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NORTH CAROLINA COAST



Corolla . Photo by cbboss.

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North Carolina Coast



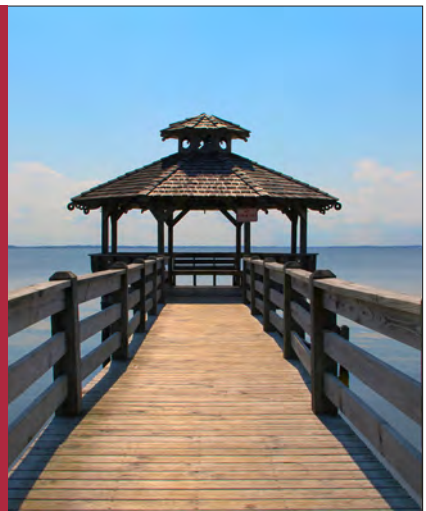
The North Carolina coast comprises over 300 miles of barrier islands, each with its own unique feel, history, and activities.

Fortunately, it has remained underdeveloped. High-rise condos and glitzy resort areas do not obstruct your view of the pristine shores. Instead you'll find unspoiled barrier islands, historic villages and easygoing beach towns full of locally owned shops and mom-and-pop restaurants. Even the most touristy beaches have a small-town feel.

It is quite easy to travel down the coast using Route 17 (highlighted in yellow on the map. It takes you all the way down North Carolina and through these quaint towns and past the barrier islands.

In this "mini" guide, we touch on a number of the most popular, historically rich, and untouched natural sites.

Corolla



Corolla Pier. Photo by Mike Giles.

Corolla, or Jones Hills as it was known until 1895, was named after the inner part of a flower which grew abundantly on the Northern Outer Banks. Before that, it was one of several remote villages and far different from today's vacation destination.

Native Americans first knew the Outer Banks and the Corolla area as their home for hundreds of years. The Poteskeet, Chowanog, and other tribes fished and hunted in this "land of the wild goose".

Gradually, Europeans arrived, saw the beauty and value of the land, and settled here in the late 1600's and 1700's. Many of them also lived on the mainland, visiting the coast periodically. By the mid-1800's, the Currituck Banks were becoming a more established area.

Those who resided on the banks made their livings by fishing, salvaging, gardening, hunting, and raising livestock. They also made their services available to others who came to visit and enjoy what this beautiful place had to offer.

In 1873, construction began on the Currituck Beach Lighthouse. It was followed by the Jones Hill Life Saving Station in 1874, one of seven such stations on the OBX. In 1905, a one-room school was added as well as a church and other buildings.

Today, Corolla is home to recreational fun, historical sites, beautiful beaches, and luxurious accommodations. Here old and new can be sampled and enjoyed.

Located about 10 miles south of the Virginia border, Corolla is now a collection of coastal and sound communities within Currituck County. These housing developments or subdivisions are known as Pine Island, the Currituck Club, Ocean Sands, Whalehead, Buck Island, Monteray Shores, Corolla Light, Villages at Ocean Hill, Crown Point, Spindrift, and more. Together they make up the larger community of Corolla which stretches from the northern four-wheel drive beaches to the southern Dare County line.

Currituck Beach Lighthouse

1101 Corolla Village Road
(252) 453-4939
www.currituckbeachlight.com

History abounds at the 162-foot, red brick Currituck Beach Lighthouse which first lit up the sky on December 1, 1875. Left unpainted to distinguish it from its neighbors, the Cape Henry, Virginia and Bodie Island lighthouses, it covers the 40 miles of dark coastline between the two.



Currituck Beach Lighthouse. Photo by Jim Dollar.

Following its automation in 1939, the lighthouse and keeper's house suffered many years of neglect, vandalism, and the ravages of nature. In 1980 it was taken under the care of the Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. which began the huge task of restoring this important part of North Carolina's coastal history.

After years of hard work and a significant amount of private funding, the lighthouse, outbuildings, and grounds have been returned to their former days. In good weather, visitors can climb the 214-step winding staircase to the top for an expansive view of the Currituck Sound, and the Atlantic Ocean.

A guiding Fresnel lens and light flash every twenty seconds, and shine for 18 miles to ships at sea. It is still an important navigational aid for the Northern OBX, warning of the coast from dusk to dawn every day of the year.

The lighthouse has interesting exhibits which tell the story and that of its keepers. Visitors can walk around the grounds, and see the keeper's quarters, a storage building, outhouse, and cisterns. Some work still remains, but the majority of it has been completed and is a testimony to all who have worked there, past and present.

Historic Corolla Village

Corolla Chapel/ Historic Corolla Village
1136 Corolla Village Road
(252) 453-4224
www.corollachapel.com

Through the work and devotion of local residents, Historic Corolla Village is finding new life as the quaint little town that it was back in the 1800's. It is here that visitors can get a unique sense of what life was like in this OBX area before it became a modern day vacationer's paradise.

One of the most famous buildings in the village is the Corolla Chapel, formed as a congregation in 1885. Located less than two blocks north of the Currituck Lighthouse on Old Corolla Village Road, the Chapel is prospering, and is a popular wedding site. It is said that a visit to Corolla should include a visit to its historic chapel.

Other restored buildings include the Corolla Post Office and General Store, the Corolla Schoolhouse, the Grey-Lewark House and Outbuilding, the Parker House and Outbuilding, the Gard House, and a village garden, some of which are on the National Historic Register.



Corolla Pony. Photo by Mike + Tiffy.

Currituck Heritage Park

1160 Village Lane
(252) 453-0221

The Currituck Heritage Park is a fun and refreshing place to play, picnic, relax, and even have a wedding. Here you can try your hand at crabbing, launch a small boat, sit and read under a live oak or picnic pavilion, go wading, enjoy a fabulous sunset, or say I do. Within the park visitors can also enjoy the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education and the Whalehead Club. These are excellent examples of what outdoor and indoor life can be on the coast of North Carolina.

Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education

1160 Village Lane
Currituck Heritage Park/ Corolla
(252) 453-0221

Free educational programs are available within the Currituck Heritage Park at the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education including fishing, nature photography, kayaking, birding, decoy carving, ecology, animal tracking, orienteering, sea turtles, and more. Visitors can also view an exhibit gallery on conservation, natural history, over 250 decoys, an 8,400 gallon aquarium, classrooms, video hall, and a gift shop.

Corolla Ponies

People share Corolla's beauty with the rugged and wild horses which have survived 500 years of northeasters and hurricanes. Presumed to have come ashore from shipwrecks and abandonments, these Colonial Spanish Mustangs, or Banker horses, have contributed much to the life of the OBX.

The horses are actually full-grown, though small in size. They thrive on the native plants and grasses of the coast, and find freshwater to drink. It is dangerous to their health and unlawful to feed them, or come within 50 feet of these wild and rare animals.

The Corolla Wild Horse Fund was formed in 1989 to protect and preserve them from people and their vehicles. Today, they have been safely relocated to the northernmost beach, and a private 400-acre island in the Currituck Sound.

Four-wheel drive tours and rentals are available to drive north of Corolla to see the horses. The Wild Horse Ordinance requires visitors to keep their distance and respect this wonderful wildlife. See www.corollawildhorses.org and the following list for more information, rentals, and tours.

Duck



Duck, NC. Photo by Josh Delp.

A small village in the 1700's, established in 1879, and incorporated in 2001, Duck was originally named for the abundant waterfowl which inhabited its sandy shores. This quaint and popular vacation destination is bordered by both the Atlantic Ocean and the Currituck Sound.

In the last twenty years, Duck has seen much new growth and development. Yet, its year-round residents and thousands of visitors find this thriving community to be just the right combination of traditional and contemporary styles.

Many vacationers come to Duck to enjoy the unique shops, fine restaurants, and rental homes. Others come to savor the beautiful sand and surf. Whatever the reason, Duck does not disappoint its guests.

Recreation

Duck's clean, private beaches rank among America's top ten. A paved bike path also runs along NC Highway 12 and through the community of Southern Shores.

Whether fishing, kayaking, surfing, swimming, walking, shelling, jet skiing, parasailing, windsurfing, golfing, canoeing, or soaking up the sun appeal to you, both the ocean and sound sides of Duck have much to offer. Visitors can rent or buy sporting equipment at a variety of locations in Duck and the surrounding area.

There is so much to see and do in Duck that it helps to have some suggestions. The following is a list of some of the available recreational opportunities.

Duck Town Park

1200 Duck Road
(252) 255-1234
www.townofduck.com

Duck Town Park is a fun place to visit during your stay. It offers 11-acres of maritime forest, green space, willow swamp, and soundside views. Walking trails, public canoe and kayak launches, a playground with a climbing wall, slide, and xcelerator, picnic shelter, gazebo, amphitheater, boardwalk, and water fountains for humans and canines alike are places to play and rest. During the summer, performances, concerts, and story hours are also available.

Kitty Hawk



Beach of Kitty Hawk.
Photo by Henry T McLin.

The town of Kitty Hawk offers a unique blend of fun and relaxation. It has everything from a generations-old village to modern fully-equipped homes, a maritime forest to popular sandy beaches for exploration and refreshment.

The origin of Kitty Hawk's name is uncertain, but it may date back to the Native American phrase for goose hunting, "Chickahauk". It might also refer to dragonflies, or mosquito or skeeter hawks, terms used by early settlers. Whatever its original name, Kitty Hawk means a great place to visit.

Monument to a Century of Flight

Milepost 1 of the US 158 Bypass
www.monumenttoacenturyofflight.org

Behind the Aycock Brown Welcome Center is the Monument to a Century of Flight. It has fourteen wing-shaped stainless steel pylons, bearing black granite panels. They chronicle aviation's most important 100 events over the 100 years following the Wright Brothers' flight.

The Monument is owned and operated by the state of North Carolina. It also serves as a public park, and is accessible to all without charge.

Wilbur and Orrville Wright

US 158/ MP 7.5
(252) 441-7430
www.nps.gov/wbr/

Kitty Hawk owes much of its reputation to Wilbur and Orrville Wright even though the actual location for the first flight was a few miles to the south near Kill Devil Hills. The Wright brothers saw in the sandy beaches, gently rolling dunes, and average wind speeds over 15 mph. an ideal place to test their aviation theories and knowledge.

For over three years they practiced, planned, and persisted on the beaches. Their dedication was finally rewarded on December 17, 1903 when the Wright Flyer took to the air to become the first powered, heavier-than-air flight.

Kitty Hawk Woods Coastal Reserve

983 W. Kitty Hawk Rd.
(252) 261-8891
www.ncnerr.org

While visiting the area, a trip to the Kitty Hawk Woods will give you an opportunity to experience the many varieties of nature on the Outer Banks. The 1824-acre Woods lies in the village of Kitty Hawk.



Monument to the Wright Brothers. Photo by Nic.

The Woods' maritime swamp, forest, and marshlands are located between the Currituck Sound and U.S. 158 at Kitty Hawk Road. Public parking and access are available to visitors who wish to wander the designated trails, and observe the delicate balance of flora and fauna.

Recreation

Activities are abundant on the Outer Banks, and Kitty Hawk is no exception. Kayaking, golfing, birding, skateboarding, parasailing, waverunning, jet skiing, kiting, shelling, windsurfing, biking, fishing, and swimming can be found in this popular vacation destination.

The Pruitt Multi-Use Trail is a paved path where bikers, skaters, runners, or walkers can enjoy the great outdoors on a safe trail which is separate from the roadway. Bikes, helmets, and other equipment can be purchased and rented through local businesses.



Wright Brothers, first in flight. Photo by Tim Menzies.

Nag's Head



Colorful seaside homes of Nag's Head.
Photo by lns1122.

Nag's Head is a place where tried and true traditions meet modern-day comforts. Since the early 1830's when it became North Carolina's first tourist colony, vacationers have delighted in Nags Head's beautiful beaches and ocean breezes. Rich with history, it still entices visitors to sample the old and the new while creating their own vacation memories.

The name Nags Head possibly came from its early inhabitants. "Bankers", as they were known, had been there for quite a while. Legend has it that they tied lanterns to their horse's necks, and walked them up and down the beach. The bobbing light appeared to be a floundering ship, and brought vessels into shore to investigate only to run aground and be pillaged. The Bankers found ways to sustain themselves by fishing, farming, and salvaging wood and other items from shipwrecks. They increased their incomes by providing food, transportation, and needed services to the early vacationers who came to get away from it all.

Starting in the 1860's, the Nags Head Beach Cottage Row houses were built to accommodate the seasonal visitors. Several of the original structures, or Unpainted Aristocracy, from that era still exist opposite Jockey's Ridge State Park. Hotels and churches soon followed, and the future of Nags Head became very bright.

Jockey's Ridge State Park

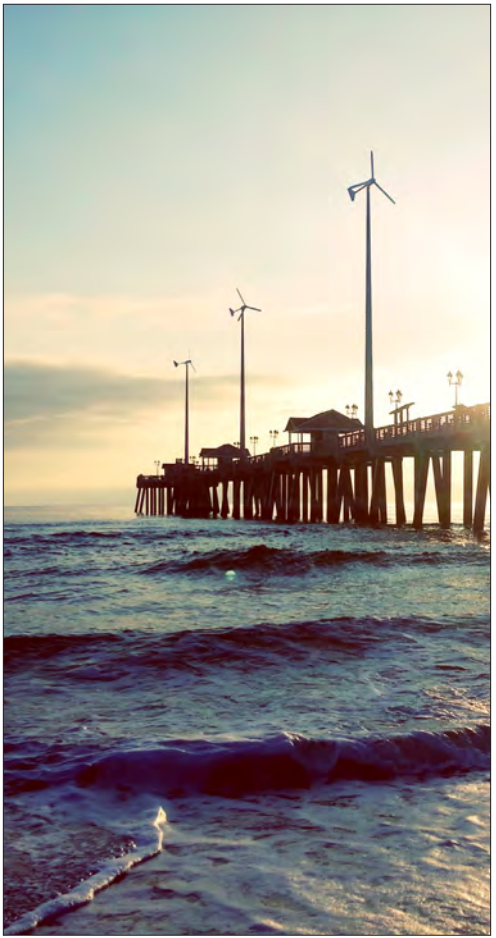
300 W Carolista
(252) 441-7132
www.jockeysridgestatepark.com

Today Jockey's Ridge is the highest active sand dune on this eastern coastline. Over many years, the winds have caused it to shift to the southwest, burying many structures in the process.

Hang gliders and kite flyers relish the 110 foot dune for its great take off and landing advantage. For others, the 360-degree view is also unique, especially at sunset.

Jockey's Ridge is a 420-acre ecosystem in the heart of Nags Head. Bird watchers and nature lovers will enjoy the beauty of the park, and the available activity programs.

There are two walking trails through the live oaks as well as a handicapped–accessible walkway to the highest dune. Visitors can also enjoy sand-boarding, kayaking, windsurfing, swimming, picnicking, and touring the museum and gift shop. Programs and admission are free of charge.



Nag's Head pier. Photo by TriangleREVA.

Nags Head Woods Ecological Preserve

701 Ocean Acres Dr
(252) 441-2525
www.nature.org

Nags Head Woods Preserve is a 1,400 acre maritime forest which is protected by the Nature Conservancy. Five miles of self-guided walking trails give visitors the option of easy to difficult. Centuries-old trees and countless species of birds provide the opportunity for enjoyment and observation. Maps and guides are available at the visitor's center.

Bodie Island Lighthouse and Keeper's Quarters

8210 Bodie Island Lighthouse
(252) 473-2111
www.nps.gov/caha

Lighthouse enthusiasts will appreciate a trip to see Bodie Island, just south of Nags Head, where the third such beacon stands ready to guide ships at sea. The first lighthouse, built in 1847, was torn down in 1859 for structural defects. It was replaced by a second one which was destroyed by retreating Confederate troops in 1861 to keep it from it coming under Union control.

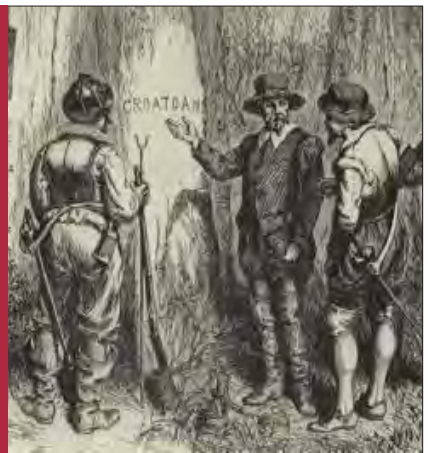
Today's Bodie lighthouse has been standing 170 feet tall since 1872. It stands over half a mile from the coast, surrounded by grass. With 160,000 candlepowers of light flashing twice every 22 seconds, it can be seen for 19 miles.

Visitors are not allowed to climb up the inside of the black and white horizontally striped lighthouse. However, they can walk around its base, enjoy the well-kept grounds, and see the restored Double Keeper's Quarters, gift shop, and visitor's center.

Recreation

Nags Head beaches are a major vacation destination. Its many public accesses provide visitors with opportunities to wade, swim, sail, search for seashells, build sandcastles, hunt for ghost crabs, and soak up that good Outer Banks sunshine. Both sound and ocean sides have plenty of beach and water sport activities for just about anyone.

Roanoke Island



John White discovers the word "CROATOAN" carved at Roanoke's fort palisade.

The history of Roanoke Island is based on legend and mystery. What happened to the 116 English men, women, and children, led by Sir Walter Raleigh, who came there in 1587 to establish a new colony? Why were they and their homes missing without a trace three years later when one of their leaders, Capt. John White, returned to the settlement from a trip to England for supplies? What caused them to completely disappear?

Today historians and archeologists have no answers to those questions. Their fate remains a mystery, but their efforts have not been forgotten. The colony which they began is a memory and still a destination.

Roanoke Island is home to two towns named after the Algonkian Native American chiefs who inhabited the area 400 years ago, Manteo and Wanchese.

Manteo is the seat of Dare County, and a popular vacation and residential spot with thriving businesses and trades. History and charm abound alongside parks, gardens, condominiums, historic homes, restaurants, and shops.

Wanchese has a laid back approach to life, and has stayed much the same for the last one hundred years, a fact which makes it quite attractive. Its quieter way of life draws visitors who enjoy the slower pace.

Amid the crape myrtle and hundreds of live oaks, Roanoke Island has much to offer to vacationers. New ways have joined forces with tradition, and the result is a place with many fine and fun attractions.

The Elizabethan Gardens

1411 National Park Drive
(252) 473-3234
www.elizabethangardens.org.

The Elizabethan Gardens honor the early Roanoke colonists with an abundance of beautiful trees, plants, and flowers. Visitors can breathe in the fragrant aromas, watch the birds and butterflies, and learn all about the year-round garden while enjoying the gazebo, fountain, ornaments, benches, lawn, and statues. Children can also look for fossils and shark's teeth at The Amazing Fossil Dig. Hands-on activities are part of a Family Fun Series, and are free with paid admission.

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site

1401 National Park Drive
(252) 473-5772
www.nps.gov/fora

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site pays tribute



The Elizabeth Gardens. Photo by Ken Lund.

to those early English settlers, and Roanoke Island's Native Americans, European Americans, and African Americans.

Although it was England's first home in this country, it was already home to many other people whose lives are also remembered at Fort Raleigh.

As a National Historic Site, Fort Raleigh is preserved for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations. Visitors can get a sense of the courage and sacrifice of these early settlers, and the lasting impression they made.

The Lost Colony

1409 National Park Drive
(252) 473-2127
www.thelostcolony.org

America's longest running outdoor theater production is on Roanoke Island, The Lost Colony. Its story is the historic drama of those first 117 English colonists, their lives and their mysteries.

Since 1937, over 4 million visitors have come to see this enduring show at Manteo's Waterside Theatre. The Lost Colony alumni actors include Andy Griffith, Eileen Fulton, and Lynn Redgrave.



Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse.
Photo by Kevin Vance at TowPathPhoto.com.

This popular production's music, dance, comedy, special effects, and new Broadway-designed costumes often bring those who have seen it back for more. The show runs during the summer months, and backstage tours and sunset picnics are also available.

Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse

Manteo Waterfront
(252) 475-1750
www.outerbanks.org.

At the southern end of Roanoke Island, amidst the marshes, stands a lighthouse which serves to guide the way along the Pamlico and Croatan Sounds and neighboring rivers. The Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse is the fourth one to stand in its place since 1877.

Built as a screwpile lighthouse, it represents a rich and important part of maritime history. Exhibits and touring are free, and the hours are seasonal.

Roanoke Island Festival Park

1 Festival Park
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Roanoke Island Festival Park sits on a 25-acre island across from downtown Manteo. The park's focal point is the Elizabeth II, a representation of one of the seven sixteenth-century sailing ships which carried the English colonists to Roanoke.

On board, you can help the costumed crew chart a course using period navigational tools, study the rigging and sails, learn about life on board these ocean vessels, and imagine a sailor's life. Both adults and children will find this to be entertaining and educational.

The Festival Park also has a Settlement Site where landlubbers can experience daily life from the colonists' viewpoint. Woodworkers, blacksmiths, games, foods, etc. are all discussed and explained.

American Indian Town is an exhibit which represents their life and times during that period of early English settlement. The Native American's longhouses, farming techniques, skills, and crafts are demonstrated and discussed.

The park also has a Roanoke Adventure Museum, information about the Freedmen's Colony, a film theatre, museum store, art gallery, Fossil Pit, Outer Banks History Center, outdoor pavilion, summer camp, outreach program, and boardwalk. A Performance Series for adults and children also takes place at various times throughout the year.



North Carolina Aquarium. Photo by Mike Allyn.

The Freedmen's Colony

www.roanokefreedmenscolony.com

The Freedmen's Colony on Roanoke Island was established as a safe haven for freed slaves. Growing from an initial 250 people in 1862 to over 1,000 by the end of the year, the occupying Union troops' General Burnside declared that these former slaves should be granted their freedom.

Escaping from North Carolina and surrounding areas, the slaves fled captivity for a community and sanctuary. Reverend Horace James led the establishment of the Freedmen's Colony in 1863, and Northern missionaries came to pursue abolition, education, and evangelism.

Churches and schools were built, and the colony grew to over 3,500 as more freed slaves arrived and settled. With the increase of population, the colony struggled to support the needs of its inhabitants. In time diseases took a toll, necessities became scarce, and the relationships between the refugees and the military became strained.

By 1865, the island's fort was ordered to be dismantled which further eroded the colony, and by 1867 the community was abandoned altogether. Some former slaves remained on the island, and some of their descendents still live on Roanoke. Although the Freedmen's Colony faded away, it is still considered to be a milestone in American history.

North Carolina Aquarium

374 Airport Road
(252) 473-3494
www.ncaquariums.com

The North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island invites you and your family to come and visit the many aquatic plants and animal life in this 68,000 square foot facility. Alligators, river otters, sharks and other furry and finned creatures are here for you to see.

Life in the wetlands, ocean, and coastal freshwater is explored and represented. Hurricanes, northeasters, marine communities, open encounters, the open ocean and more are discussed.

The Aquarium also has special activities which include animal encounters, dive shows, feeding demonstrations, films, lectures, game shows, and various topical series. Birthday parties and summer day camps are available for children.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore



Cape Hatteras National Seashore.
Photo by popofatticus.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore (CHNS) is a narrow 72 mile-long stretch of the southern Outer Banks barrier islands. Established by the National Park Service on January 12, 1953, it was our country's first national seashore. CHNS begins in south Nags Head and Ocracoke Inlet, and extends south through Bodie, Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands. Its location is both a blessing and a curse. This slender seashore has been bombarded by treacherous hurricanes and ferocious nor'easters. Daily tides, currents, and waves have left their mark on its beaches. Human events have damaged and preserved the frail ecosystem and its inhabitants. Still, this stubborn strip of land endures.

To know CHNS, is to appreciate it. Home for hundreds of years to Native Americans, watermen, slaves, farmers, surfmen, lighthouse keepers, and countless others who lived and worked here, it has a rich culture all its own. Visited by pirates, shipwrecked crews, military battles, ponies, and vacationers, CHNS has many stories to tell.

EDWARD TEACH AKA BLACKBEARD

Among the many famous people with an Outer Banks connection is Edward Teach, known as Blackbeard the Pirate. Teach originally served Queen Anne of England as a privateer in the British Navy, helping to rob merchant vessels. Following The War of Spanish Succession which ended in 1714, he turned to his next career. Blackbeard acquired his own ship in 1717 with Benjamin Hornigold, a true pirate in the Caribbean. Renaming it Queen Anne's Revenge, he took to pirating with a spirit all his own. Blackbeard's flag displayed a horned skeleton with cloven feet holding an hourglass and a heart which dripped blood. His ship of 40 cannons and over 300 men prowled the waters of the Caribbean and Atlantic coast. With a notorious brutality, they ransacked ships and tortured crewmen. Blackbeard's reputation for fearsome cruelty and savage murder was so vicious that his own men feared him. His famous beard contained fuse cords which were pre-soaked in limewater and saltpeter to smoke slowly when lit.

North Carolina's governor, Charles Eden, tried to bribe Blackbeard in exchange for the peaceful passage of its ships. The coastal waterways, inlets, and channels proved to be too tempting for Blackbeard who stole and did whatever he could, whenever he could. When residents and merchantmen could stand it no longer, they appealed to Virginia's Governor Spotswood for protection. With a promise of rewards to whoever would kill Blackbeard and his crew, the Navy planned a counterattack against him. The battle



Capt. Edward Teach, alias Blackbeard.



The Cape Hatteras Life Guard Station, which later became part of the Durant Motel.
Work of the United States National Park Service.

took place in the Ocracoke Inlet on November 22, 1718. Blackbeard was prepared, and led a fierce assault on the enemy who were aboard the Jane and the Ranger. Fooled into believing that the Jane had suffered a mortal blow, its crew hiding below decks, the pirates boarded the smoking ship. Royal Navy Lieutenant Robert Maynard led his waiting men to a valiant charge, and the pirates were cut down to the last man. Blackbeard took five bullets and twenty-five stab wounds before he succumbed to death. His severed head was displayed on the Ranger's bowsprit, and his body flung overboard, ending his reign of terror. Today the spot known as Teach's Hole marks the place of his death in the Ocracoke Inlet.

U.S. LIFESAVING SERVICE

Valiant efforts were made by many others on the waters of CHNS beginning in the 1800s. Shipwrecks meant more than lost cargo to the volunteers who risked their lives to save crewmen and passengers from these sinking vessels. Known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic, this Outer Banks section has claimed hundreds of ships and thousands of lives throughout its history. Its unpredictable storms, swirling currents, and shallow shoals have scored heavily against those at sea. But, there were those who were not content to be safe on the shore, who felt called to do what they could to save lives. The federal government did not respond as well or as quickly. In 1848, limited federal efforts were made, but fell short.

Finally, the U.S. Treasury's Revenue Marine Bureau established the U.S. Lifesaving Service in 1871. Still lagging in funds with poor equipment and training, the need for improvement was noticed when two ships, the USS Huron and the Metropolis, wrecked along the coast with tragic results. The chief of the Revenue Marine Bureau, Sumner I. Kimball, became the superintendent of the U.S. Lifesaving Service. By 1878, he had developed a heroic and committed model of lifesaving rescue operations. A keeper was appointed as the head lifesaver at a station and he was responsible for the training of the surfmen, daily drills, and maintenance of the equipment.

Initially surfboats were launched into rough waves and rowed through storms to the site of a shipwreck. Later they were powered, but much of the work was still done by oarsmen. Breeches buoys were used in the rescues along with other cumbersome equipment which was hauled to the sea on heavy carts.

Lifesaving personnel had to be fearless, selfless, and powerful. They gave willingly to serve others, and were often unsung heroes



Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Photo by John Buie.

who patrolled beaches and manned watch towers around the clock. Braving high seas, frightening storms, and overwhelming odds, they rescued hundreds from a watery grave through sheer strength and bravery.

In 1915, the U.S. Lifesaving Service ended, and the U.S. Coast Guard took up the noble tradition. Though equipment has changed to the most modern technology, the essence has stayed the same, to rescue lives by all heroic means. For more stories about these courageous efforts, see www.nps.gov.

LIGHTKEEPERS

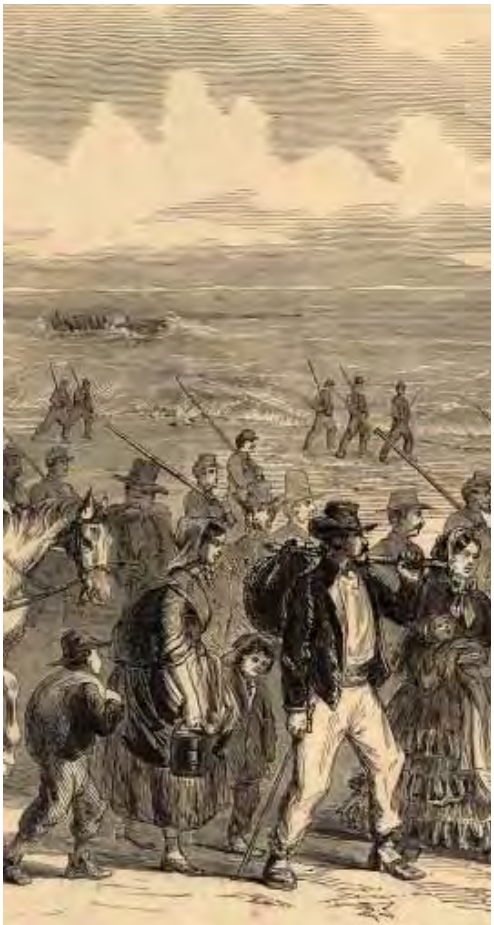
Like the lifesavers, the lightkeeper's job was to protect ocean voyagers from disaster. Tending a lighthouse also required commitment and dedication. Without it, ships could easily run aground on the coast, and lives could be lost. Lightkeepers had to maintain a constant fuel supply in the lanterns, and faithfully trim the wicks. The glass had to be clean and polished so the beam within would shine clearly out to sea. Brass fittings were to be kept polished, too, and the whole structure neatly painted. Clockworks had to be lubricated and cleaned, and lights extinguished during the day to save on fuel. If strong sunlight hit the lens, it could damage the clarity so curtains must be closed in daytime. All additional buildings were to be kept in good repair, reports written, records kept, supplies ordered, and guests warmly received.

Perhaps a lightkeeper's most important job was to watch the sea for any emergency. Through stormy nights and days, they had to keep a vigilant eye on the horizon, and signal for help. For all this, they received little if any pay. Today, lighthouses have become more automated, but are still important to those at sea. Visitors can tour several remaining lighthouses and keepers houses, and learn about the important contributions which they made to coastal North Carolina. For more information, go to www.outerbanks.org.

WARTIME

The Civil War

Cape Hatteras National Seashore is a tranquil place today, but it was often a battleground in wartimes. The Civil War came to the Outer Banks in the early 1860s. Because of its critical location, control of the Outer Banks meant control of eastern North Carolina. Access to Pamlico Sound could be gained by means of the Hatteras Inlet. Slaves and soldiers built Forts Clark and Hatteras to protect this narrow passage between Ocracoke and Hatteras Islands.



Chicamacomico Races. Via Trading Cards NPS.

A Confederate state as of 1861, the inlet was a highly desirable prize for the Union forces. Fort Clark fell first under a barrage of fire from seven Union ships and troops on August 28, 1861. The weaker Confederate opposition left and went to Fort Hatteras. The following day they surrendered to the Union after battle. This first victory of the war was a great encouragement to Union troops. A jubilant President Abraham Lincoln was said to have jumped out of bed and danced a jig in his nightshirt when he heard the news.

In October 1861, another battle took place which became known as the Chicamacomico Races. Confederate forces wanted to regain Fort Hatteras and Pamlico Sound from Union hands. Amassing on Roanoke Island, a Confederate stronghold, they hoped to retake the Sound. Union soldiers were at their outpost at Chicamacomico. They were retreating south to Fort Hatteras across 40 miles of hot sand with little drinkable water when Confederate ships were sighted in Pamlico Sound. On the way, they camped at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse while the Confederates proceeded to Chicamacomico. Union troops, now with reinforcements, turned around and marched back north where they caught up to the Confederates. A battle ensued on land and sea, and the Chicamacomico Races ended with no great number of casualties and no clear winner.

Other battles took place on the Outer Banks including the critical one for Roanoke Island on February 7, 1862. The Union gained control of the island, and established their hold on eastern North Carolina. The Civil War Trail section of the coast is a part of a larger system of trails which seek to preserve and maintain this valuable history. Hatteras and Roanoke Island are featured in this area, with markers and information. To learn more about this free trail, visit www.civilwartraveler.com.

World War II

World War II came to the Outer Banks. Following Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, a secret operation was developed by Germany to wage a submarine offensive against the United States' eastern coast. From January to June, 1942, almost 400 ships and hundreds of lives were lost off the coast of North Carolina. Poorly prepared and under-equipped, the Americans were overpowered in their defense of these heavily traveled sea lanes. Stealthy U-boats found little opposition from the few Navy vessels and numerous merchant ships which moved through these vital waters. Launching attacks was made easier by the many onshore lighthouses, buoys, and homes which served as backlighting for the unsuspecting crafts. The American naval command, believing that the United States could handle it alone, rejected assistance



The Loss of the USS Monitor. Via Trading Cards NPS.

from British allies who were eager to come to their aid. Many thought that the Navy was not seeing the crisis as a real threat. An absence of American defenses led to tragic and massive losses.

The U-boats struck with precision and without mercy along the coast. Burning ships lit up the nights while bodies and wreckage were washed up on the beaches. Largely unchallenged, the German forces continued to pound away until the area became known as Torpedo Junction by the numerous merchant ship captains.

It wasn't until June 19, 1942 when Army Chief of Staff George Marshall wrote a letter to the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Fleet, Admiral Ernest J. King, that the danger was noticed. The entire war effort was questioned, and America's ability to be a strong force called for review. The result was an acknowledgement of the United States' vulnerability, an increase in naval patrols and aircraft, and the acceptance of England's assistance. Churchill sent anti-submarine ships including the HMS Bedfordshire which was lost to a U-boat's torpedo on May 11, 1942. Four bodies of Bedfordshire crewmen washed on to the shores of Ocracoke, and all other sailors were lost. These naval heroes are remembered at a British cemetery there, on land given to England.

As resistance to the German attacks grew, the conflict began to turn in the summer of 1942, and the U-boats were withdrawn. The great losses of lives and ships had been a bitter lesson for the United States. Gradually, the Outer Banks retreated from its role in yet another war.

SHIPWRECKS

Shipwrecks come as a matter of fact, not just war, to the CHNS coast. Throughout history, this fragile shoreline has been a powerful force against the wood and steel structures on the sea. What humankind does not destroy, nature attempts to defeat. The Outer Banks' Atlantic coast is littered with hundreds of years of broken ships throughout The Graveyard of the Atlantic. Here the sea has given life, and taken it away.

Jutting out into the ocean, the Outer Banks and its notorious Diamond Shoals require a navigational side step. Avoiding these slender barrier islands is much more dangerous than it appears. The water which flows here is comprised of the cold Labrador Current and the warm Gulf Stream, creating a desirable effect for ocean travel. Trying to reach this current required risking an encounter with underwater sandbars, and infamous storms. The low profile of the island was also difficult to see until it was too late. Even the sturdi-



One of a few dozen horses descended from Spanish horses of the 16th century, dumped on Ocracoke. Cared for today by the National Park service. Photo by Jason A G.

est of vessels and experienced captains and crews could be overcome by these elements.

Whether the ships are merchant or pirate, tankers or fishing trawlers, all are treated equally by nature. Among the many famous shipwrecks resting in this Atlantic graveyard, are the Laura Barnes, a wooden sailing ship lost on June 1, 1921, the Lois Joyce, a commercial fishing trawler which went down in 1981, and the Federal steamship, the Oriental, lost during the Civil War in 1862. Occasionally, pieces of wrecked ships will wash onto an Outer Banks beach, and bring some history and memories with it.

Visitors to CHNS can absorb some first-hand stories at The Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum, a non-profit institution in Hatteras Village, dedicated to the education, preservation, and presentation of the Outer Banks' maritime past. To find out about times and fees, visit www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com.

BANKER PONIES

At the southern tip of CHNS is Ocracoke Island, adopted home of the Banker ponies whose origin is a matter of legend. It will never be known if they were brought to the island intentionally, or were survivors of floundering and wrecked ships from the 16th or 17th century. Regardless, they ran free for hundreds of years, grazing and breeding at will. Though they are the size of ponies, the Bankers are actually full grown, powerful horses who were used to haul rescue and farm equipment, freight, food, and help patrol the beaches. Annual pony pennings took place for years. During these festivals, the ponies were rounded up, and some were sold to owners on the mainland. Today they are fenced and cared for in the National Park Service Pony Pen on the eastern end of Ocracoke Island.

PEA ISLAND NWR

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge begins four miles below the Bonner Bridge to Hatteras Island, and stretches south to Rodanthe. Since May 17, 1937, it has been a refuge where salt marsh and flats, brackish water ponds, dunes, ocean beaches, and upland areas can be enjoyed. Pea Island is a bird lover's paradise, and is under the wing of two federal agencies, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the National Park Service.

Along with birders who scan the land and sea for local and migratory fowl, there are those who come to see some of the other 365 species. Endangered and threatened fish and wildlife such as loggerhead, green, and leatherback sea turtles, hawksbill and Kemp's Ridley sea turtles, American alligators, red



Pea Island Lifesaving Station. Via Trading Cards NPS.



Chicacomonico Life Saving Station. Photo by Elizabeth

wolves, West Indian manatees, and seabeach amaranth take refuge here as well.

Educational programs, wildlife photography, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, shelling, strolling, and reflection can all be enjoyed along the beautiful, quiet beaches. In addition, the first all African American lifesaving crew was located at the Pea Island Lifesaving Station from 1880-1947. The restored cookhouse has displays of artifacts and pictures about their service to those in need. For more information, visit www.fws.gov.

CHICAMACOMICO LIFESAVING STATION HISTORIC SITE

One of the most interesting places to tour in this area is the Chicamacomico Lifesaving Station Historic Site [telephone (252) 987-1552]. This station's seven original buildings are listed on the National and State Historic Registers and are the most complete of their kind. The oldest station was built in 1874 and is currently undergoing a restoration. The second station was added in 1911. Visitors can observe the Gothic architecture and see numerous exhibits of artifacts, uniforms, documents, photographs, and maritime memorabilia - which highlight the importance of this historic part of the Outer Banks story.

It was here, on August 16, 1918, that the famous maritime rescue of the British steam tanker SS Mirlo occurred during WW I. The Mirlo was on a trip from New Orleans to London carrying a load of gasoline and refined oil when it was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine, the U-117. Braving high seas and a blazing inferno, the rescuers rowed against all odds and extreme danger. The courageous men of this early Coast Guard lifesaving station saved 42 of 51 sailors in a daring and highly awarded mission.

The Chicamacomico Historical Association uses 100% of the admission fees, purchases, donations, etc. to continue its work of preserving and operating this rare and valuable station.

RODANTHE

Rodanthe has the distinction of being the easternmost point of North Carolina, and the site of Nicholas Sparks' book and movie Nights in Rodanthe. The local pier, Hatteras Island Resort Fishing Pier, was featured in the movie and is where some of the area's best fishing can be found. This Rodanthe pier house has an assortment of snacks, drinks, souvenirs, beach supplies, bait, and tackle plus a game room and restrooms. The 850-foot pier is open from April through November for those who love to fish, and enjoy the



Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Photo by popofatticus.

ocean breezes. Call (252) 987-2323 for more information.

GENERAL INFO

When it comes to swimming on the Outer Banks, visitors should use some caution. Rip currents are nothing to take lightly. They can be very dangerous for those who are caught in them, and don't know how to get safely back on shore. The best advice is to avoid swimming during those times when rips are present, and either wait for a calmer day, or swim at a soundside beach.

In addition, be aware that there are certain restrictions designed to protect nesting wildlife. Rare shorebirds and turtles are closely monitored, and weekly reports are given from March through November. During most of the year, driving on the beaches at night is strictly forbidden and enforced by the National Park Service in order to safeguard these endangered species.

Beaufort



Beaufort. Photo by Patrick Mueller.

Known as Beaufort-by-the-Sea when it was settled in 1709, this quaint town is the third oldest in North Carolina. From its early days, Beaufort was home to pirates, fishermen, merchants, farmers, and those who sought a coastal life.

As a bustling trade center, Beaufort collected customs from ships and was a busy lumber products port. During the American Revolution, it held its own as the third largest port in North Carolina.

Union forces occupied Beaufort for much of the Civil War. Nearby Fort Macon held a prominent place in the defense of this area. Following the war, Beaufort resumed its role as an export center and fishing business.

In time, the trade declined in Beaufort, and the fishing industry increased. A large fleet was established there as well as fish processing plants.

In the 1970's, Beaufort became more popular as a tourist destination and restorations were made to the waterfront and town. Today Beaufort is both a throwback to its historical beginning and a contemporary place to visit and enjoy.

Beaufort Historic District

100 Block Turner Street
(252) 728-5225
www.beauforthistoricsite.org

Over 100 historical homes and buildings including the old 1796 Carteret County Courthouse and 1829 county jail, an 1859 apothecary shop and doctor's office, the 1732 R. Rustell House, the 1778 Samuel Leffers Cottage, the late 1700's Josiah Bell house, the 1825 John C. Manson house, and the Old Burying Ground bear testimony to their age and significance as part of the National Register of Historic Homes.

Known for their beautiful detail, picket fences, and lovely preservation, this district offers tours which give a look into life in a Victorian and Queen Anne past which has remained much as it was in 1722.

The Beaufort Historical Association also operates a shop on the Historic Site. Helping to finance the group's restoration and educational projects, they offer homemade items as well as artwork, books about the local history and life, and various plants and herbs.

North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort

15 Front Street
(252) 728-7317
www.ncmaritime.org
www.ncmm-friends.org

Three different facilities comprise this museum's tribute to the life and times of coastal North Carolina. The Waterfront Center



The Old Burying Ground of Beaufort.
Photo by Jerad Bitner.

and Maritime Museum are across the street from each other. They display decoys, wooden boats, a large seashell collection, and a shop which shows ship models. The Gallant's Channel annex is in downtown Beaufort. Here visitors can see shipwreck artifacts including some from Blackbeard's ship, Queen Anne's Revenge.

Educational programs include the Junior Sailing Program, Summer Science School for Children, day classes in boat models, pirate life, seashore life, fishing, saltwater science, nature at night, kayaking, coastal trails, etc. Adults and children will find much to learn and enjoy.

Rachel Carson National Estuarine Research Reserve

135 Duke Marine Lab Road
(252) 728-2170
www.ncnerr.org

Part of the North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve, this reserve is named in honor of Rachel Carson. Her devotion as author and scientist to the study of nature and human influence on it, led her to a special interest in coastal ecosystems.

On the other side of Taylor's Creek, part of the Beaufort waterfront, there lie a series of small islands which comprise the reserve and are accessible only by boat. Bird Shoal, Horse Island, Carrot Island, and Town Marsh are inhabited by wild horses which were released by a farmer in the 1940's.

The Reserve offers visitors an opportunity to see nature in its own element. Self-guided walking tours are allowed year round with boat cruises and nature tours during the spring and summer. Educational programs are also available.

The Old Burying Ground

130 Turner Street
(252) 728-5225
www.beauforthistoricsite.org

Time and nature have left their mark on this centuries-old cemetery. Soft sand has caused some stones to tilt while wind and rains have erased some names and memories. Small markers in tucked away corners and large tributes in open places all speak of people in other eras.

Take a self-guided tour between dawn and dusk while viewing over 400 gravesites which date back more than 300 years. Guided tours are also offered. This fascinating piece of history has stories to tell about those who lived in this region and their times.

Cape Lookout National Seashore



Beach of Cape Lookout National Seashore. Photo by bobistraveling.

Cape Lookout National Seashore (CLNS) is part of the Central or Crystal Coast. Its 56-mile stretch lies three miles offshore from Ocracoke Inlet south to Beaufort Inlet.

CLNS is divided into four islands known as North Core Banks (NCB) or Portsmouth Island (PI), Middle Core Banks (MCB), South Core Banks (SCB) or Cape Lookout (CL), and Shackleford Banks (SB). Each of these undeveloped islands is a part of the National Seashore which was established on March 10, 1966 under the administration of the National Park Service.

In addition to these islands, Harkers Island (HI) is a part of the CLNS. Lying on the sound side of the SCB and SB where it is protected from the Atlantic Ocean, it is connected to the mainland by the Davis Memorial Bridge.

The National Park Service Headquarters on HI is a great source of information. Helpful volunteers and rangers can answer questions, and a video of the islands is also shown here.

The history of HI is rich and deep. In many ways it was separate unto itself until the establishment of the CLNS by President Lyndon Johnson changed their way of life. It had a long history as a plantation for Ebenezer Harker, boat building, livestock and fishing center, and key player in various wars with a dialect which was unique to the island.

Today, HI is a popular place for waterfowl decoy enthusiasts. They come from far and wide to see the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum which houses one of the largest known collections of decoys.

The NCB run from PI in the north to SCB which includes CL in the south. Though uninhabited today, there are two historic villages which speak of a coastal past.

Historic Portsmouth Village dates back to the 1700's when it was a major East Coast seaport. It was a bustling fishing and shipping spot until the mid-1800's when a hurricane opened a deeper inlet at Hatteras, and railroad commerce took away most of Portsmouth's business.

Today Portsmouth is uninhabited, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its few remaining buildings are preserved as a testimony to the more important role it once held.

The first Cape Lookout Lighthouse stood from 1812-1859. It was then replaced by the familiar black and white diamond-painted lighthouse which was first lit on November 1, 1859, and is still active today.



Wild pony of Cape Lookout National Seashore. Photo by bobistraveling.

The 1873 light keeper's quarters exhibit items from the island's past. Along with a Coast Guard station, lifesaving station, boathouse, fishing cottages, summer kitchen, and fuel shed they serve as the Cape Lookout Village Historic District.

Under the care of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Department of the Interior in recent years, the lighthouse underwent structural inspections and repairs. As of July 15, 2010 it opened to the public for regular climbing for the first time in its history.

Diamond City was once a part of the thriving whaling community which began in the 1700's on the Central Coast. For over 150 years, pilot boats and dories were sent out in pursuit of migrating whales as they swam past the barrier islands and what is now Barden Inlet where the town was located.

Whale oil was used a lubricant, soap, and lamp fuel. Bones of whales were highly prized for umbrella ribs, corset stays, needles, and many other practical uses. The remains of the carcasses were sold for fertilizer.

Today there is little evidence that Diamond City existed. This important historical spot was totally destroyed by a hurricane on August 17, 1899. All that remains are the memories and artifacts of the role that it played in life on the Outer Banks.

Originally known as Cart Island, SB was renamed for 18th century Virginian John Shackleford. His 7,000 acre land grant afforded him the opportunity to plant corn and build a garrison on what became his plantation. Troops were stationed here, and a fee was charged for every ship which anchored on the Banks.

The SB has herds of wild horses which are closely monitored by the National Park Service (NPS). Nesting loggerhead turtles and various sea inhabitants including scallops and crabs can also be found on the island.

Visitors to CLNS can only get there by boat, either a private vessel or ferry licensed by the NPS. Several passenger ferries travel there from Harkers Island, Beaufort, Morehead City, and Ocracoke. Ferries which can transport vehicles operate out of the towns of Davis and Atlantic.

A limited number of campers are permitted to stay at the SB campgrounds for designated periods of time. The NPS oversees the rentals of campsites and cabins, and reservations are required.

Within CLNS there exists an abundance of wildlife which draws birdwatchers, art-



Cape Lookout Lighthouse. Photo by Doug Butchy.

ists, photographers, environmentalists, and nature lovers to its fragile ecosystem year after year. The ocean and sound waters, brackish ponds, and fresh water habitats support mammals, fish, bird, reptiles, and more which live and adapt to this unique and often changing environment.

Visitors can find themselves in the company of egrets, herons, plovers, shorebirds, rabbits, raccoons, river otters, rice rats, horses, Fowler's toads, loggerhead and Ridley turtles, racerunner lizards, black racer snakes, and numerous others. These different species seek the sanctuary of the islands, and the protection of humans to live and thrive in this delicate region.

Human impact should only be good for this fragile place. Leaving trash behind, driving on beaches and dunes, feeding the wildlife, and walking in restricted areas can all lead to a harmful imbalance for the islands' inhabitants.

All visitors to any of these undeveloped islands must keep the word undeveloped in mind. There is a distinct absence of conveniences such as food, beach equipment rentals, or other kinds of the amenities commonly available at other coastal locations. If you want or need a particular item or two, you should plan to take it with you when you go and when you leave the island, too.

One of the many peaceful pastimes to enjoy on CLNS is shelling. Seashells are plentiful here, and there is a two gallon per day limit on them. Whelks, scallops, conchs, Scotch bonnets, clams, sand dollars, Queen's helmets, olives, and many more can be found on these wide, clean beaches.

Overall, CLNS is prized by visitors for its quiet, undeveloped quality. Its wide, sparsely covered beaches, flat grasslands, low dunes, salt marshes, and maritime forests provide miles of walking, hiking, shelling, fishing, sunbathing, and relaxing. As the largest uninhabited string of barrier islands on the East Coast, CLNS is a destination for those who appreciate its special elements.

Atlantic Beach



Atlantic Beach. Photo by James Willamor.

In the 1880's, Atlantic Beach was the site of both a budding resort destination located opposite Morehead City on the Bogue Banks, and the home of Fort Macon, one of the coastal military defenses. Today, it is still a popular part of the Crystal Coast with activities and history for everyone.

The area known as The Circle is located in a traffic circle at the end of the Atlantic Beach Causeway. Visitors can find souvenir shops, a boardwalk, restaurants, and numerous upscale shops to enjoy.

Whether touring Fort Macon, fishing, sunbathing, taking a charter boat ride, strolling along the beach, sampling the night life, dining at a great restaurant, and more, Atlantic Beach has much to offer. Its public beaches, friendly townspeople, and fine services will provide you with a very memorable stay.

Fort Macon State Park

2300 E. Fort Macon Road
Atlantic Beach
(252) 726-3775/ (252) 726-2295
www.ncparks.gov

Fort Macon is the second oldest North Carolina state park and its most visited. Its restored structure and museum are a testimony to the life and times of those who served there.

The fort is bordered on three sides by water, the Atlantic Ocean, Beaufort Inlet, and Bogue Sound. It is not only a historic site, but a place of abundant coastal and marine life and recreational activities.

Fortifications on Bogue Banks began in the early 1700's. This area at the Beaufort Inlet was both valuable and vulnerable to many including pirates, especially Blackbeard. It was also attacked and captured by both Great Britain and Spain in the mid-1700's.

Previous forts stood at this site and were destroyed by hurricanes and conflicts, and eventually replaced. The present Fort Macon is shaped like a pentagon with 26 casements or vaulted rooms and dates back to 1826. It was part of a chain of coastal defenses which were constructed to protect the United States' shoreline.

Fort Macon was overtaken by Union forces during the Civil War. It became a coaling station for the navy and a federal prison when the war ended and until 1876.

In 1903 the fort was closed, and offered for sale by Congress in 1923. North Carolina bought the property on June 4, 1924 for $1 with the intention of making it a state park. The Civilian Conservation Corps restored it from 1934-1935.



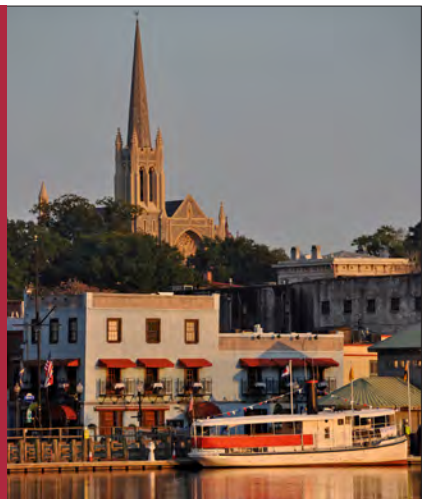
Fort Macon State Park. Photo by Jack.

Fort Macon also played a role in Outer Banks history during WWII. It was garrisoned by the US Army from December 1941-November, 1944 to guard the coast and nearby vulnerable facilities. Since then the park has been in the hands of the state of North Carolina.

Several years ago, a ship was discovered in neighboring waters. It is thought to be Blackbeard's Queen Anne's Revenge. Efforts are being made to salvage contents and parts of the ship.

Today, reenactments and guided tours are offered as well as seasonal swimming with available beach and bathhouse. It is open year round for surf fishing, hiking, picnicking, and educational activities. Hours of operation are available at their web site.

Wilmington



Wilmington. Photo by James Willamor.

Since its incorporation in 1739, Wilmington has been an important part of North Carolina's story. It is located 29 miles upstream from the Cape Fear River's mouth at the Atlantic Ocean in an area known as the Cape Fear Coast. As the state's largest deepwater port city, Wilmington was a critical player in the nation's history as well.

Early French, Spanish, English, and European colonists came to the Wilmington region, some settling nearby. Others brought with them a dependency on African slave labor to produce crops and maintain industries which then became part of the area's culture.

Wilmington was a major Confederate blockade running port during the Civil War, and relied upon Fort Fisher to defend it. The Union had established a maritime barricade on Wilmington, affecting this essential supply point.

The Confederacy traded cotton and tobacco with British smugglers on steamer ships from the colonies of Bermuda, the Bahamas, and Nova Scotia. Foodstuffs, munitions, and clothing for Confederate troops were received in exchange.

On February 22, 1865 the Union forces captured the town following their victory at Fort Fisher, effectively closing the port. Led by Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield, the Army of the Ohio was reorganized, and marched with the remaining troops to join Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman and his forces. Within three months, the war ended.

Wilmington was very fortunate to have much of the military conflict occur in surrounding areas and not within its own town. As a result, many of its beautiful historic antebellum homes and buildings are in excellent condition to this day.

On November 10, 1898 Wilmington was the scene of a violent turning point. White supremacist Democrats unseated the ruling black majority Republicans from their position in the elected government. Using weapons which included a wagon-mounted Gatling gun, a bloody conflict ensued.

Governor Daniel Lindsay Russell and President William McKinley did not stop the Wilmington Massacre of 1898 when the appeal was made. Attacks continued on the streets and allegations were written in newspapers. No whites were known to have died in the riots, the record indicating only black casualties.

When the insurrection was over, the minority whites held the political power, and African American civil rights which had been granted



Wilmington. Photo by Sergey Galyonkin.

following the Civil War were stripped away. It wasn't until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's that those rights were restored.

World War II came to Wilmington as well. The North Carolina Shipbuilding Company was based there and produced more than 243 ships under the federal government's Emergency Shipbuilding Program.

From February 1944 through April 1946, three prisoner-of-war camps were located in Wilmington. Over 550 German prisoners were held in these camps where they were assigned a variety of tasks including grounds keeping and kitchen duties for the duration of their stay.

Today, Wilmington is the county seat of New Hanover County, and is eighth largest in terms of population in the state. It has many interesting sites to see including the Riverwalk, a one-mile long historic tourist attraction, a movie production studio, plantations, museums, and all that fun which is spelled B-E-A-C-H in coastal North Carolina.

Nearby Carolina, Wrightsville, and Kure Beaches draw sand and surf lovers who come to Wilmington. They can't help, but sample all the fun, sun, and recreation which these vacation destinations have to offer.



Airlie Gardens. Photo by Teresa Phillips.

Airlie Gardens

300 Airlie Road
(910) 798-7700
www.airliegardens.org

Thousands of magnolias, azaleas, camellias, wisteria and more have graced the Airlie Gardens since their beginning in 1901. Walking trails, sculptures, ten acres of freshwater lakes, wildlife, formal gardens, and the famous 462 year old Airlie Oak are just some of the beautiful sights to see at this historic, peaceful place. Year-round plantings make this a thing of beauty in all seasons.

Burgwin-Wright House & Garden

224 Market Street
(910) 762-0570
www.burgwinwrighthouse.com

This 1770 museum house was built on the foundation of an old jail, and is the oldest of its kind in southeastern North Carolina. Originally owned by John Burgwin, treasurer of the Carolina colony and a planter and merchant, the house was Lord Cornwallis' headquarters during the Revolutionary War. It was purchased in 1799 by Joshua Grainger Wright. Today, it is the property of The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in North Carolina who bought it in 1937. The 18th and 19th century Georgian-style architecture can be seen in the house, its furnishings, the gardens, separate kitchen, and craft room. It is open to the public for tours.

Cameron Art Museum

3201 South 17th Street
(910) 395-5999
www.cameronartmuseum.com

The 40,000 square foot Cameron is a modern facility which is located on the wooded 9.3 acre Pyramid Park, and is dedicated to art and education. Since 2002 when the previous museum was moved to this site, art lovers have been drawn to their national and international exhibits, programs, workshops, classes, demonstrations, lecture and reception hall, full service café, gift shop, and numerous pieces of fine arts, crafts, and design.

Cape Fear Museum

814 Market Street
(910) 798-4350
www.capefearmuseum.com

Artifacts and photographs abound at this museum which is rich in history and educational opportunities. The Cape Fear Coast is explored through programs, events, and exhibits including the Waves and Currents



USS North Carolina Battleship Memorial.
Photo by James Willamor.

exhibit and a 17 foot by 20 foot model of the 1863 Wilmington. Founded in 1898, the museum is North Carolina's oldest history museum. It presents decades of information and stories about science, history, and local cultures.

Poplar Grove Plantation

10200 US Hwy. 17 N.
(910) 686-9518
www.poplargrove.com

This 1850 Greek Revival-style manor home and peanut plantation was built using native materials on land owned by six generations of the Foy family. Today it is listed on the National Register of Historic Homes. Visitors can experience some of its past including the life of its slaves while touring the house, grounds, kitchen, tenant house, and watching demonstrations in blacksmithing, cloth weaving, and basket weaving. Sixty-seven acres of old and new forests also have nature trails for visitors to explore.

USS North Carolina Battleship Memorial

#1 Battleship Road
(910) 251-2797
www.battleshipnc.com

You will find something amazing to learn and enjoy while touring the battleship, North Carolina. This first of ten WWII American Fast Battleships has a Need for Speed day, Ghost Ship weekend, Batty Battleship's Halloween Bash, Heritage observances, Lifelong Learning sessions, Easter Egg Hunt Carnival, Beach Music Festival, Battleship Blast fireworks shows, gift shop, programs for school groups, and research opportunities. The North Carolina was constructed in 1937, and was followed by numerous other American ships in a fleet of WWII naval offensive weapons. Earning fifteen battle stars for her role in the Pacific arena, the North Carolina had many close and dangerous calls. She was decommissioned on June 27, 1947, and spared the scrap yard in 1958 by a group of citizens who treasured her history and contributions in a Save Our Ship (SOS) campaign. Since April 29, 1962, the North Carolina has paid tribute to her state's 10,000 fallen WWII heroes, and memorialized those who valiantly served on board this mighty ship.

Bald Head Island



Bald Head Island homes perched on the dunes of the shore.
Photo by baldeaglebluff

Take a journey to North Carolina's southernmost cape island, a semitropical environment, where the sun both rises and sets, a place where 10,000 out of 12,000 acres are devoted to nature preserves, and you will find yourself on Bald Head Island, the southern portion of Smith Island. This ecological haven is a beautiful place for nature, and a great place for your vacation getaway.

A trip to Bald Head Island starts in Southport with a 20-minute passenger ferry ride to the island's marina. Visitors are always welcome, but their cars are not. On this island, four wheels mean a golf cart, two a bicycle, and no wheels means shoes.

Bald Head's residential communities are tucked in between nature's boundaries. These quaint and elegant homes have been built along tidal creeks, forests, and beaches, and can be purchased or rented.

History goes back a long way on Bald Head Island. Native Americans were attracted to its estuaries and shores where the abundance of shellfish and birds drew them to fish and hunt.

Spanish explorers came to the island in the 1500's. Searching for the Gulf Stream, they lost ships on the treacherous Frying Pan Shoals, and abandoned their efforts.

Europeans attempted to settle there, and wrote of the dangers of the cape and its waters. Barren soil was also discouraging, causing them to establish themselves elsewhere. Charleston, SC was one such settlement as a result of Bald Head's inhospitable welcome.

Stede Bonnet, the "Gentleman Pirate", sailed these waters in his ship, The Revenge. Using the island as an occasional hideout, he raided and plundered the seas until he was captured in nearby Cape Fear River. In 1718, he was hanged in Charleston, thus ending his thieving career.

The Revolutionary War came to the island in 1776. A British garrison established Fort George, across the Cape Fear River from the Continental Army's Fort Johnson.

Led by Col. Polk, the Continentals raided Fort George. Capturing five British sailors and using knowledge of the island's geography, they forced the British troops to flee Bald Head, ending its role in the war.

Countless shipwreck deaths along the dangerous North Carolina shoals indicated a need for lifesaving measures. That led to Congress forming the US Lifesaving Service in the 1870's.



Old Baldy Lighthouse. Photo by Becky.

Cape Fear Lifesaving Station was established soon afterward on the island's east beach, answering the call for help, all day, every day. These fearless rescuers risked their lives for those of strangers until the station was deactivated in 1937, and one was established in its place at Oak Island.

In the early 1900's, Smith Island was purchased by T.F. Boyd who planned to turn it into a vacation destination. After adding a small hotel, boardwalk, pavilion, and selling a few lots, he lost the property during the Depression to foreclosure.

Frank Sherrill bought the island in 1938, and had much bigger hopes for it. With development plans which included an amusement park, airport, industrial park, hotels, restaurants, and accommodations for up to 100,000 residents, Sherrill was in for a fight with the state's conservationists.

Court battles ensued, plans were stalled, and the island was purchased in 1970 by the Carolina Cape Fear Corporation. They had much more modest plans for Bald Head and Smith Island which pleased the concerned parties.

Three-quarters of the island and the surrounding islands of Buff, Battery, and Striking, went under the care of the state of North Carolina. Their plan was to conserve the natural habitats, and allow for the preservation of this unique coastal life.

The remaining land of 2,800 acres was developed into a marina, golf course, and 4,800 residential properties. Today, the beauty of this fragile ecosystem is protected, and it is an enjoyable place to live in and visit.

Old Baldy Lighthouse & Smith Island Museum of History

(910) 457-7481
www.oldbaldy.org

In 1794, a lighthouse was completed and stood at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. Built too close to the water, it suffered from erosion within twenty years, and was ruled inoperable.

In 1817, its replacement was built and went into service. This lighthouse was constructed of red bricks with stucco covering which required a whitewash painting. However, mistakes had been made in its design, too. This time the lighthouse was not bright enough or tall enough to be of any value to ships trying to skirt the deadly shoals.

Old Baldy, as it became known, fell into disrepair when its stucco went untreated and began to deteriorate. Various patches were applied, but were not the same as the origi-



Bald Head Island. Photo by gardener41.

nal stucco, and it declined even further.

During the Civil War, the Confederate Army shut down all the lighthouses to keep from aiding Union ships. Following the war, it was not put back into commission.

The lighthouse was eventually relit in 1879 when the forces of nature closed the nearby inlet, allowing Old Baldy to live again. Repairs and improvements were made, and it continued to function for some time.

Cape Fear Light was built on the shoals in 1903. It aided sailors until 1958 when it was replaced by the Oak Island Lighthouse.

Old Baldy was retired, and became a radio beacon during WWII. It is now North Carolina's oldest lighthouse, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

The public may visit Old Baldy, and climb its 108 steps. A restored keeper's cottage now houses a museum and gift shop.

Historic island tours are also available, with required reservations, which include a round trip ferry ride from Southport, a tour of the island, museum and lighthouse admission, and a voucher for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Weddings and other special events can also be hosted at Old Baldy.