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Cape Hatteras

NATIONAL SEASHORE • NORTH CAROLINA

You can obtain information at National Park Service headquarters at Fort Raleigh and during the summer season at visitor centers near Bodie Island Lighthouse, Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, and the village of Ocracoke.

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



National Parks Centennial 1872-1972

From Whalebone Junction southward and southwestward to Ocracoke Inlet, Cape Hatteras National Seashore preserves 45 square miles of beach land. It is divided into four sections: Bodie, Hatteras, and Ocracoke Islands and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. Pea Island, formerly separated from Hatteras Island by New Inlet, is now part of Hatteras Island.

Eight villages are within the natural boundaries of the area. They are excluded from the National Seashore, with room around them for expansion, to permit the growth of each as a tourist center. Congress also provided that only those parts of the National Seashore especially suitable for recreational use should be developed. The remainder was set aside to preserve the plant and animal life and the shoreline.

HISTORY IN BRIEF

In 1585, Roanoke Island was the scene of the short-lived first English settlement in the New World. On the sand flat at the base of Kill Devil Hill, the Wright brothers in 1903 made the first successful flight in a powered airplane. Both events are commemorated in nearby areas of the National Park System outside the National Seashore.

In colonial times, Virginia and Maryland families of British descent settled these isolated sandbanks. They were attracted by opportunities for stockraising, but many of them turned to the water for a living. The sea has always dominated this watery region—shipwrecks, pirates, lighthouses, the Life-Saving Service and its successor, the Coast Guard, are the main elements of this sea story.

Storms and vandals have carried away most of the remains of wrecked ships, but bits still remain partly buried in the sands or submerged in the water. Blackbeard, the most notorious of the pirates on this coast, was killed near Ocracoke Island in 1718. The present Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, the third in the vicinity, was built in 1870, and is the only one open to the public. A few modern Coast Guard stations carry on the vigilance which saved many lives on this dangerous coast in past decades, including action in two World Wars.

FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

On this long strip of barrier islands, the sea, the winds, and the land have contended for many human lifetimes, reshaping shore and landscape in a pattern of never-ending change.

Recreational activities are varied in Cape Hatteras National Seashore and include beachcombing, surf bathing, boating, sailing, fishing, history and nature study, bird watching, enjoying interpretive programs in summer, photography,

watching the ocean surf, and simply loafing on the beach.

Wildflowers grow profusely in the humid climate and blossom over a long growing season. Other kinds of vegetation on the Outer Banks have their attraction—the mixed shrubbery of yaupon, bayberry, silverling, and gallberry, and the live oak and loblolly pine in locations like the Buxton Woods. The marsh grasses and the beach grasses used in dune stabilization interest many.

More than 300 species of birds have been recorded in Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Snow geese winter here and on Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, as do Canada Geese and all species of ducks of the North Carolina coast. Large numbers of whistling swans spend the winter on the ponds.

The waters around this National Seashore provide a wide variety of sport fishing. The season extends from mid-April to mid-November. You can catch channel bass, bluefish, marlin, dolphin, mackerel, tuna, and others. "Fisherman's luck," however, prevails here as elsewhere.

FOR YOUR PROTECTION

You will want to cross the barrier dune to the sand beaches. Be sure to walk—never drive—across. Park your car only in designated parking areas to avoid getting stuck in the soft sands of the road shoulder and general area. Ramps are provided only for vehicles properly equipped to drive on the soft sand.

Camp only at designated campgrounds. Tent campers should have long tent stakes for proper holding in sand. Awnings for shade and netting for insect protection will make camping more enjoyable.

Strong lateral currents, rip tides, and shifting sand make swimming particularly dangerous during periods of heavy seas. Tidal currents are very dangerous near inlets. We urge you to swim only where lifeguards are on duty.

Small boats should stay in the relatively calm water of the sounds and avoid the inlets and ocean.

Lightweight clothing in summer should be adequate to protect you from the sun and cool evening breezes. High humidity and northerly winds make winter weather seem much colder than temperatures indicate. Warm, wind-resistant garments are needed. Hurricanes occur infrequently, usually in August or September; you will be warned in time to leave low-lying places.

Sensible precaution will do much to assure a most enjoyable visit to Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

CAPE HATTERAS NATIONAL SEASHORE



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ACCOMMODATIONS

Meals, lodging, groceries, camping supplies, and gasoline are available in the villages on Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands, in the resorts just north of the National Seashore, and on Roanoke Island and the adjacent mainland. Prices are lower after September.

A hard-surfaced road runs the length of the National Seashore, except at Hatteras Inlet where a free ferry, operating in daylight hours, connects Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands. A toll ferry runs between Ocracoke and Cedar Island where a road connects with the mainland. Schedules of both ferries are subject to change, so local inquiry must be made.

ADMINISTRATION

Cape Hatteras National Seashore is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 457, Manteo, NC 27954, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.