

Cape Cod

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



National Seashore
Massachusetts

A man may stand there and put all America behind him.

Henry David Thoreau

The great Outer Beach described by Thoreau in the 1800s is protected within Cape Cod National Seashore. Forty miles of pristine sandy beach, marshes, ponds, and uplands support diverse species. Lighthouses, cultural landscapes, and wild cranberry bogs offer a glimpse of Cape Cod's past and continuing ways of life. Swimming beaches and walking and biking trails beckon you today.

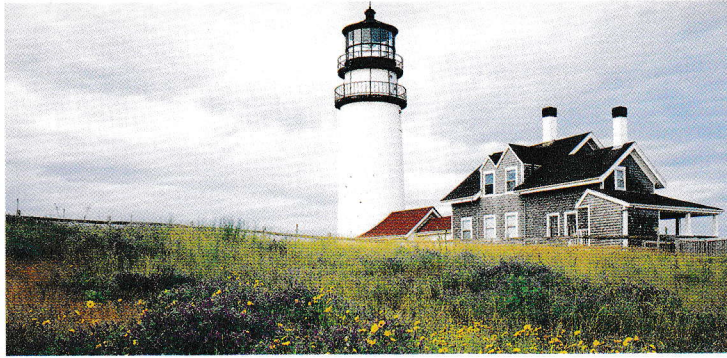
Beach at Herring Cove © ROBBY MCQUEENEY

Cape Cod is a glacial deposit always undergoing natural change as wind and water move sand along shorelines, tearing away one place and building up another. You can get a sense of how quickly the land is diminishing at the Marconi Station Site at Wellfleet, where the peninsula is only a mile wide. Much of the high cliff has eroded since Guglielmo Marconi first built his towers there in 1901. Cape Cod Bay's shoreline changes, too, but not as noticeably. Great Island is now connected to the peninsula and can be explored by trail.

Native people began living on the Outer Cape about 10,000 years ago. Oral tradition and a vast archeological record tell us of their history here. The Pilgrims arrived in 1620 and stayed briefly before sailing across the bay to Plymouth. Later, residents constructed buildings that reflected the sea's influence on their lives (*see below*).



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Photos (left to right): Fishing boats at Provincetown Harbor, Highland Light, and rose hips, roseate tern, salt marsh, ranger and children study marine life.

The Old Harbor Life-Saving Station built in 1897-98 was moved from Chatham to Race Point near Provincetown in 1977. Captain Edward Penniman's 1868 house in Eastham

is unusually ornate and represents the once-profitable whaling business. Nauset Light is one of five working lighthouses in the national seashore. The Atwood-Higgins House, built

about 1730, represents the typical Cape Cod dwelling. Ask at visitor centers about tours.

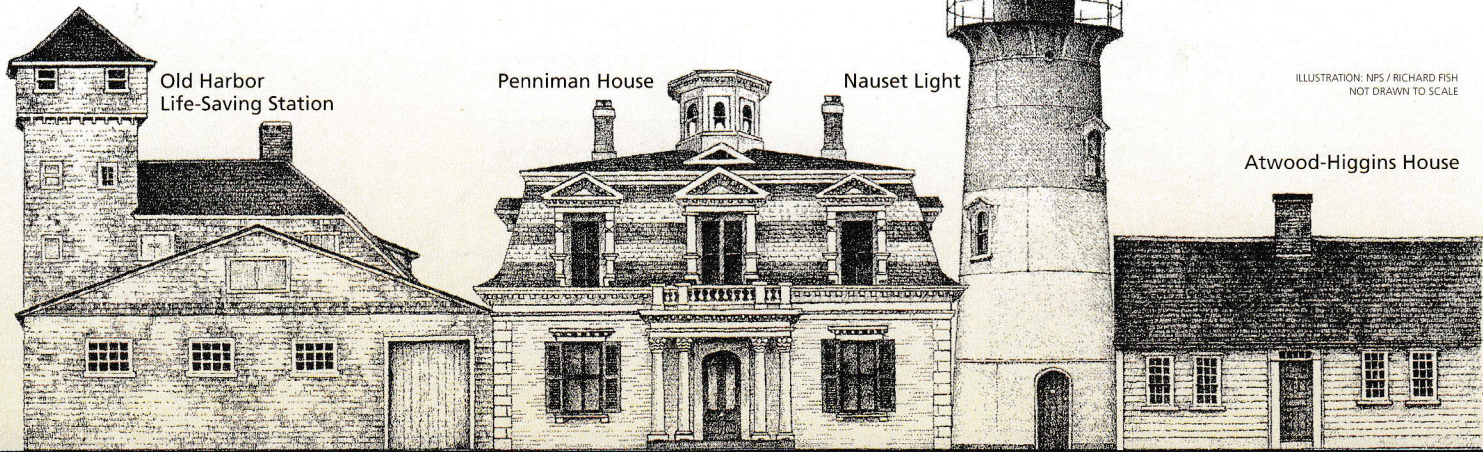


ILLUSTRATION: NPS / RICHARD FISH
NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

Recreation and Relaxation

Take time to try something different, bike, hike, or just watch the waves. (See *Things To See and Do on the other side*). Activity schedules are available at visitor centers or www.nps.gov/caco.

Swimming Seasonal lifeguard services and facilities are provided at these National Park Service beaches: Coast Guard, Nauset Light, Marconi, Head of the Meadow, Race Point, and Herring Cove. Many towns have public beaches; all charge seasonal fees. Observe water safety practices at all times.

Surfing and Windsurfing These are permitted within the national seashore in waters outside the lifeguard-protected beaches.

Walking There are 12 self-guiding trails, where you can learn about the Cape's natural and human history. Their names may entice you: Fort Hill, Red Maple Swamp, Nauset Marsh, Doane, Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, Great Island, Pamet Area, Small's Swamp, Highlands Woods Walk, Pilgrim Spring, and Beech Forest. Buttonbush Trail, near Salt Pond Visitor Center in Eastham, has features for children and visitors who are blind.

Bicycling, Skating, and More There are three bicycle trails ranging from 1.6 to 7.3 miles long. Roller blades, skates, and skateboards are permitted. Motorized vehicles, including mopeds, are prohibited on these paved trails. **Safety Note** • The speed limit on all bicycle trails is 10 mph. • Ride single file. Stay to the right, except when passing. • Helmets are required for ages 16 and under and strongly advised for all. • Yield right of way to pedestrians.

Fishing Try surf-fishing, but stay away from swimmers. A license is required for saltwater and freshwater fishing. Town licenses for shell-fishing are required. Regulations and fees vary.

Hunting Upland wildlife and migratory waterfowl may be hunted in certain areas in season. There is no open season on non-game species. Ask for a brochure about hunting and restrictions. Federal, state, and local laws apply.

Travel Services The national seashore has no overnight facilities. Towns within the national seashore offer a wide variety of amenities. Reservations are essential in summer. For information and reservations: Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, 508-362-3225; www.capecodchamber.org.

Camping Overnight camping and parking are prohibited. Find camping at private and state-operated facilities.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to a visitor center, ask a ranger, call, or check our website.

More Information Cape Cod National Seashore includes 44,000 acres and 40 miles of coastline from Chatham to Provincetown. Headquarters is near the Marconi Station Site in Wellfleet. Contact the park or visit our website:

Cape Cod National Seashore
99 Marconi Site Road
Wellfleet, MA 02667
508-255-3421
www.nps.gov/caco

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Piping plovers

NPS / DOROTHY MICHELE NOVICK

Safety and Regulations

National Park Service rangers are here to help you and enforce regulations that protect you and the national seashore. For firearms and other regulations ask at headquarters or visitor centers or check our website. Observe the following:

- Do not disturb natural or cultural features; all are protected by federal law.
- Keep trails, roadsides, and other areas clean. Use trash receptacles, or take trash with you.
- Over-sand vehicles must stay on designated sand routes. A permit is required.
- Open fires are not allowed except when authorized by permit (available at visitor centers). Permits are not required for stoves using manufactured fuels or for charcoal grills in designated

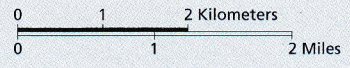
picnic areas at Doane Rock, Great Island, Pilgrim Heights, and Beech Forest, or on sandy or rocky beaches bordering tidewater.

- Pets must be leashed and attended. Pets are not permitted in public buildings or picnic areas, on lifeguard-protected beaches or self-guiding trails, in posted sensitive habitats, or on trams. Bring water and shade for your pet. Service animals are welcome.
- Sand collapses easily. Climbing slopes or digging deep holes is hazardous.
- Swim only where there are lifeguards; obey their directions. The Atlantic Ocean is great white shark habitat. Be alert for riptides and underwater obstacles. Keep children within reach.
- Public nudity is prohibited.

- Observe posted speed limits. Wear seatbelts. Report traffic accidents immediately.
- Avoid too much sun exposure. Be aware that ticks and poison ivy are prevalent.
- Do not take glass containers, inflatable rafts, rubber tubes, snorkels, or masks to any life-guard-protected beach.
- In summer be alert for heavy traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians on narrow roads.
- Helmets are required for bicyclists age 16 and under and strongly advised for everyone.

Emergencies: Contact a ranger or call 911.





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| Authorized national seashore boundary (subject to shoreline changes) | Salt marsh within national seashore |
| Bicycle trail (paved) | Walking trail |
| Ranger station | Wheelchair-accessible |
| Restrooms (seasonal) | Beach wheelchair available (seasonal) |
| Showers | Braille/tactile trail |
| Picnic area | Self-guiding trail |
| Campground | Lighthouse |

Things To See and Do

Salt Pond Visitor Center (US 6 in Eastham) and Province Lands Visitor Center (Race Point Road in Provincetown) have information, exhibits, audiovisual programs, bookstores, and spectacular views of the seashore. Salt Pond is open year-round. Province Lands is open from late spring through mid-fall. Outdoor exhibits and self-guiding trails are found throughout the national seashore. Ranger-guided activities, like walks, canoe trips, family programs, and historic home tours, are offered daily in summer and less frequently in other seasons.

Beaches and Seashore Tram

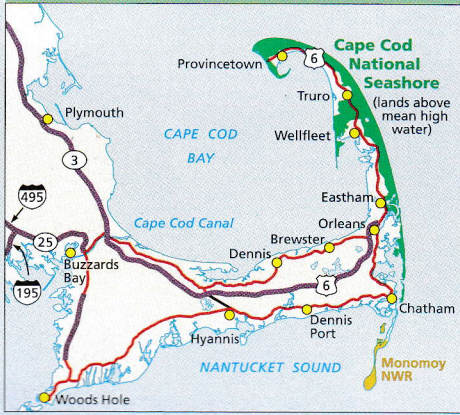
National Park Service beaches are supervised by lifeguards from late June through Labor Day. Coast Guard Beach in Eastham is served by a tram that starts in the Little Creek parking area near Salt Pond Visitor Center. This service runs on weekends from Memorial Day weekend to late June and after Labor Day through September. Daily service is provided in July and August. In summer, parking at Coast Guard Beach is limited to park staff and visitors with disabilities. Entrance fees to beaches are charged; the tram fee is included. The national seashore and most town beaches accommodate bicycles. Town beach access is regulated by town residence requirements or by local entrance fees.

Public Transportation is available through the Cape Cod Regional Transport Authority, serv-

DANGER: Land south of here is submerged except at lowest tides. Check with a ranger.

ing Race Point, Herring Cove, and Head of the Meadow beaches, and Province Lands and Salt Pond Visitor Centers. Route information: 800-352-7155; www.capecodrta.org

Getting to the Seashore



US 6 is the main route to and through the national seashore. Buses run from Hyannis to Chatham and Provincetown. Airlines operate between Hyannis and Boston, Providence, and New York, and between Boston and Provincetown. There is seasonal ferry service between Boston and Provincetown.

Established in 1961, Cape Cod National Seashore is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks visit www.nps.gov.

BAY

Massachusetts Audubon Society Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

Sunken Meadow Beach Town Managed

Cooks Brook Beach Town Managed

Salt Pond Visitor Center

Thumpertown Beach Town Managed

Kingsbury Beach Town Managed

First Encounter Beach Town Managed

Skaket Beach Town Managed

ROCK HARBOR

Fort Hill

National Seashore Headquarters

Marconi Beach National Park Service

Nauset Light Beach National Park Service

Coast Guard Beach National Park Service

Orleans (Nauset) Beach Town Managed



ATLANTIC OCEAN

NANTUCKET SOUND