



Cape Lookout to celebrate International Dark Sky Week



Cape Lookout National Seashore officials, the Crystal Coast Stargazers and Island Express Ferry Service are celebrating International Dark Sky Week, April 22-23, and “Discover the Night” is the theme for the week set aside to bring awareness to light pollution.

Both nights are to feature stargazing at the national seashore’s Harkers Island Visitor Center and a nighttime cruise offered by Island Express Ferry Service.

The International Dark Sky Association recently named Cape Lookout National Seashore an [International Dark Sky Park](#), in recognition of the “exceptional quality of the night skies of the park and the [opportunities for astronomy-based experiences for park visitors](#),” according to the National Park Service. The Cape Lookout National Seashore is the first Atlantic Coast Dark Sky Place in the park service to receive the certification.

Both nights of stargazing at Harkers Island visitor center begin at 8 p.m. The Crystal Coast Stargazers plan to set up their own telescopes for the public to use or visitors can bring their own telescopes.

All stargazers should be set up by 7:30 p.m. While there is no camping on the visitor center grounds, astronomers may stay with their telescopes throughout the night.

Island Express Ferry Service, the park's authorized passenger ferry service concessionaire, is offering visitors the chance to experience a starlight cruise, accompanied by NASA Solar System Ambassador Brandon Porter, who will provide a laser-pointed presentation of the night sky from the Cape Lookout Lighthouse area.

The ferry departs the Harkers Island visitor center at 7:30 p.m. each night and returns from the lighthouse dock at 9 p.m., returning to Harkers Island by 9:30 p.m. For reservations and ticket prices call Island Express Ferry Service at 252-728-7433.