

Cape Hatteras

NATIONAL SEASHORE • NORTH CAROLINA

ATTENTION FISHERMEN:

The congressional law creating Cape Hatteras National Seashore protects the right of local, commercial, net fishermen to pursue their livelihood from the beaches within the park. At the same time, this national seashore was set aside to provide high-quality recreational experiences for all people, and sports fishing and fishermen are considered highly appropriate.

It is the sincere wish of the National Park Service that both groups use this resource harmoniously, cooperatively, and with respect for each other as well as for all park visitors.

INFORMATION

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

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 was separated from Hatteras Island by New Inlet.

Eight villages are within the natural boundaries of the park. They are excluded from the national seashore with room around them for expansion as tourist centers. Congressional legislation restricts development within the national seashore to those parts especially suitable for recreational use and sets aside the remainder to preserve the plant and animal life and the shoreline.

PIONEERS, PIRATES, AND SEAMEN

In 1585, Roanoke Island was the scene of the short-lived first English settlement in the New World, and in 1903, on the sand flat at the base of Kill Devil Hill, the Wright brothers made the first successful flight in a powered airplane. These events, commemorated in National Park System areas near the national seashore, are just part of the diverse history of this land off the North Carolina coast.

In colonial times, Virginia and Maryland families of British descent settled these isolated sand banks. They were attracted by opportunities for raising stock on the land, but many of them soon turned to the water for a living. Since then, the main elements of the Hatteras story have been shipwrecks, pirates, lighthouses, the Life-Saving Service and its successor, the Coast Guard.

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 at the national seashore include beachcombing, surf bathing, boating, sailing, fishing, history and nature study, bird watching, attending 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 include 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 and commercial fishing. With "fisherman's luck," which prevails here as elsewhere, in season you can catch channel bass, bluefish, marlin, dolphin, mackerel, tuna, and others. Congressional legislation protects the right of local, commercial, net fishermen to pursue their occupation from the park beaches.

FOR YOUR PROTECTION

When you 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. Offshore winds can blow air mattresses and other flotation devices out to sea.

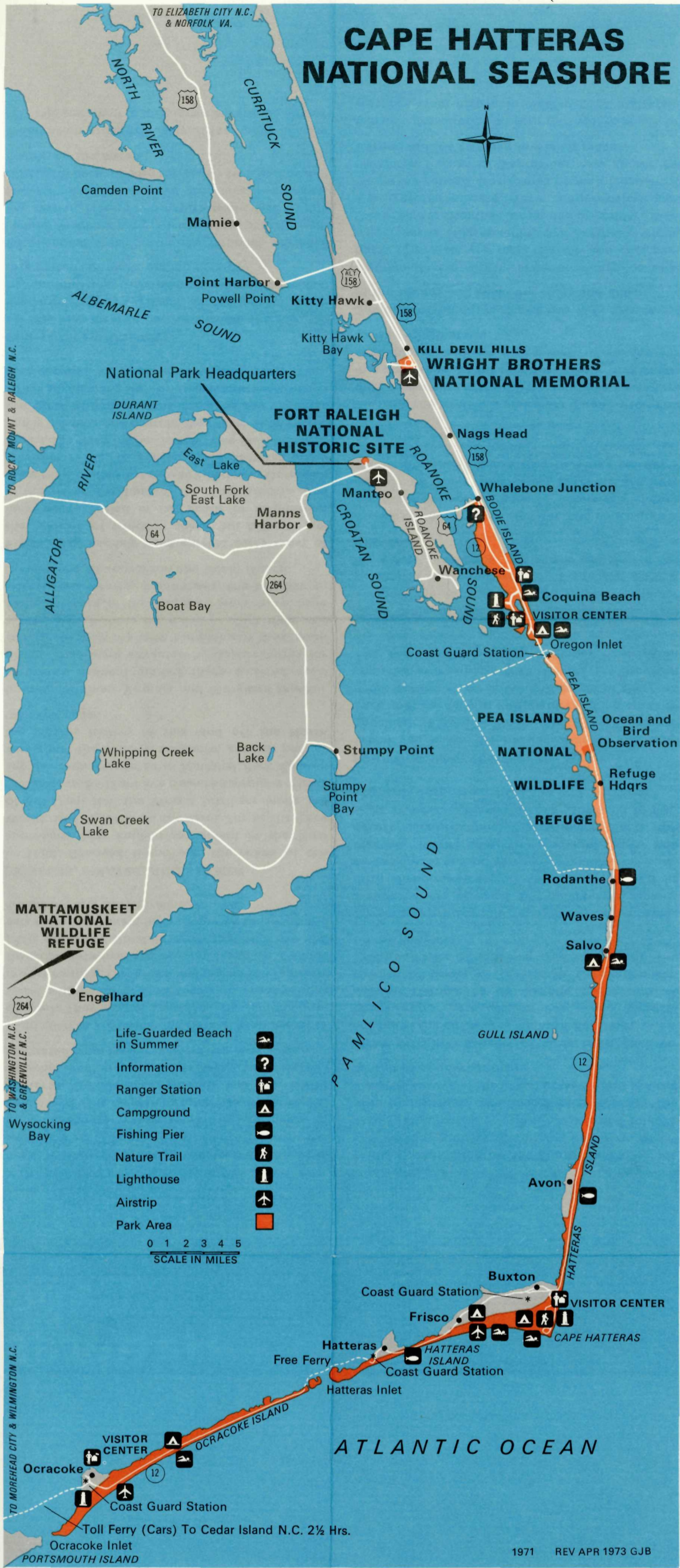
We urge you to swim only where lifeguards are on duty. Swimming in the ocean is not like swimming in a pool, river, or lake. If this is your first ocean visit, please contact a lifeguard or ranger for further information.

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 should be warned in time to leave low-lying places.

Sensible precautions on your part will do much to assure a most enjoyable visit to Cape Hatteras.

CAPE HATTERAS NATIONAL SEASHORE



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 inquire locally.

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.