

A group of birdwatchers are standing on a dirt path in a marshy field. They are wearing hats and carrying binoculars. One person is using a spotting scope mounted on a tripod. In the background, there is a body of water and a line of trees under a blue sky with some clouds.

The Ultimate *Wildlife Guide* to the OBX

The Outer Banks®
OF NORTH CAROLINA
outerbanks.org

places to See Wildlife

The "OBX" as called by its fans, consists of three island areas with 100+ miles of ocean shoreline that curve far out into the Atlantic Ocean for a dynamic environment you won't find elsewhere. Come & explore.



1 ALLIGATOR RIVER

The Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge includes more than 154,000 acres of wetland habitats and a wide variety of wildlife. Plant species, including Atlantic white cedar, bald cypress, wildflowers and shrubs, are abundant. Visitors will find hiking and wildlife trails, observation platforms, fishing areas and kayaking routes.

2 NC AQUARIUM

Exhibits featuring coastal & freshwater habitats, including the STAR Sea Turtle Assistance & Rehabilitation Center can be found at the North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island.



3 BUXTON WOODS

The Buxton Woods Reserve is located on Hatteras Island between the villages of Buxton and Frisco and is one of three maritime forests along the OBX. Much of the property is bordered by the Cape Hatteras National Seashore and is a dedicated Nature Preserve.

4 PEA ISLAND

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge is a 6,000-acre haven for more than 360 species of birds. From spring to autumn, a large variety of wading, shore and upland birds can be seen on observation platforms near parking areas or in the visitor center.



TOURS & EXCURSIONS

for the nature lover



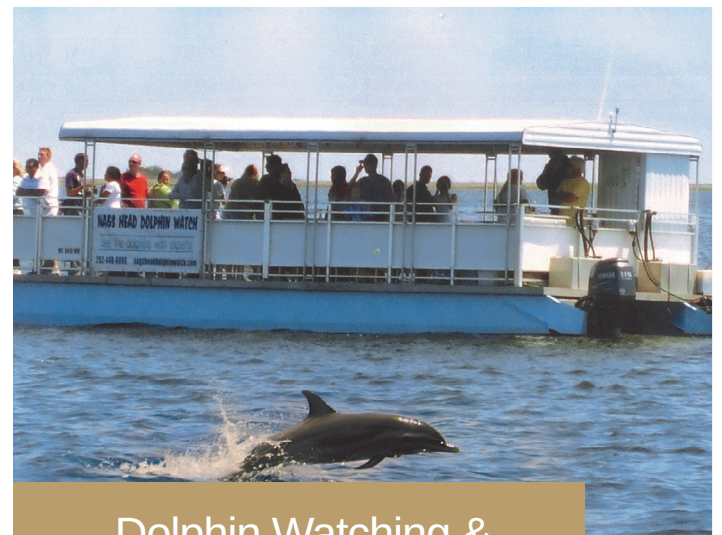
The Coastal NC National Wildlife Refuges Gateway Visitor Center in Manteo represents eleven national wildlife refuges and one national fish hatchery. Through interactive exhibits, audio-visual programs, and even a virtual airplane ride, visitors may experience a field trip to each refuge. In the main lobby, try to find 37 critters hiding in the pocosin diorama. Peek into a red wolf den. Have a picture taken of you as a wild lands firefighter! A short interpreted nature trail wanders through the woods behind the center.



The annual Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival draws visitors from across the US and world in October & December. It offers a long list of programs ranging from birding trips, photography, and other natural history interests for a week-long adventure. The 100-mile long Dare Outer Banks has topography and geography that make the 1,563-square-mile area a unique living history museum. Habitat found on the Outer Banks includes swamp and pocosins, hardwoods and scrubs, and both fresh & saltwater.

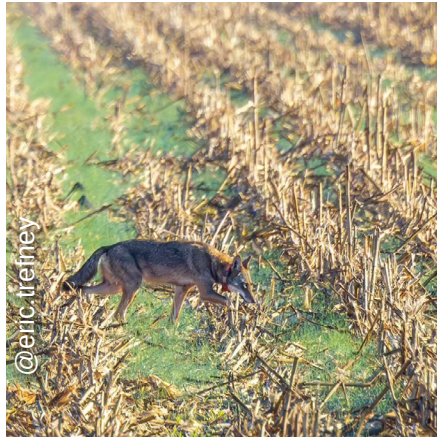


Horseback rides along the south end of Hatteras Island are a unique way to explore the habitat of the Carolina coast with Equine Adventures. Enjoy a trail ride through the maritime forests of Frisco with some of their experienced guides, take in the sites of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in the distance and leisurely stroll along the water's edge. Kick it up a notch and feel the wind in your hair with an exhilarating canter down the beach.



Nags Head Dolphin Watch takes visitors on an eco-tour in search of wild Atlantic bottlenose dolphins. Passengers are able to see how biologists and researchers with the Outer Banks Center for Dolphin Research, a nonprofit organization, conduct their research and hear about some of the discoveries from more than a decade of studies & monitoring. These excursions will allow you to closely and safely connect with these incredible animals in the wild.

SPOTTED *on the OBX*



RED WOLVES

Once thought to be extinct, red wolves have made a comeback in Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.



BIRDS

The OBX is known for having the best birding opportunities on the East Coast of North America.



BLACK BEARS

The Albemarle-Pamlico area has one of the highest concentrations of black bears in the country.



DOLPHINS

Jennette's Pier in Nags Head is a prime location for dolphin spotting and nature watching.



LIZARDS & SNAKES

The Outer Banks is home to nearly 59 documented unique reptile species including the green anole pictured here.



SEALS

Mating seals rest along the shoreline during their journey South. Be sure to give them plenty of space.



SEA TURTLES

Many different species of sea turtles are here including Loggerhead, Green, Hawksbill, Kemp's Ridley, and the giant Leatherback.



ALLIGATORS

While you likely won't find any alligators on the beaches or in the ocean, the aptly-named Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge has them to see.



DEER

White-tailed deer are one of the most common mammals to see on the Outer Banks and tend to be slightly smaller than mainland deer.

a mini guide to BIRDING

The OBX is in the Atlantic Flyway, the major north-south flyway for migrating birds headed from northern locales of Canada, the Arctic & Greenland to South America and even Antarctica. The busiest portion of the flyway covers very little landmass, thus most of it is over or close to water including the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, however we welcome hundreds of species each migration.



Seasons & Species

SPRING

Neotropical songbirds begin returning from Central & South America and begin nesting in maritime shrubs. Black-bellied plovers, American avocet, brown pelican are a few.

SUMMER

Blue herons, great egrets and snowy egrets, American coot, black-necked stilt, and black skimmer are a few species to be seen during summer.

FALL

Many birds begin making their way south including ducks, swans, and geese. Also expect to see American kestrel, northern pintail, osprey, falcon, redhead ducks, and willets.

WINTER

American oystercatcher, American widgeon, canvasback duck, northern harrier hawk, mallards, northern shovelers, tundra swans, and snow geese arrive during winter.



Best spots FOR BIRDWATCHING

- Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge
- Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge
- The Nature Conservancy at Nags Head Woods Preserve
- Kitty Hawk Woods Reserve
- Buxton Woods
- Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Ready to visit?

Start planning at
OUTERBANKS.ORG

Help us **LEAVE NO TRACE**

Our coast's public lands are a great resource for hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, relaxing and so much more. Because of this, we want to ensure that our land and natural resources are protected and we encourage our visitors and locals to practice these 7 leave no trace principles. Follow the QR code for more tips to keep this place special.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel/Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impact
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors



JOCKEY'S RIDGE

Jockey's Ridge State Park is the 427-acre home to the tallest set of natural sand dunes on the East Coast and another great spot for exploring nature.

Interested in getting involved with local non-profits during your next visit?

Click here!

