

Acadia

National Park Maine

National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior



The park keeps public precious samples of Maine's impressive rock-bound coast.

Bubble Pond's outlet exemplifies Acadia's inland wooded character.

Nature arranges cast off shells and bones by wave action on Seawall Beach.

Intertidal areas abound with life forms of this nether world, neither sea nor land.

A decoy painter's dream, a wood duck sits quietly for its portrait.

Misty or foggy, muted weather plays a mood-making role at Acadia.

If you have never tried—really tried—doing nothing, Acadia is a good place to begin. First you need a rocky ledge or stony beach, perhaps at Schoodic Point, along Ocean Drive, or near Seawall. Sit down and relax and wait for things to happen. A gull may sail up over the ledge with a sea urchin in its beak. The gull drops the urchin onto the rocks below to smash its shell-like, spiny armor. The gull dives right behind the creature and then devours it. Besides watching the activity, listen for the chuckle of pebbles moving in the surf and smell the salt air as the sun warms your skin. Doing nothing on the shore is an art, a pleasure, and a long-standing tradition.

Little of New England's rockbound coast remains in public ownership, undeveloped and natural. Acadia National Park preserves the natural beauty of part of Maine's coast, its coastal mountains, and its offshore islands. Weather permitting, you can drive to the top of Cadillac Mountain, the highest point here, for a

spectacular view of this coast. Or better yet, park your car and walk or bike into the nature and history of the park on its many trails.

Acadia, as the name suggests, was French before it was English and then American. French frigates hid from English men-of-war in Frenchman Bay, screened from detection by the Porcupine Islands. The French and English battled for possession of North America from 1613 until 1760. French explorer Samuel de Champlain sailed into the Bay in 1604 and named this Mount Desert Island because of its landmark bare top.

The sea encircles, thrusts inland, and fogs here. In the midday sun its bright-blue surface is studded with lobster buoys. In fog all is gray and muted. Somewhere out at sea engines may mutter, but the lobster boat is blurred or lost in a formless world. Seen at sundown from Cadillac Mountain, the sea glows in soft pinks, mauve, and gold. Gulls wing silently home to distant is-

lands, and, like fireflies, navigational aids flash warnings from reefs, islands, and headland. Between the sea and the forested mountains here is the small, fascinating, almost nether world of the tidal zone. Twice daily exposed to air and drowned by sea water, it is a world of specially adapted organisms. Tidepools, pockets of seawater stranded in rock basins, are microhabitats brimming with life and exposed to view. In these natural aquariums you can watch marine animals going about their business. This zone of life is amplified here by Acadia's tides, which vary from 2.7 to 4.3 meters (9 to 14 feet), averaging 3.3 to 3.6 (11 to 12). It is the primeval meeting place of earth and water.

Behind the sea lie Acadia's forests and mountains, made easy for exploring by the 69-kilometer (43-mile) system of carriage paths. These broad, smooth, graveled byways encircle Jordan Pond and Eagle Lake and wind around the flanks of Sargent and Penobscot Mountains.

They offer stunning views of Somes Sound and Frenchman Bay; and they lead you along beaver-dammed brooks. The grades are gentle, but the vistas are long. The loop road around Eagle Lake is a bicycle path.

The story of the people who lived on this island when Champlain first saw it is told in the Abbe Museum at Sieur de Monts Spring with Indian artifacts and exhibits. Take the ferry to Little Cranberry Island to see the Islesford Museum, whose ship models, tools, and pictures reveal island life in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Villages near the park present the variety of life-styles on the island today. Northeast Harbor shelters sailboats, large and small, and a summer colony. Bar Harbor caters to tourists, offering many accommodations and amusements. Bass Harbor and Southwest Harbor, and Winter Harbor at Schoodic, retain more of the traditional flavor of Maine coastal villages. Those who earn livings from the sea—whether

lobstering, fishing, building boats, or guarding the coast—tie up here. And canneries, lobster pounds, and boatyards have not yet been replaced by summer homes and motels.

You should not neglect the opportunities for exploring marine environments. On the tidepool walks conducted by National Park Service naturalists, you will learn about plants and animals in the microhabitats between land and sea. On cruises led by a naturalist you may get to see porpoises, seals, eagles, and nesting colonies of sea birds. Or you may get to watch an osprey catch a fish and cart it off to its nest of hungry youngsters. Explore an offshore island and you can reflect on the lonely life of a lighthouse keeper's family. These are just a few of the scenic, natural, historic, and recreational wonders that comprise Acadia National Park.

Who built the carriage paths? Who had the vision of a national park on this popular vacation coastland? This national park is unusual

because it was neither carved out of public lands nor bought with public funds. It was envisioned and donated through the efforts of private citizens. Many people loved Mount Desert Island, Schoodic Peninsula, and the nearby islands. Maine residents and summer visitors alike donated their time and resources to preserve Acadia's beauty. George B. Dorr and Charles W. Eliot, a former president of Harvard University, saw the dangers of development and acted to avoid them. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. also played a critical role. He built the carriage paths and gave more than 4,450 hectares (11,000 acres), about one-third of the park's area, to what became known as Acadia National Park.

Trails and Paths

The more than 193 kilometers (120 miles) of trails in the park range from short, level surf walks, to the steep Precipice Trail. Connecting trails enable hardy hikers to scale several Acadia peaks in one trip. Between 1915 and 1933 John D. Rockefeller, Jr., financed and directed the building of 92 kilometers (57 miles) of carriage paths, a network of woodland roads free of motor vehicles, for hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders, and carriages. Activities on some of the 69 kilometers (43 miles) of carriage paths in the park today also include cross-country skiing and limited snowmobiling. The Eagle Lake Loop Road is specially graded for bicycles.



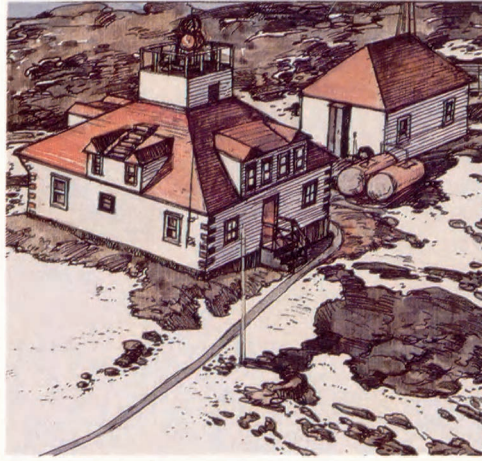
Sixteen stone bridges connect the carriage paths. The first hand-cut granite bridge was built in 1917, the last in 1933.



Each was individually designed for its setting. One boasts three arches. In winter, carriage paths make great cross-country ski trails. Bicycles may be rented in Bar Harbor.

Lighthouses

The French explorer Champlain, who named Mount Desert Island and Isle au Haut, ran aground here in 1604. His was the first of many boating mishaps on these shores. The rocky shoreline, hidden ledges, and fog posed treacherous hazards for boats and ships until after the Civil War. By that time foghorns and lights were installed to make navigation generally safe. Today the U.S. Coast Guard maintains five lighthouses in this area: Egg Rock, Bass Harbor Head, Bear Island, Baker Island, and Great Duck Island. The romance of the often lonely life of lightkeepers and their families is a thing of the past. Modernized lighthouses are run by remote control.



Egg Rock Light Station was first lit in 1875. Perched on a craggy island, it lights the entrance to Frenchman Bay.



You can visit the Bass Harbor Head Light by car. Built in 1858, it marks the entrance to Blue Hill Bay.

History

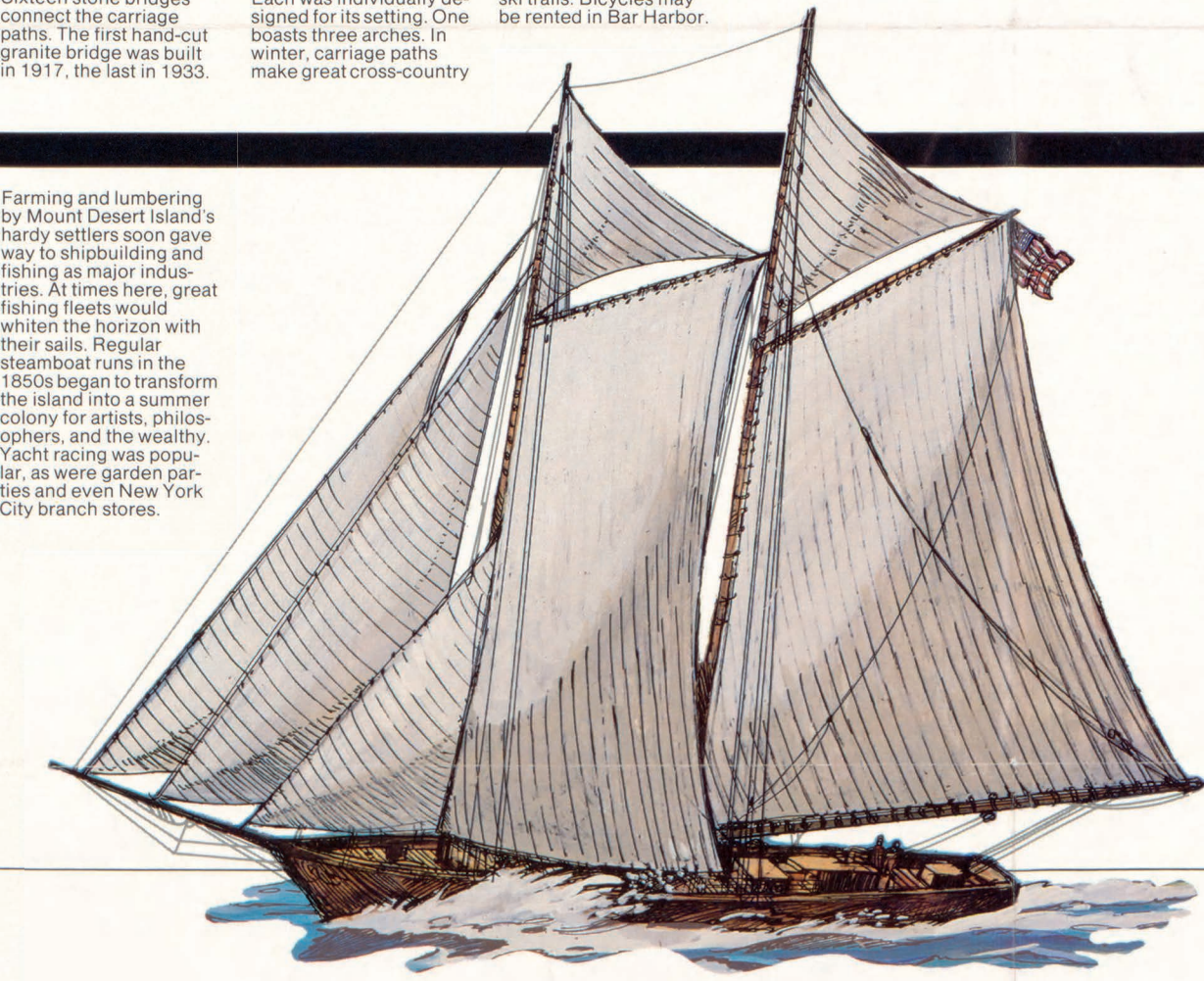
After its discovery in 1604, Mount Desert Island figured in French, English, and Indian contact—and conflict. French ships hid in Frenchman Bay in the French and Indian War between France and England. The French would rendezvous with Indians who canoed down the rivers to trade. English colonists settled here after the British victory in Canada in 1760, when the threat of continual warfare ended.

Farming and lumbering by Mount Desert Island's hardy settlers soon gave way to shipbuilding and fishing as major industries. At times here, great fishing fleets would whiten the horizon with their sails. Regular steamboat runs in the 1850s began to transform the island into a summer colony for artists, philosophers, and the wealthy. Yacht racing was popular, as were garden parties and even New York City branch stores.



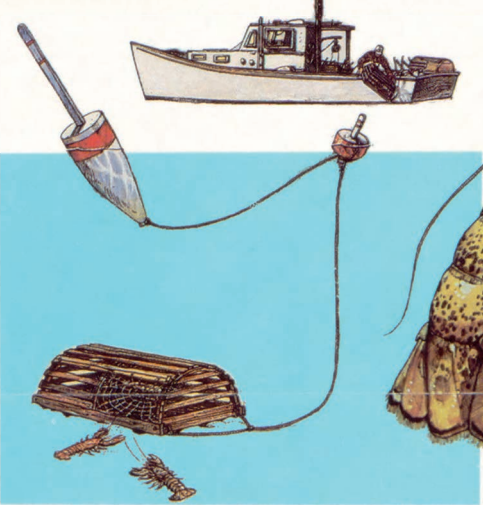
European explorers found Abnaki Indians occupying the Maine coast. Their permanent villages were on the

mainland, but they fished and gathered shellfish on "Pemetec," as they knew Mount Desert Island.



Commercial Fishing

Commercial fishing remains an important Maine industry. Fishing is no longer the hazardous producer of widows and orphans as in sailing days, but today's practitioners remain salty, colorful characters. Most prized by them is the lobster, but scallops, crabs, and several fish are caught commercially. At low tide clam diggers often work the flats with their short rakes. Boat building continues on the island and Schoodic Peninsula.



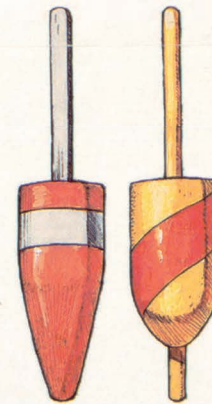
Lobsters feed on snails, clams, mussels, dead fish, and other organisms. Their large claw cracks shellfish and the

other claw tears prey apart for eating. They dart backwards powered by abdomen and tail, but they also clamper over

rocks on their four pairs of legs. They periodically shed and re-grow the tough outer skeleton "shell."



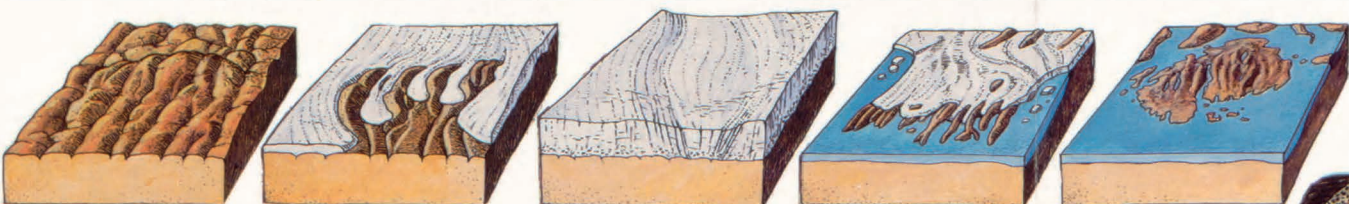
Lobsters caught today usually weigh 0.7 kg (1.5 lbs.), but deeper water specimens can exceed 18 kg (40 lbs.).



Brightly-colored buoys mark the lobster traps. Their individual colors are registered with the state.

Glaciers and the Landscape

Effects of continental glaciation abound here. Mount Desert Island's major valleys all run north and south and each holds one or two lakes the glaciers scooped out. Erratic boulders sit where the mammoth ice sheet, 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) thick in places, stranded them. Many rocks are polished or scratched by the glaciers. Somes Sound, the only fjord on the east coast of the United States, is a glacial river valley drowned by the sea.



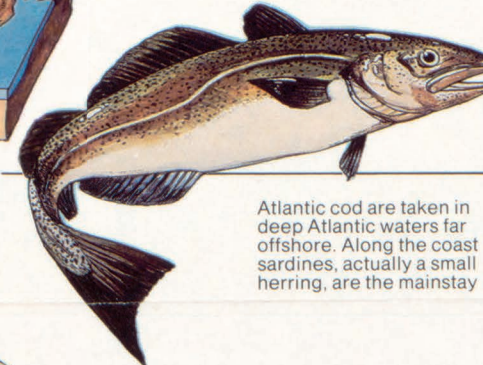
Before glaciation, the Acadian highland was an east-west running granite ridge.

Huge ice tongues invaded the valleys on the north slopes, cut through the passes, and engulfed the mountains.

The ice sheet swept seaward, finally extending 320 km (200 mi.) out to the continental shelf.

As the ice melted, the ocean level rose and flooded the foothills, creating today's indented shoreline.

Acadia's shape was changed. U-shaped valleys now run north and south. Its mountaintops are rounded.



Atlantic cod are taken in deep Atlantic waters far offshore. Along the coast sardines, actually a small herring, are the mainstay

of the commercial fishing industry. They are taken in nets, brush weirs, or seines.

Boats of all descriptions and functions are part of the salty scenery of Acadia.



The Living Shores

Land and sea meet at Acadia, and the Northern and Temperate Zones meet and overlap. The result is an abundance of life. Birdwatchers rise to the challenge of 300 species of birds, 122 of them breeding species. You might also, on a trip to Baker Island, see seals basking on the rocky islands. The tidepool world is awash with the shapes and colors of shells, pebbles, and sea plants. And the sea itself offers the symmetry of northern starfish and green sea urchins.



Barnacles crowd for space on seashore rocks. They define the upper limits of high tide because they must be covered by water twice a day to survive.



Rockweed (above left) is floated by pairs of air bladders. Irish moss is at left.

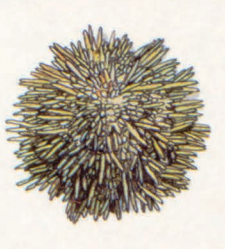
Common eider, an oceanic duck, lives year round at Acadia. It feeds near the shore on barnacles, crabs, and sea urchins.



Herring gulls are constant companions here. They often follow fishing boats for scraps, raising a real racket.



Rock crabs are often caught in lobster traps. They are common food for gulls.



Green sea urchins have spines for protection. They are found in tidepools and deep water.

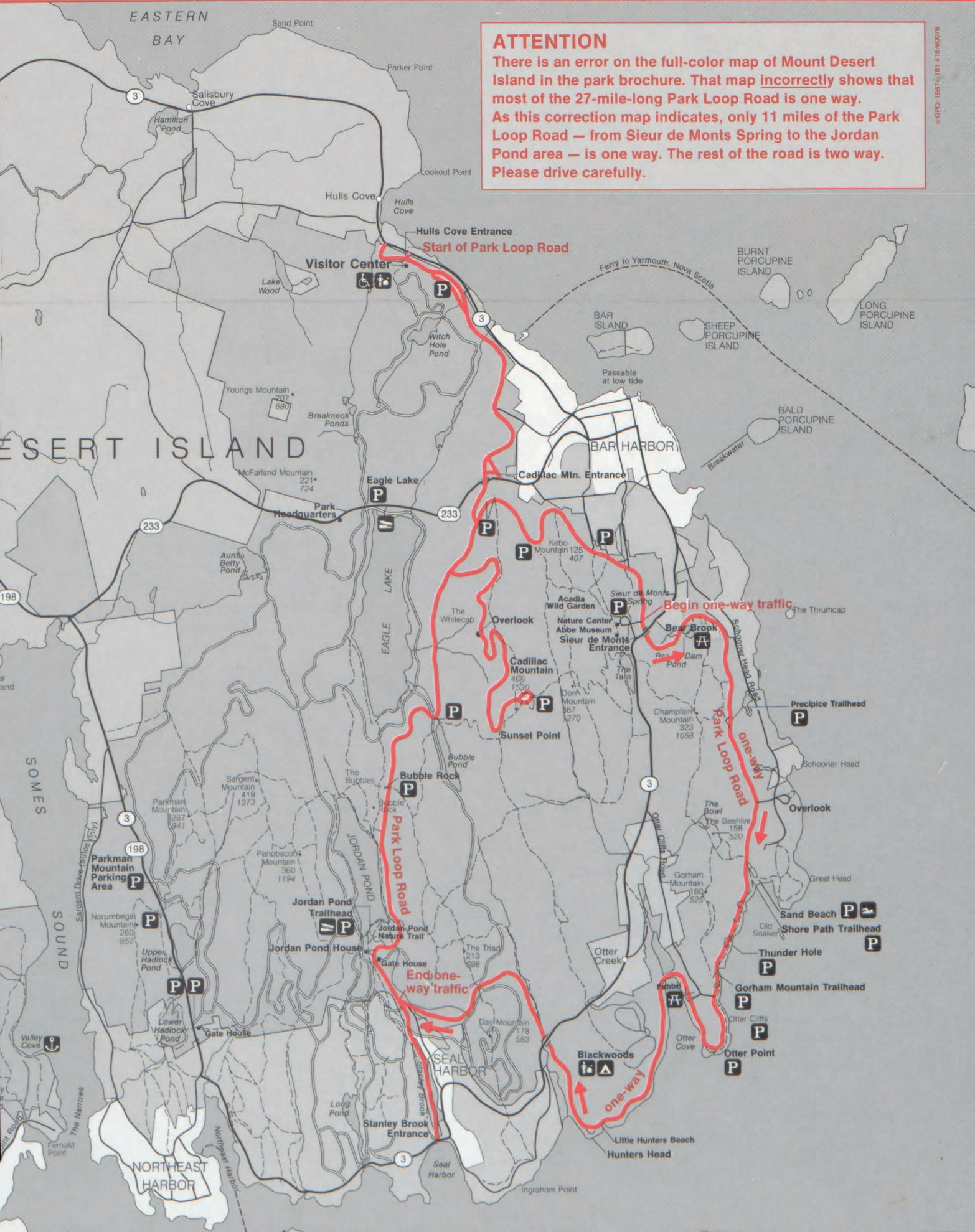


Northern starfish have five rays and can regenerate lost body parts. They eat mollusks.

Correction Map

Acadia National Park
Maine

National Park Service
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Using the Maps
The map directly below shows all of Acadia National Park and how it relates to the coast. It also shows highway access to the Schoodic Peninsula. The smaller maps show Isle au Haut and the Schoodic Peninsula. The large map presents Mount Desert Island, which contains the greater part of the park. The Park Loop Road is emphasized for your convenience. Please note that all three detail maps show private property. Please respect all private property and the rights and privacy of its holders.

Visiting Acadia
Access: Mount Desert Island is reached by automobile on Maine 3. Schoodic Peninsula is reached by Maine 186.
Visitor Center. To make the most of your stay in Acadia, stop first at the Visitor Center on Route 3 south of Hulls Cove. Watch the film about the park and browse the publications. You can buy or rent a self-guiding

tape tour of the park.
The Park by Car. A 32-kilometer (20-mile) loop road connects Mount Desert Island's lakes, mountains, and seashore. You can also drive up Cadillac Mountain to the highest point on our Atlantic Coast for panoramas of island-studded Frenchman, Blue Hill, and Penobscot Bays and the coast. At stops along the

Park Loop Road you see glacier-carved valleys and lakes; high, surfpounded cliffs; and magnificent remnants of the northern coniferous forests once covering the region.
Accommodations. The park has two campgrounds, find private ones nearby. Villages offer full tourist services. Reservations are required in

summer for Blackwoods Campground; call or write the park or your local Ticketron outlet for advance reservation forms. Camping at Seawall is first-come, first-served. Camping in the park is limited to 14 days.
Trails. Foot trails are plentiful and range from easy lowland paths to rugged mountain routes. Some carriage paths are

open to bicycles (rent them in nearby towns). Some are open to horses; you can hire them at Wildwood Stable on the Park Loop Road.
Naturalist Programs. Schedules are posted at park headquarters and park campgrounds for boat cruises and seashore, woodlands, and mountaintop walks. There are evening programs at

the campgrounds.
Boat Trips. Villages offer boat rentals, charters, cruises, and ferry service. Get information at the visitor center.
Fishing. State laws govern fishing. No license is required for saltwater fishing.

Swimming. Lifeguards are on duty in summer at Echo Lake (fresh water) and Sand Beach (salt water). Ocean is cold!
Safety Information. Be careful on Acadia's rugged shores. Ledges and rocks below high tide are slippery with algae. Walk carefully to prevent a nasty fall. In spring and autumn, watch out for storm waves. A large one

could knock you down and sweep you out to sea. On trails, beware of ankle-turning loose stones, and don't blunder into poison ivy. Don't take a chance on a trail that is too steep or precarious for you. There are plenty of trails to choose from.
Regulations. Fires and camping are permitted only in designated sites. Firearms are prohibited

unless cased, broken down, or otherwise packed against use while in the park. Pets must be kept under physical restraint in the park at all times. Report any accident involving personal injury or property damage to a ranger or to park headquarters.
Winter Activities. Cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, ice fishing, and

winter hiking are popular. Winter's season is November to April, depending on snowfall. Blackwoods campground is open in winter.
Information. For reservation or other information write: Superintendent, Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor, Maine 04609.

Call, write, or stop at the Visitor Center for detailed information about Handicapped access.

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Isle au Haut



Schoodic Peninsula



Mount Desert Island

