

Beach, Water & Other Hazards



At Sandy Hook, as on other Gateway beaches, Surf Guards protect bathers from ocean hazards. **Photo: NPS.**

A trip to the beach or to explore Gateway's trails can be rewarding. Plan ahead to avoid beach hazards and the dangers of heat, cold and sun exposure by following these basic tips.

- Use a high SPF sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB radiation.
- Always dress for the weather, dressing in layers for the cold.
- On hot days, always keep well hydrated.
- Heed warnings of trained Surf Guards and other staff, especially warnings of dangerous rip currents, undertows and water quality.
- Do not touch syringes, waste and other potential hazards on the beach. Instead, report them to Surf Guards or other park staff.

Gateway Health & Safety Program



A Ranger at Great Kills Park on Staten Island sets a mosquito trap to monitor West Nile Virus. **Photo: NPS.**

Gateway's natural resource specialists and safety and public health professionals manage the park's resources to protect visitors. National Park Service staff:

- Monitor bacterial levels of ocean waters at park beaches and drinking water quality throughout the park.
- Monitor mosquito populations for evidence of West Nile Virus.
- Respond to reports of dead animals and send for appropriate testing.
- Inspect food and other concessionaire facilities to ensure public health and safety.

In addition, park staff are planning responses to possible future public health threats, including Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) and Norovirus.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Gateway National Recreation Area

Have a Safe Trip: Enjoying Your National Parks



Resident mammals at Gateway may be cute, but they can also carry human disease. Always keep your distance. **Photo: NPS.**

Safe Park Visits: A Partnership

The National Park Service makes your safety its highest priority. Each year, America's national parks welcome 300 million visitors. **Gateway National Recreation Area** alone receives ten million visits a year. While most visits end happily and uneventfully, there are things to keep in mind to help make visiting the National Parks a healthy and safe experience.

The following pages cover current issues at Gateway as well as common sense ways you can be a partner in keeping yourself and others healthy and safe.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Insect-Borne Diseases



Some species of mosquitos transmit West Nile Virus.
Photo: American Mosquito Control Association.

West Nile Virus

This relatively new public health concern has been present at Gateway. Transmitted both to birds and humans by certain species of mosquitos, West Nile Virus (WNV) can be serious in children, older adults and the chronically ill.

Gateway's Natural Resources staff and Public Health Specialist monitor mosquito populations for West Nile. **Report any dead or injured birds to park staff. Please do not touch or move them.**

Ticks and Lyme Disease



Lyme Disease is transmitted by the deer tick (*shown above, larger than life*). It can cause serious systemic health problems if not treated promptly. See park staff for literature about identifying deer ticks and preventing Lyme Disease.

Mammal-Borne Diseases



Raccoons are common carriers for rabies in Northeastern states. **Photo: NPS.**

A number of native mammals at Gateway can also transmit various diseases to humans. Most prevalent among these is **Rabies**, often spread in the Northeast by raccoons. Take these measures to protect yourself.

- Stay on designated trails.
- Keep pets on leash at all times.
- Report any animals that seem sick or injured, as well as dead raccoons and other mammals, to park staff. **Please do not touch or move them.**

Another disease that can be transmitted by mammals is *Tularemia*, or Rabbit Fever. The same common sense precautions above apply.

Poisonous Plants



In summer, poison ivy is dark green and often shiny. In other seasons, leaves may have a red tint. **Photo: NPS.**

One of the most common native plants at Gateway is **Poison Ivy**, or *Toxicodendron radicans*. Poison ivy actually helps anchor sand dune systems on Gateway's beaches. However, many visitors are allergic to the plant's oil, called *uroshiol*. This oil can be found in every part of the plant---leaves, berries, stem and roots. Visitors should look out for this distinctive three-leaved plant, which at Gateway grows in several forms. **Please stay on park trails.**

Other park plants also have poisonous leaves and berries. If ingested, these pose a risk to small children and pets.

For information about health and safety programs at Gateway, please call 718-354-4560.

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NPSafe

