

## Beach Camping



Ah, camping at the beach. Sea, sand, sun, brilliant sunsets and dark skies. Swimming, surfing, fishing, clamming, crabbing and evening campfires. These are the things that memories are made of. The following information will insure that your camping trip to the seashore is a safe and enjoyable one.

### All camping is done in the primitive style



Camping at Cape Lookout National Seashore is a different experience from camping at other national or state park areas. There are no established campgrounds in the park and few other amenities, such as water pumps or toilets, available within the park's boundaries. All camping is primitive. You must bring everything you need and take all trash with you.

#### Finding a Camping Spot:

Camping is permitted on all islands, except Harkers Island, within Cape Lookout National Seashore; however, there are no designated campsites or campgrounds.

When selecting your beach campsite, there must be room enough at high tide for vehicles to drive by. If there isn't enough room, you must find another campsite for the night.

#### Tents:

Tent campers may set up among, but not on, the dunes just behind the ocean beach as well as on the sound-side of the island.

For adequate shelter, a tent that has insect netting and is designed to withstand strong winds is recommended. To anchor the tent properly, use stakes that are about one foot in length. Standard stakes may not hold in the sand under high wind conditions.



#### Hammocks:

Hammocks, or hanging seats or tents, are not permitted to be hung from trees, shade shelters or porches anywhere in the park, and must only be used with free-standing supports.

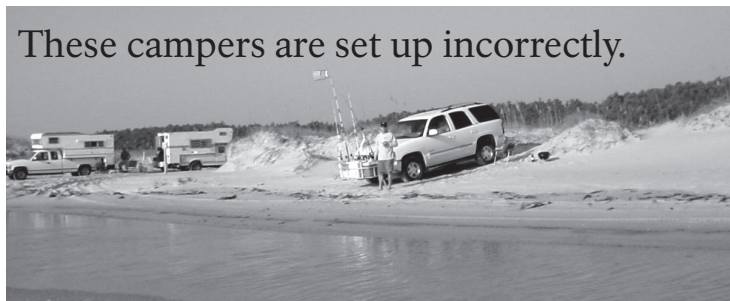
#### Vehicle Camping:

Vehicles are allowed only on North and South Core Banks. All vehicles and trailers must remain on the ocean beach, seaward of the dunes or within established areas signed for vehicle use.

These campers are set up correctly.



These campers are set up incorrectly.



#### Areas Closed to Camping:

- Park Service property on Harkers Island
- wildlife protection zones
- designated long-term parking lots/areas
- Portsmouth Village Historic District
- Cape Lookout Historic Village
- within 100 feet of any docks, shade shelters, restrooms or other structures.
- within 100 yards of the lighthouse, or any cabin or house on the barrier islands
- within the boundaries of the rental cabin areas

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## Weather & Tides



Wherever you set up your campsite, be sure that the site you have selected is above the high tide zone. In North Carolina, the tidal change is generally between two and four feet. If rain storms are predicted during your stay, be sure that your campsite is above, or out of the way of, the higher storm tides. High winds during a storm can push waves higher on the beach than during calm weather.

Weather conditions can change rapidly on the islands. During the summer months, afternoon thunderstorms can occur. These storms pass quickly, but lightning can strike dunes, beach and water.

Hurricane season begins on June 1 and ends on November 30. The park will be evacuated and closed if a hurricane threatens the area. Please check the visitor center for the latest watches and warnings.

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## Campfires, Bugs & Raccoons



### Campfires:

Campfires are permitted in the park, but only on open beaches below the high tide line.

It is generally best to bring your firewood with you. Driftwood may be collected but is extremely limited. Only dead and down (already on the ground) wood may be collected for firewood. You may not cut down trees, including the trees of the “ghost forest” on Shackleford Banks, nor cut up the timbers of old shipwrecks for firewood.

It is a good idea to bring a campstove or charcoal grill for cooking.

### Bugs:

Biting insects such as mosquitoes, greenhead flies, deerflies and gnats are active throughout the seashore during the months of May through October. Chiggers and ticks can also be found. Carry insect repellent with you.



### Raccoons

Yes, we have raccoons on all islands. Raccoons will break through screens, chew their way into tents, open coolers, break into storage wells on kayaks and even board boats anchored just offshore in their quest for food. Store all food and bait in sturdy containers with locking lids.

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## Food & Water



### Drinking Water:

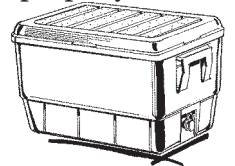
Fresh water is very limited and available only seasonally at a few widely dispersed locations. Water is available at: the Harkers Island Visitor Center, the Cape Lookout Light Station in the restrooms and at the spigot on the backroad near the boardwalk, and at the cabin camps. Water is **not** available on Shackleford Banks.

### Food:

There are no restaurants or campstores on the seashore. All food must be brought with you. A limited selection of snacks may be available seasonally at the Light Station Visitor Center

### Store your food and water properly:

Proper food storage, including fish bait, is a must. Sea gulls and raccoons are very adept at raiding your camp.



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## Sanitation & Trash Disposal



### Sanitation:

Toilet facilities are available near the lighthouse, on the back road near Cape Lookout's point, in the Portsmouth Village Visitor Center, and near the dock on Shackleford Banks. The cabin camps have facilities available for day use. Composting toilets are located on the road from Portsmouth Village to the beach, and at Wades Shore on Shackleford.

If camping away from these areas, the use of “catholes” to properly dispose of human waste is important. Select a site above the high tide line and where others will be unlikely to walk or camp. With a small trowel, dig a hole about 6-8 inches deep and 4-6 inches in diameter. Cover the cathole when finished. Using this method minimizes the possibility of spreading disease.

### Properly dispose of ALL trash:

Trash includes fish scraps and old bait, as well as leftover food, empty bottles and cans, wrappers and anything that smells like food. Put fish scraps in the ocean or sound away from campsites and cabin areas. Secure all other trash in sturdy containers.

Do not bury your trash! The s is constantly moving and burie trash resurfaces quickly. This causes problems for other visit and for wildlife.



There is no trash pickup on the islands. Take your trash with you when you leave the park for disposal and recycling on the mainland.

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## Emergencies: Where to get help



The following locations have park staff available (in season) to provide emergency assistance: Cape Lookout Light Station (Lighthouse and Historic Keepers' Quarters), Great Island Cabins, Long Point Cabins, Historic Portsmouth Village.

(Response time is 1 - 3 hrs to island locations)

### Cell phones:

Cell phones work in most locations on the islands. When making a 911 call, be sure to tell the dispatcher: 1-- your cell phone number (in case you lose contact). 2-- you are calling from Cape Lookout National Seashore, which island and as exact a location on the island as you can give. 3--the nature of your emergency.