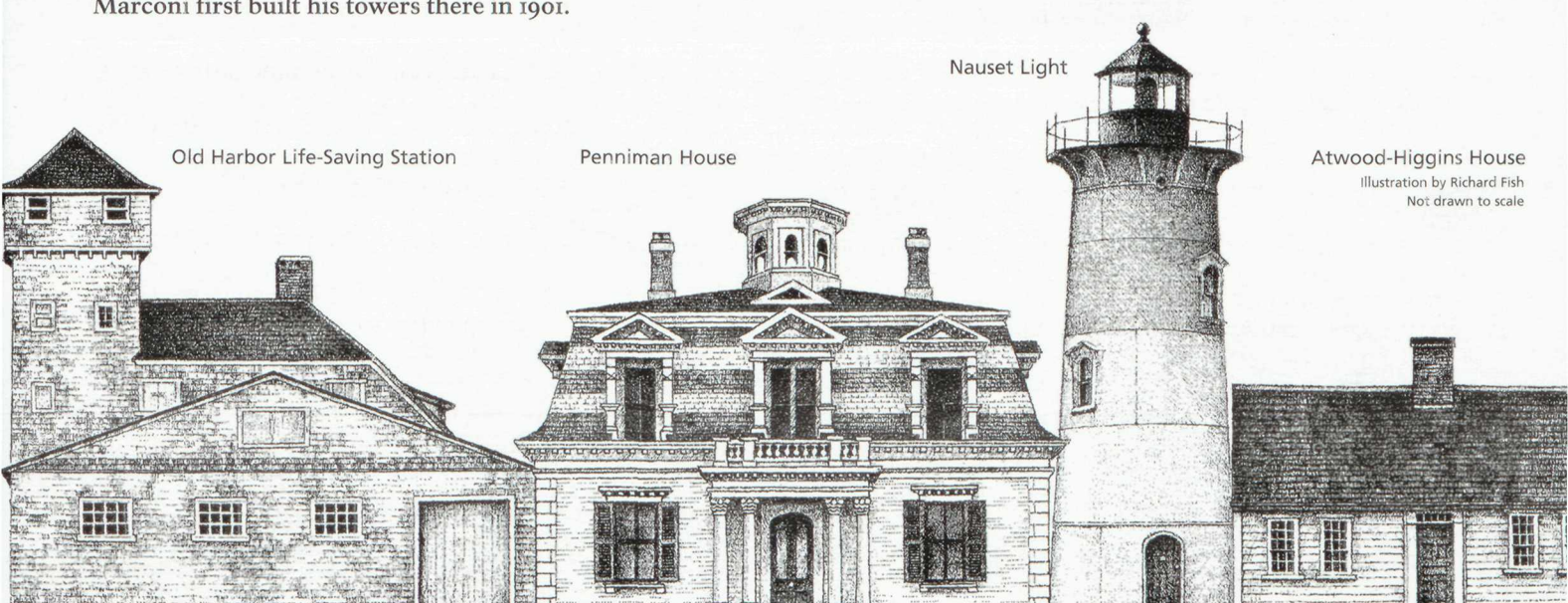
©Greg Probst

Mention Cape Cod and people think of different things—swimming and sunbathing, fishing and whaling, clams and cranberries, writers and artists, cottages and shops, Pilgrims and American Indians. All are part of the ambience and charm that attract thousands of visitors to the Cape each year. To help protect the qualities of this environment, the national seashore was established in 1961. It contains 44,000 acres along a 40-mile section between Chatham and Provincetown. Each of the National Park Service sites within this area tells a part of the Cape Cod story.

The Cape is a glacial deposit that is constantly undergoing natural changes as winds and water move sand along the shorelines, tearing away one place and building up another. You can get a good sense of how quickly the land is diminishing at the Marconi Station Site at Wellfleet, where the peninsula is only a mile wide. Much of the high cliff has eroded since Guglielmo Marconi first built his towers there in 1901.

Changing, too, though not so perceptibly, is the Cape Cod Bay shoreline. Great Island, where whalers used to congregate, is now connected to the peninsula; you can explore it via a trail.

American Indians began living on the Outer Cape about 10,000 years ago. Oral tradition and a vast archeological record tell us of their history here. The Pilgrims arrived in 1620 and stayed briefly before sailing across the bay to Plymouth. Later, residents constructed buildings that reflected the sea's influence on their lives: (*below from left*) the Old Harbor Life-Saving Station built in 1897-98 was moved from Chatham to Race Point near Provincetown in 1977; Captain Edward Penniman's 1868 house in Eastham is atypically ornate and denotes the once-profitable whaling business; Nauset Light is one of five lighthouses in the national seashore; and the Atwood-Higgins House, built about 1730, represents the typical Cape Cod dwelling. Ask at the visitor centers about building tours.



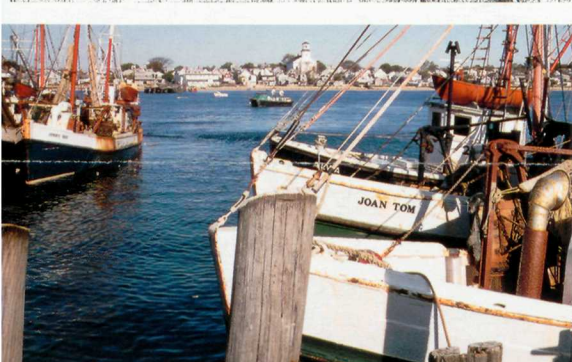
Old Harbor Life-Saving Station

Penniman House

Nauset Light

Atwood-Higgins House

Illustration by Richard Fish
Not drawn to scale



©Jeff Gnass



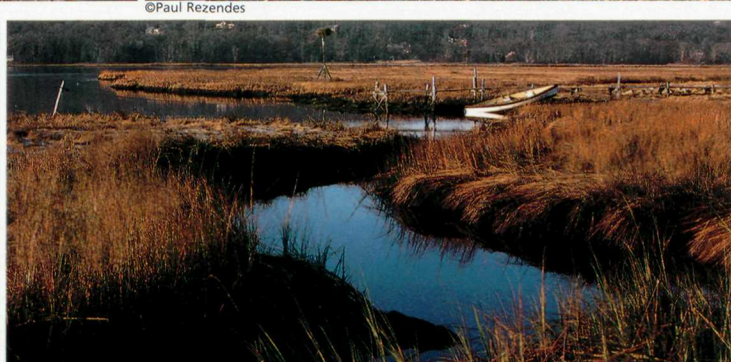
©Paul Rezendes



©Jerry Howard



©Les Campbell



©Jerry Howard



NPS

Photos (*clockwise from upper left*): Fishing boats at Provincetown Harbor, wildflowers and Highland Light, rose and rosehips, ranger and children study marine life, salt marsh, and herring gull with chicks.

Recreation and Relaxation

While you are here take time to try something different, whether it is bicycling, hiking, or just sitting by the ocean watching the waves. See the other side of this brochure for information about national seashore sites where activities take place. For information, obtain an activity schedule at a visitor center.

Swimming Seasonal lifeguard services and other related facilities are at these National Park Service beaches: Coast Guard, Nauset Light, Marconi, Head of the Meadow, Race Point, and Herring Cove. Many towns have public beaches; all charge seasonal fees. Please observe water safety practices at all times.

Surfing and Windsurfing Within the national seashore surfing and windsurfing are permitted in waters outside lifeguarded beaches.

Walking The seashore has a number of short self-guiding trails. We invite you to walk them to relax and to gain an insight into the Cape's natural and human history. Perhaps their descriptive names will entice you: Fort Hill, Red Maple Swamp, Nauset Marsh, Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, Great Island, Pamet Area, Small's Swamp, Pilgrim Spring, and Beech Forest. You can obtain brochures about the trails at the visitor centers. Button-bush Trail, with features for visitors who are blind, starts at Salt Pond Visitor Center.

Bicycling, Skating, and More The seashore maintains three bicycle trails ranging from 1.6 to 7.3 miles long. Roller blades, skates, and skateboards are permitted. Motorized vehicles, including mopeds, are prohibited on these paved trails. **Safety Note:** •The speed limit on all bicycle trails is 10 MPH. •Ride single file. Stay to the right, except when passing. •Helmets are required for ages 12 and under and strongly advised for all. •Yield right of way to horses and pedestrians.

Fishing Try surf-fishing from the beaches, but stay away from swimmers. No license is required for saltwater fishing, but a state license is required for freshwater fishing. Town licenses for shellfishing are required. Regulations and fees vary among the towns.

Hunting Upland game and migratory waterfowl may be hunted in certain areas in the specified season. There is no open season on non-game species. Ask for a brochure about hunting opportunities and restrictions. All federal, state, and local laws apply.

Travel Services Cape Cod National Seashore has no overnight facilities. Sleeping and camping accommodations, restaurants, gift shops, grocery and other stores, and gas stations are found in nearby towns. Reservations at motels, hotels, and private camp-

grounds are essential in summer. For information and reservations, write: Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, Hyannis, MA 02601.

Camping The National Park Service does not operate a campground here. Camping is available at nearby private and state-operated facilities. Overnight camping and parking are prohibited.

More Information Headquarters is near the Marconi Station Site in Wellfleet (no public facilities). Contact the park or send a stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope to:

Cape Cod National Seashore
99 Marconi Site Road
Wellfleet, MA 02667
508-349-3785
www.nps.gov/caco

©GPO:2002-491-282/40243 Reprint 2002
Printed on recycled paper



Piping Plovers: Dorothy Michele Novick

Safety and Regulations

National Park Service rangers are here to help you and to enforce regulations established to protect you and the national seashore. To see a full set of regulations, ask at headquarters or the visitor centers. Observe the following:

- Do not disturb natural or cultural features; all are protected by federal law.
- Keep trails, roadsides, and other areas clean. Use trash receptacles, or take trash with you.
- Over-sand vehicles must be used only on designated sand routes. A permit is required.
- Open fires are not allowed except when authorized by a permit; get one at visitor centers.

- Permits are not required for stoves using manufactured fuels or for charcoal grills when used in designated picnic areas at Doane Rock, Great Island, Pilgrim Heights, and Beech Forest, or on sandy or rocky beaches bordering tidewater.
- Pets must be physically restrained. Leashes must not exceed six feet. Pets are not permitted in public buildings, in picnic areas, on protected beaches, or on self-guiding trails.
- Public nudity is prohibited.
- Sand collapses easily. Climbing slopes or digging deep holes is hazardous.
- At the ocean be alert for riptides and underwater obstacles. Keep children within

reach. Beaches with lifeguards are marked with signs. For your safety, obey the directions of lifeguards.

- Drive carefully and observe posted speed limits. Wear seatbelts; it's the law. Report all traffic accidents immediately.
- Avoid too much sun exposure. Be aware that ticks and poison ivy are prevalent.
- Do not take glass containers, rafts, rubber tubes, snorkels, and masks to any beach.
- In summer be alert for heavy traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians on narrow roads.

Emergencies: Contact a ranger or call 911.

Fishing at sunrise
©Greg Probst



