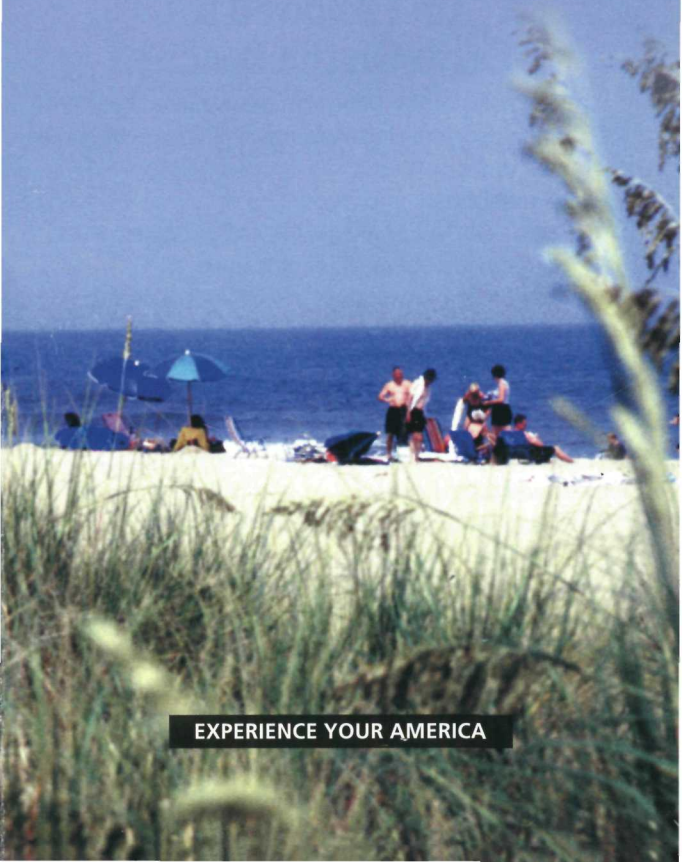




National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Helpful Information from Cape Hatteras National Seashore



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA



Stretched over 70 miles of barrier islands, Cape Hatteras National Seashore,

a unit of the National Park System, is a fascinating combination of natural and cultural resources providing many recreational opportunities. Once dubbed the “Graveyard of the Atlantic” for its treacherous currents, shoals and storms, Cape Hatteras offers a wealth of history relating to shipwrecks, lighthouses and the U.S. Lifesaving Service. These dynamic islands also provide a variety of habitats and are a valuable wintering area for migrating waterfowl, thus creating excellent birding opportunities. The park’s fishing and surfing are considered the best on the East Coast.



Park volunteers teach young anglers surf fishing.

Where Can We Camp?

Camping on the National Seashore is permitted only in designated campgrounds at Oregon Inlet, Cape Point, Frisco and Ocracoke. Availability is on a first-come, first-served basis except at Ocracoke, where you may make reservations by calling 800.365.2267. Camping on the beach overnight, whether in a tent or in your vehicle, is not permitted.

How About a Beach Campfire?

Fires are permitted on the park’s beaches, and you do not need a permit. The fires must, however, be at least 100 feet from any grasses or dunes and below the high tide line. Please keep the fires small. Boards containing nails and other debris should not be used in the fire since they create a hazard to bare feet. When putting the fires out, please use water. Burying the embers with sand allows the fire to smoulder, making the sand covering the fire very hot — an obvious safety problem.



A view of the Ocracoke Lighthouse from across Silver Lake, the harbor in Ocracoke Village.

Am I Allowed to Drive On the Beach?

Many miles of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore are open to beach driving. A four-wheel-drive vehicle is a must, due to the soft sand.

Other important information:

- * Your vehicle, including ATVs and dirt bikes, must be street legal to operate within the park.
- * The driver must possess a valid driver’s license.
- * All regulations that apply on the streets and highways of the state also apply on the beach.
- * The maximum speed limit is 25 m.p.h.
- * Driving and parking on the dunes and/or vegetation is strictly prohibited. You should access the beach only by designated ramps.
- * Please observe all signs, and do not drive in areas where you see a “No Vehicles” sign posted. These areas are closed to protect natural resources such as turtle and bird nests, developing dunes and vegetation.
- * Beach areas in front of the villages of Rodanthe, Avon, Buxton, Frisco and Hatteras, are closed to vehicles from May through September to ensure the safety of the beach goers in these heavy use areas.

Can I Fish At the Seashore?

In a word, yes. But be aware that fishing within Cape Hatteras National Seashore is regulated by state law. Regulations regarding size limits, numbers of fish per day, seasons and licensing requirements are set by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, which may be contacted at 800.682.2632. Limit sheets are available through the Marine Fisheries or at all Outer Banks tackle shops.

Is It Okay to Have a Beer On the Beach?

Some alcoholic beverages are permitted in the Seashore, but consider the following:

- * The laws of North Carolina do not permit spirituous liquors — distilled liquors, whiskey, vodka, etc. — or fortified wines to be consumed in public. Ask where you buy your wine if you are unsure what’s fortified and what’s not.
 - * The legal drinking age in North Carolina is 21.
 - * Open containers of alcohol are not permitted within any motor vehicle, including vehicles on the beach.
- Please be sure to put all your cans and bottles in the trash so you’re not creating a hazard.

May I Hunt For Hidden Treasure With My Metal Detector?

No. Because of the vast wealth of historic artifacts within National Parks, metal detectors are prohibited in all areas, including beaches and campgrounds. In fact, all items found on the beach, with the exception of shells and drift wood, are protected by law and may not be removed from the beach. Please do not disturb any shipwrecks that may wash up or be uncovered by the ocean.

What if I Find Shipwrecks or Other Treasures on the Beach?

All items found on the beach, with the exception of shells and driftwood, are protected under the law and may not be removed from the beach. Please do not disturb any shipwrecks that may wash up or be uncovered by the ocean.

May We Shoot Off Fireworks?

No. Fireworks are not allowed in any National Park Service area. This includes the beaches in front of the villages.

What About Launching My Personal Watercraft?

The trailering, launching or landing of personal watercraft of any kind is not allowed within the boundaries of Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

What If My Pet Comes On Vacation Too?

Your pets are welcome at Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Do keep them leashed and under your control at all times. Pets are not allowed on designated swim beaches or in buildings. Please, for your pet’s sake, do not leave them unattended. And, for other visitors’ sake, clean up after your pet.

And If My Pet Is a Horse?...

Horses may be ridden anywhere vehicles are permitted to drive. Please clean up after your horse.

We want your visit to the Seashore to be safe and enjoyable. By following these guidelines, we can all protect and maintain this spectacular area.

What Vegetation and Creatures Are Here?

Sea Turtles

Sea turtles are one of the most amazing, yet fragile, creatures we have the opportunity to coexist with here at the Park, and this is one of the areas where they nest. On warm summer nights, if you're lucky, you might see them pull themselves out of the surf to crawl up onto the beach to lay eggs.

Remember that these turtles are a protected species, so do not disturb them in any way. Watch from a distance. Lights disorient hatchlings and scare off nesting females. Turn off all lights on the beach, especially beach cottage lights.

You can be a protector of this endangered species by making sure all items that might entangle them or harm them in any way —

volleyball nets, sun shelters, lawn chairs, trash — are taken off the beach at night. Your help in this area might make the difference between a turtle living or dying.

If you see a turtle nesting, please contact the Cape Hatteras National Seashore at 252.473.2111. If your call is before or after business hours, leave a message letting us know the area where you found the nest. And remember that all parts of turtles, both living and dead, are protected by the Endangered Species Act and may not be disturbed or removed from the beach.

Birds

The Seashore is a sanctuary for a wide variety of birds. Nesting areas for terns, Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers and Black Skimmers will be clearly marked by signs and string, and access is restricted to researchers during the nesting season. The hatchlings are very vulnerable to predators, and any disturbance to them during this fragile time could cause them to die. So please respect and protect these very special areas. Bird check lists are available at Park Visitor Centers.

Vegetation

All vegetation in the Seashore is protected. The Seashore is home to over 30 rare, endangered or threatened plant species. Please do not pick up or pull up any plants. Vegetation plays a key role in stabilizing the dunes and the barrier islands so we all can enjoy this national treasure.

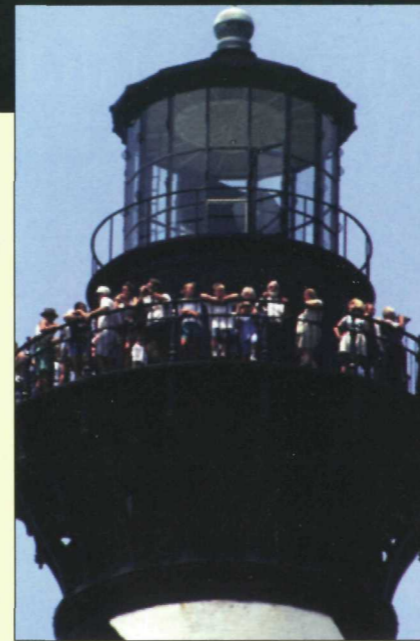
What About Handicapped Beach Access?

Handicapped beach access permits are available from Cape Hatteras National Seashore Headquarters by calling 252.473.2111.

Beach-capable wheelchairs are available on a first-come, first-served basis at the Park Visitor Centers.

What About Group Events at the Seashore. Anything We Should Know?

Groups are welcome at the Seashore! If you have more than 25 people in your group and plan to gather within the Park, you will need to obtain a special use permit. For more information on obtaining a permit, please call the Park staff at 252.473.2111



The staff at Cape Hatteras National Seashore hopes you have a safe and enjoyable stay.



Cape Hatteras National Seashore

1401 National Park Drive
Manteo, NC 27954
252.473.2111
www.nps.gov/caha

Our thanks to Eastern National for funding this brochure.



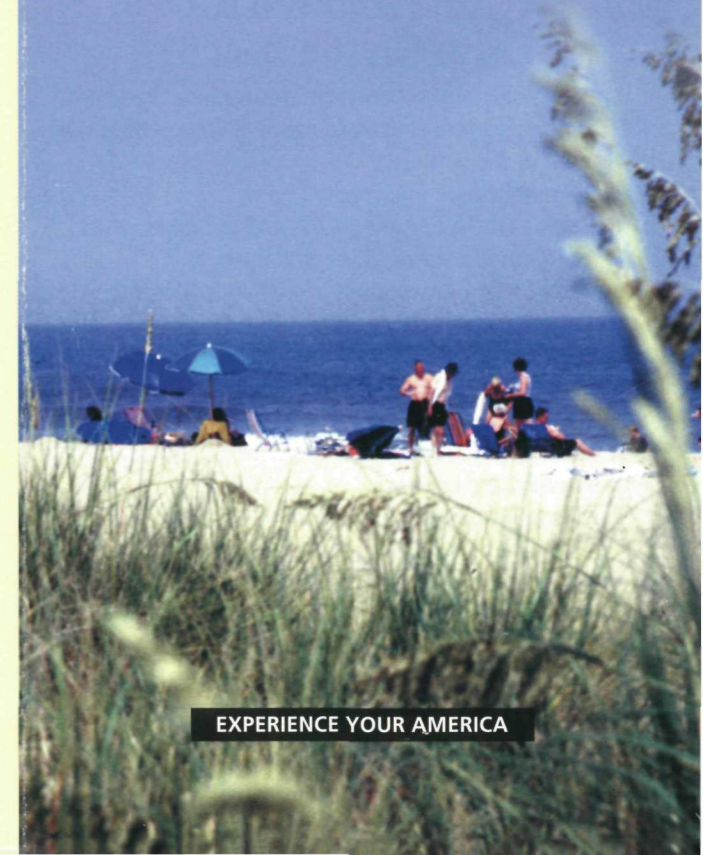
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