

Cape Lookout

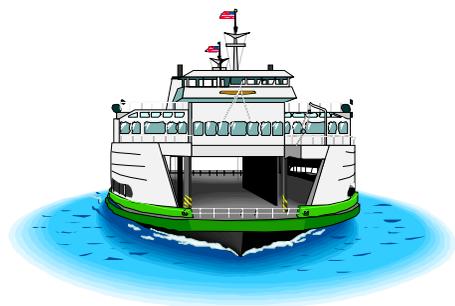
National Seashore
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Planning Your Visit

Cape Lookout National Seashore consists of three undeveloped barrier islands extending for 56 miles along the North Carolina coast. These thin ribbons of sand serve as buffers for the North Carolina mainland. The park provides many opportunities for recreation and enjoyment. It also serves as an outdoor classroom for learning about a unique ecosystem, endangered species and geology of barrier islands. The lighthouse, historic village, shipwrecks, and lifesaving stations all are pieces of the park's past.

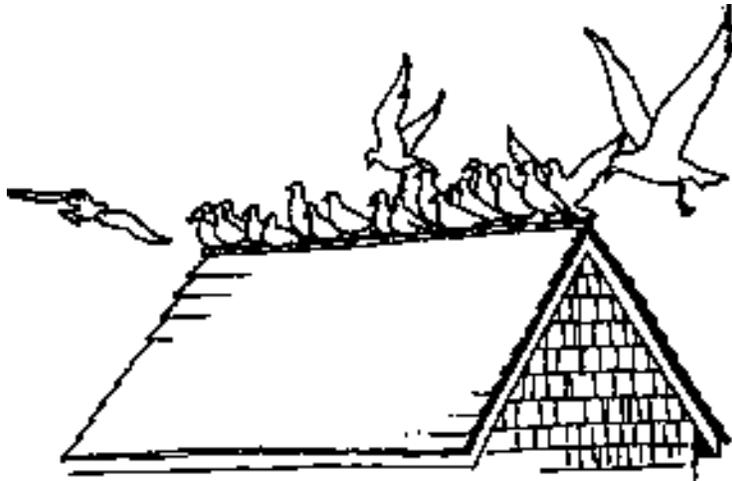
HOURS

The park is open year round. You may want to start your visit at the Cape Lookout Visitor Center, located on Harkers Island. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily (closed December 25 and January 1). The visitor centers at Portsmouth Village and Cape Lookout Lighthouse are only open from April through November (hours vary). There are no entrance fees. The Cape Lookout Lighthouse is closed to the public.



ACCESS

Cape Lookout National Seashore is accessible only by private boat or public ferry. These ferries depart from Harkers Island, Morehead City, Beaufort, Atlantic, Davis and Ocracoke. For more information on the ferry services to Cape Lookout, please call 252-728-2250.



If you are driving from Cape Hatteras National Seashore, you can take the state ferry from Ocracoke to Cedar Island, NC. Advance reservations are required and fees will be based on vehicle size and type. Call 1-800-BY-FERRY for more information.

There are no developed roads on Cape Lookout National Seashore. Although driving on designated backroads is allowed. Vehicle ferries are located in Atlantic, NC, and Davis, NC. They charge a fee for vehicle transportation. It is **recommended** that you have a four-wheel drive vehicle if you plan to drive on the beach. If you get stuck with your vehicle, towing fees can be very expensive. There are designated four-wheel drive ramps to reach the beach. Closed sections are well marked. Bicycling is prohibited due to soft sand.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

During the summer, programs are held weekly at the North Carolina Maritime Museum by park staff to orient visitors to the park. Please contact the park visitor center for more information.

SWIMMING

Due to hazardous currents on the ocean side, swimming is not recommended at the park. Swimming in the ocean is NOT the same as swimming in a pool. Tides and rip currents are dangerous and can be fatal. There are no lifeguarded beaches at the park.

FISHING/BOATING

During spring and fall, Cape Lookout offers what many consider to be some of the best fishing on the Atlantic Coast. Most of the beach and sounds are open to fishing. There are no fishing piers at the park. There are no slips for boats at the park. There are charter boat services located in Morehead City, Harkers Island, and Atlantic Beach, NC.



WINDSURFING

Many windsurfers use the area known as Shell Point on the east end of Harkers Island.

TRAILS/HIKING

There are no hiking trails on the seashore, but many people do backpack or hike the islands. Be advised that walking can be difficult due to soft sand. Sturdy walking/hiking shoes are recommended.

BIRDING

Birding is a year-round activity at the seashore. Terns and herons are best seen in the summer. Spring and fall are excellent times to view shorebirds, hawks and songbirds. Ducks and geese are common during the winter months.



PLACES TO STAY

...Motels, hotels, rental cottages, and camping.

On Harkers Island and Atlantic Beach, NC, there are beach cottages for rent.

There are hotels and motels located in Beaufort, Morehead City, Atlantic Beach and Harkers Island, NC. Please contact the local chamber of commerce at 1-800-786-6962 for more information.

There are concessioner provided cabins located on the national seashore. Some of the cabins have running water and generator-provided electricity. You must bring linens, food and necessary supplies with you to the cabins. The cabins are located a considerable distance from the lighthouse or Portsmouth Village. You must make your cabin reservations with the concessioner.

For more information contact:
North Core Banks from Atlantic, NC:
Morris Marina and Kabin Kamps
1-252-225-4261

South Core Banks from Davis, NC:
Alger Willis Fishing Camps, Inc.
1-252-729-2791

Primitive camping on the seashore is allowed. You may camp anywhere except within 100 yards of any cabin or house. Campfires are allowed below the high tide line. Firewood on the islands is scarce and using a stove is recommended.

Private campgrounds can be found in the area and may offer utilities for trailers and recreational vehicles. Some are open on a year-round basis.

Other National Park Sites:

Cape Hatteras National Seashore is located north of Cape Lookout. Cape Hatteras is a developed seashore and has paved roads, and villages with services located throughout. Call 252-473-2111 for information.

Wright Brothers National Memorial is located in Kill Devil Hills, NC. This is the site where the Wright Brothers first flew their airplane. Ranger-led programs are conducted year-round at the visitor center. For more information call 252-995-6061.

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site is located in Manteo, NC. This site has a reconstructed fort showing the life of the first English settlers to the area. The visitor center has a video and ranger-led programs are conducted during the summer. Call 252-473-5772. At the fort is the Lost Colony outdoor drama which is held during the summer months.

Moore's Creek National Battlefield, a Revolutionary War battle site, is located near Wilmington, NC. Visitor center, exhibits and ranger-led programs interpret the battle of February 1776. Call 910-283-5991 for more information.

WHAT TO BRING

Recommended items to bring with you are: insect repellent, drinking water, sunscreen, food, good walking shoes and a hat. Please **do not bring metal detectors or fireworks.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

North Carolina Tourism Bureau
1-800-847-4862

Carteret Chamber of Commerce
252-726-6831 or 1-800-786-6962

WEATHER

Winter storms, called nor'easters, can bring bitterly cold conditions and at times make roads in the area impassible due to rising water. The possibilities of hurricanes exist June through November. For current information call 252-223-5737.

| Averages | High | Low |
|-----------|------|-----|
| January | 52 | 38 |
| February | 53 | 38 |
| March | 58 | 43 |
| April | 66 | 51 |
| May | 74 | 60 |
| June | 80 | 68 |
| July | 84 | 72 |
| August | 83 | 71 |
| September | 79 | 68 |
| October | 71 | 59 |
| November | 63 | 49 |
| December | 55 | 40 |

BEWARE OF HEAT INJURIES!

A combination of high temperature and high humidity creates a higher and possibly dangerous "Apparent Temperature." Heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke are possible during elevated apparent temperatures. At an air temperature of 90 F and a humidity of 80 percent, the Apparent Temperature is 113 F. Enjoy the seashore, but limit your physical activity and exposure during days of high heat and humidity.

For more information:

Cape Lookout National Seashore
131 Charles Street
Harkers Island, NC 28531

You can also check our web page at www.nps.gov/caloc/

