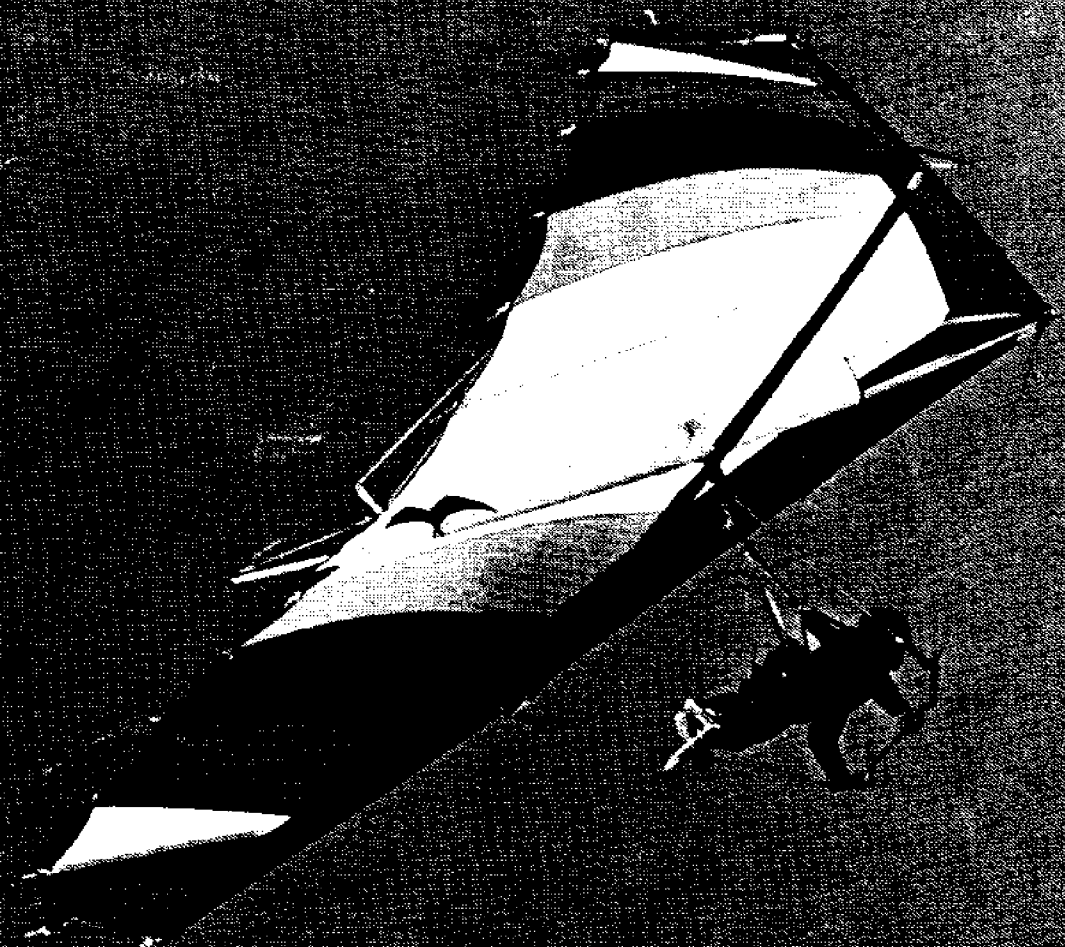


# Vacation and weather guide to coastal North Carolina



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**Contents**

Beaches .....	3	Hang gliding .....	17
Boating .....	4	For a change of pace .....	18
Bicycling .....	6	History .....	18
Shellfishing .....	7	Weather hazards .....	20
Fishing .....	7	Marine weather service .....	21
Hunting .....	14	Coastal maps .....	22
Camping .....	14	Helpful publications .....	26
Surfing .....	15	For more information .....	28
Bird watching .....	16	Credits .....	28
Scuba diving .....	16		

Cover photo: Hang gliding on Jockey's Ridge by Foster Scott.

North Carolina has long been known as the nation's variety vacationland. No section of the state offers more opportunity to the vacationer than the coast. Bordered by more than 300 miles of beautiful ocean beach, the area is laced with scenic rivers and lakes. A unique chain of delicate barrier islands just offshore stretches from the state's northern to southern borders. Large portions of these Outer Banks are preserved under the Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout National Seashores. Between the islands and the mainland lie 2000 square miles of brackish bays. It is a land of natural beauty that is ideal for the sportsman and beachcomber. And as the site of the first English colony in the New World, the coastal area is rich in history and tradition.

North Carolina's climate makes it an ideal vacation spot. From Corolla to Calabash summers are lazy and warm, while winters are mild and short. Outdoor weather prevails from April through early November, while the beach season begins in May and lingers into early October.





## BEACHES

Along North Carolina's meandering coastline are more than 300 miles of mainland and barrier island beach. Unlike many of the nation's ocean-side areas, which have been marred by pollution, North Carolina's beaches remain clean and beautiful. And there's variety here too: from the quiet pristine stretches of sand and surf to more intensely developed beaches such as Nags Head and Carolina Beach. Most of the 140 miles of beach which lie within the Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout National Seashores remain in their natural state. A long summer season provides ideal weather for the beachcomber, swimmer and sunbather.

### Beach Weather

May signals the arrival of the beach season. Beginning south of Beaufort early in the month, summer warmth spreads northward as the month progresses. Good beach weather (as shown in the table below) is the rule from June through September and into October in the southern area of the state. Average water temperatures remain above 70°F into October. While July and August are the peak beach weather months, there are very few extended periods of bad weather along this coast from May through October. Summer daytime temperatures are consistently above 80°F and frequently reach the 85° to 90°F range; however, they seldom climb very high into the nineties along the beaches because the air is moderated by ocean and bay breezes. Nighttime temperatures in the mid-sixties to low seventies are common.

	Cape Hatteras		Wilmington	
	Ideal	Good	Ideal	Good
March	0	4	1	9
April	1	10	4	16
May	3	21	12	26
June	10	26	19	26
July	16	28	20	28
August	16	28	21	28
September	12	26	18	26
October	2	18	9	23
November	*	6	1	10

*Ideal* represents average number of days per month with air temperature higher than 80°F, average wind speed less than 10 knots and precipitation duration less than one hour (between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.). *Good* represents number of days with temperature higher than 70°F, wind speed less than 15 knots and precipitation duration less than three hours.  
\* Less than .5 day

## BOATING

The vast expanses of North Carolina's coastal waters offer perfect conditions for every type of boater—from the ocean-going yachtsman to the canoeist. Large stretches of protected water have good winds and plenty of docks, marinas and service. For the blue water enthusiast, there is easy access to the ocean. The Intracoastal Waterway runs the length of the coast. Many sounds, rivers and estuaries provide the perfect opportunity for motor boat cruising. And for the naturalist, there is the chance to explore blackwater swamp in canoes and johnboats.

### Sailing weather

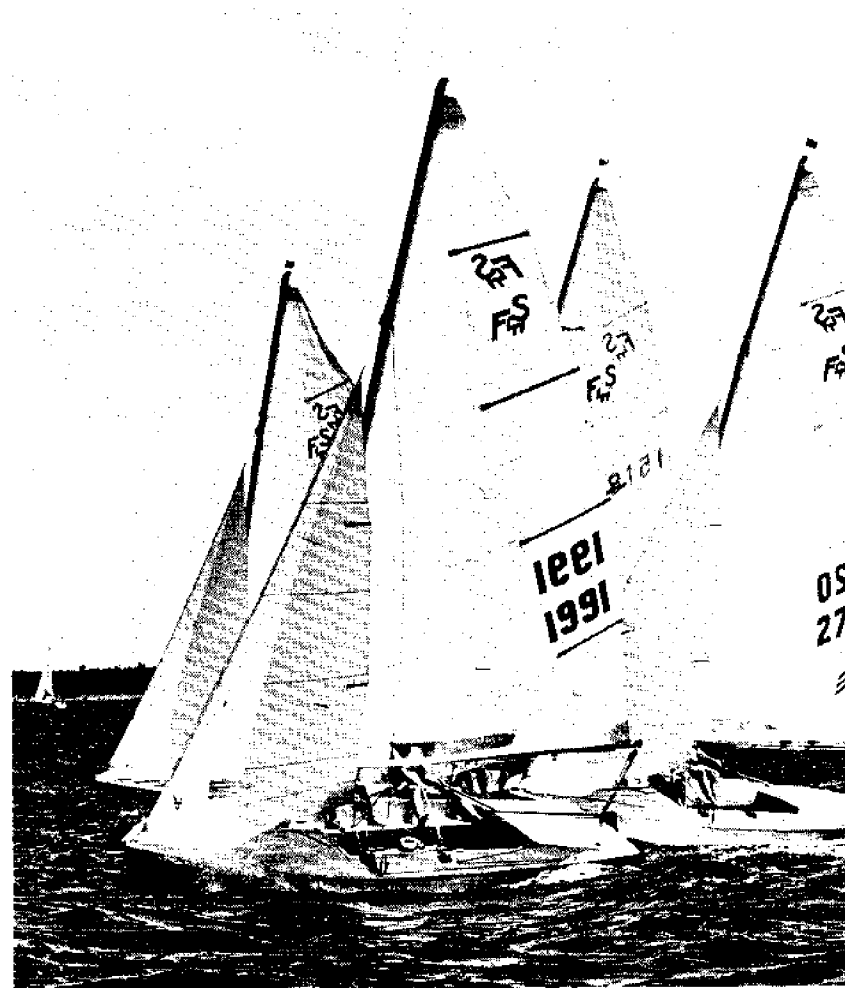
Sailing in coastal North Carolina has increased in popularity in recent years—and along with it, the number of sailing clubs, regattas and racing opportunities. From early spring through fall the weather is largely cooperative with the sailor.

**Winds**—Along the coast winds are mainly under the influence of the good weather Azores-Bermuda High, which brings southwesterlies and southerlies; low-pressure systems are responsible for the preponderance of northerlies and northeasterlies. Superimposed on this flow and sometimes dominating it is the local land-sea breeze circulation. This is most apparent from spring through autumn. Morning winds, particularly over inland waters, are apt to be calm or light and off the land. This gives way during the late morning hours to stronger winds with a component off the water. Southwesterlies and southerlies prevail. Northerlies and northeasterlies, secondary winds in spring and summer, become predominant by September. Wind speeds in the ideal sailing range of 7 to 16 knots occur frequently with the prevailing winds, particularly during spring and summer afternoons. Autumn often brings good sailing weather, but the winds are stronger.

**Visibilities**—During the fall and winter a combination of fog and rain causes a drop in visibilities to less than two miles up to 10 percent of the time and less than one-half mile up to four percent of the time. From April through August visibilities improve and are usually just a morning problem, particularly along the coast and over inland waters. Visibilities are usually good over offshore waters. Along the coast and inland, morning fogs restrict visibilities to less than two miles from two to eight percent of the time and to less than one-half mile about three percent of the time. By early afternoon good visibilities are the rule everywhere.

**Waves**—Waves create few sailing problems from spring through fall. Seas of four feet or less are the rule, particularly in the waters south of Cape Hatteras. Wave gauges along the beaches from Currituck to Sunset

Beach indicate that during the summer, waves of three feet or less occur up to 80 percent of the time. This also holds true for inland waters. In more open seas these conditions exist about 35 percent of the time north of Cape Hatteras and 45 percent of the time to the south. Seas of eight feet or more are uncommon close to the shore and in inland waters. Offshore, they occur less than 20 percent of the time in the north and less than 15 percent of the time in southern waters. Fall seas are usually more choppy than summer or spring seas, particularly off the coast north of Cape Hatteras.



*Sailing on the Neuse River near Oriental*

## SAILING WINDS

		Prevailing Directions	Windspeeds 7-16 kt (%)			Prevailing Directions	Windspeeds 7-10 kt (%)
<b>Elizabeth City</b>				<b>Cherry Point</b>			
April	am	SW/W	58	April	am	SW/W	49
	pm	SW/S	87		pm	SW/S	72
July	am	SW/W	44	July	am	SW/W	33
	pm	SW/S	72		pm	SW/S	64
Oct	am	C/N	42	Oct	am	N/NE	36
	pm	NE/E	66		pm	NE/N	53
<b>Cape Hatteras</b>				<b>Jacksonville</b>			
April	am	SW/NE	72*	April	am	W/SW	42
	pm	SW/NE			pm	S/SE	77
July	am	SW/NE	72*	July	am	SW/C	23
	pm	SW/S			pm	S/SW	58
Oct	am	NE/N	68*	Oct	am	N/C	29
	pm	NE/N			pm	NE/S	48
<b>Wilmington</b>							
April	am	SW/W	59*	* Frequency not separated into am and pm C-Calm			
	pm	SW/S					
July	am	SW/W	46				
	pm	SW/S					
Oct	am	N/NE	51				
	pm	N/E					

## BICYCLING

Pleasant, easy pedaling is the story of biking across the flat terrain of North Carolina's coastal area. One popular trip will take you along the 60-mile stretch from Kill Devil Hills to Hatteras, where you can get the ferry to Ocracoke Island. This trip should not be made during the tourist season, when the road is heavily traveled and unsafe for cyclists. Maps of the state-wide bicycling system may be obtained by writing: Bicycle Program, N.C. Department of Transportation, Box 25201, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.

The system of bikeways in North Carolina is constantly expanding. One of the routes to be completed in the near future will run along the coast between the North and South Carolina borders. In addition to information on already established routes, the Bicycle Program office offers a trip planning service. For assistance in planning your bicycle excursion in North Carolina, write or call the Bicycle Program office in Raleigh.

## SHELLFISHING

Oysters, clams, shrimp, blue crabs and scallops abound in North Carolina's coastal waters. Unless a boat is used, no license is required for recreational harvesting. Harvesting more than one bushel of clams per person per day, however, requires an oyster/clam license. Information on seasons and limits is available from local fisheries enforcement officers. In some areas shellfishing is prohibited because of pollution. These areas are marked, but visitors should check with local officials before harvesting.

## FISHING

North Carolina's unique set of geographical features produces perfect conditions for high quality sport fishing. Just offshore, the warm Gulf Stream mixes with cool northern currents, making both tropical and subtropical species available. Because of a benign climate coastal fishing is popular about ten months of the year. Charter fleets, marinas, launch ramps, piers and fishing guides are available in all sections of the coast.

For the competitor, many offshore and surf fishing tournaments are scheduled annually in the coastal area. A state license is required for fishing in fresh water, but none is necessary for saltwater fishing. The only saltwater species for which there is a size and creel limit is the channel bass, the official state fish.

## Fishing weather

Weather for both offshore and surf fishing is best from June through September, when light jackets and shirt sleeves are the rule. From inland waters to the ocean, average air and water temperatures range from the mid-seventies (°F) into the eighties. Near the ocean, air temperatures seldom climb above 90°F. Breezes are light. Seas are generally less than four feet. Rain is infrequent, falling as brief showers or thunderstorms. While an occasional morning fog may develop, visibilities improve with the rising sun.

Spring (April-May) and autumn (October-November) are usually pleasant, but sometimes the weather turns cool. For these days medium weight clothing is recommended: a heavy shirt and trousers, sweater, water-repellent, wind-resistant jacket with hood, insulated gloves and foul-weather gear. Conditions are usually rougher in the fall; northerlies and northeasterlies of 22 knots or more frequently generate seas of more than eight feet in the open ocean. Temperatures are mild in both seasons, and rain, while still infrequent, is more likely to be steady or fall as drizzle. Fog is more likely, particularly in the early morning hours. Off the southern coast water temperatures remain warm through November.



### Surf and ocean pier fishing

The entire North Carolina coast is suitable for surf fishing. The season is a long one, reaching its peaks in May and November and declining during the summer and late winter.

The spring season is best for channel bass, which sometimes weigh over 60 pounds. Other species include flounder, croaker, mullet, bluefish and false albacore. Small bluefish, Spanish mackerel and flounder are the mainstay of warm months. There is another seasonal peak for channel bass, false albacore and flounder in November.

Off road vehicles are permitted on some beaches. Check with local officials and the offices of the Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout National Seashores for regulations. Surf guiding service is also available in some sections of the state.

About 35 piers bristle from the North Carolina coastline, many of them with restaurants, recreation rooms and tackle shops. Live bait fishing for king mackerel is particularly productive here as is channel bass fishing. When the sea mullet run in spring and spot run in late summer anglers line the rails.

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### SURF FISHING WEATHER GUIDE

CAPE HATTERAS Morning/Evening			
Season*	Avg. Temp. (°F)	% Precip.	Avg.** Winds
Winter	44/49	12/13	N 11/N 12
Spring	55/63	6/7	SW 10/SW 12
Summer	75/82	7/6	SW 8/SW 12
Fall	63/69	8/9	NE 9/NE 11

CHERRY POINT Morning/Evening			
Season*	Avg. Temp. (°F)	% Precip.	Avg. Winds
Winter	41/46	12/12	N 8/SW 8
Spring	58/62	7/7	W 8/S 8
Summer	77/79	7/10	SW 7/S 7
Fall	60/64	10/8	N 8/NE 8

WILMINGTON Morning/Evening			
Season*	Avg. Temp. (°F)	% Precip.	Avg. Winds
Winter	43/45	14/12	N 8/SW 7
Spring	62/61	6/6	SW 9/SW 8
Summer	79/78	6/9	SW 7/SW 6
Fall	63/63	7/6	N 8/C

\* Season—represented by January, April, July and October.

\*\* Average winds represent predominant direction with average speed in knots

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## Coastal freshwater fishing

In the large, slow-flowing rivers of coastal North Carolina are practically all the freshwater game fish species of the southern United States. During spring spawning runs, such andramous species as shad and striped bass are also prevalent. Fishing for most species is best in spring and fall.

Here's a rundown:

**Striped bass:** Stripers may be taken from sounds and river mouths during any month, but summer stripers are likely to be small and scattered. December through February is best. Albemarle Sound has the second largest striped bass population in the world, after Chesapeake Bay. But the fish can be caught at river mouths all along the coast.

**Shad:** Populations of shad have declined over the past few years but there is still significant bank and boat angling for them in several coastal rivers during the spring, especially April and May. The most popular tackle is light spinning gear with small spoons and tiny jigs called "shad darts."

**Winter jacks** (chain pickerel): The toothy jack is not known as a table delight, but on suitable tackle its fight rivals the best. Perhaps no freshwater game fish strikes a lure more readily than the chain pickerel. Fishing is good in blackwater streams and lakes.

**Summer white perch:** These fish are most plentiful in brackish bays, though salt and freshwater bodies may have populations. Perch can be caught during most months of the year.

**Year around panfish:** The group includes crappies, bluegill, white and yellow perch, warmouth, redbreast, robin pumpkinseed, green sunfish and redbfin pickerel. They are abundant during every month.

**All season bass:** Except for the coldest winter days, fishing for coastal large-mouth bass can be good. Sunny days in November and December, when the wind is not up, are particularly good for surface feeding largemouths. Lipped balsa plugs, plastic minnows, surface plugs, hair and cork fly-rod bugs and spinner baits can all be used successfully.

## Offshore fishing

Tar Heel offshore fishing grounds extend from a line about ten miles off the inlets to the Gulf Stream. Much of this water is virgin territory for the offshore angler and there are relatively few boats prospecting it even on the most active days.

Virtually all the tropical species are caught off North Carolina, from blue marlin weighing over 1000 pounds to scrappy school dolphin. The proximity of the Gulf Stream accounts largely for the excellent fishing. A run to the Stream from Southport is about 60 miles; from Hatteras Inlet it is about 20 miles.

Charter boats and party boats or headboats are available at many fishing ports along the coast. Headboats fish the bottom for snapper, grouper and

porgies and are the most economical means to blue water fishing. Check local phone directories or chambers of commerce for listings.

Here are the prospects:

**Wahoo:** Excellent for fish to about 100 pounds, although the average is nearer 35. Fishing is usually best during migrations in July and October. Most are caught on nylon jigs tipped with bait strips.

**Barracuda:** Good around wrecks for fish to 45 pounds. Large fish may carry a dangerous poison, so they should be released alive. Barracuda are caught on a variety of trolled lures and baits. The best fishing is May through October.

**Dolphin:** Excellent for fish of all sizes—from school fish of less than five pounds to about 60 pounds. Great numbers are caught off Oregon Inlet and Hatteras on trolled jigs, skip baits and cast lures.

**Tuna:** Excellent for yellowfins to 200 pounds and the smaller species (bigeye and blackfin) but poor for bluefins. September seems to be the best yellowfin month. Tunas are caught on trolled lures and bait.

**Sailfish:** Excellent from Cape Hatteras southward. Occasionally, sails are plentiful off Oregon Inlet. Most often caught on trolled skip baits.

**White marlin:** Probably the best in North America off Oregon Inlet. Caught mostly on skip baits.

**Blue marlin:** Excellent for fish to over 1000 pounds, although the average is about 300 pounds. These are among the most challenging game fish in salt water.

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## OFFSHORE WEATHER GUIDE

Outer Banks	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
% Precipitation	7	7	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	3	2
Av. Air Temp.	51	50	53	60	68	75	79	80	76	69	61	55
Av. Wat. Temp.	59	55	56	60	68	75	79	80	78	73	68	63
% Waves ≥ 8 ft.	25	26	21	16	11	9	7	6	12	21	20	22
Av. Wind Sp.	18	17	16	15	14	12	12	12	13	16	16	17
Prv. Wind Direct.	N	N	N	SW	SW	S	SW	SW	NE	NE	N	N
South Coast												
% Precipitation	6	8	7	5	5	5	4	5	5	6	7	6
Av. Air Temp.	53	53	56	64	70	77	80	81	77	70	63	57
Av. Wat. Temp.	63	62	60	64	69	77	81	82	80	76	70	67
% Waves > 8 ft.	19	24	12	7	5	8	6	3	13	21	13	22
Av. Wind Sp.	17	19	17	14	13	13	12	12	14	17	16	17
Prv. Wind Direct.	N	N	SW	SW	SW	SW	SW	SW	NE	NE	N	N

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### Inshore, inlet and sound fishing:

On any fair day between April and October hundreds of private and charter boats fish North Carolina's sound and inshore waters. Several artificial reefs located within range of small craft are concentration points for a variety of species. For reef locations contact the Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 689, Morehead City, NC, 28557.

At all the offshore fishing ports, there are charter craft available for fishing the sounds and inlets. Numerous ramps, private and public, provide access for small craft. There are ample marinas where boaters may purchase fuel, supplies and tackle.

The species sought by inshore anglers range from tackle busters like cobia and king mackerel to delicious table fare such as spot, sea mullet and black sea bass.

Here are the prospects:

**Bluefish:** Excellent for small fish spring through fall and good for large blues in April, October and November. Fish under three pounds are universally available to trollers and casters in turbulent inlet water, along beaches and over grass beds in the sounds. Seaworthy small craft may brave the 35 mile run to the principal wintering grounds off Cape Fear from October through March. Metal squids and lead-head jigs are favored lures; the fish will also take any sort of fresh cut bait.

**Spanish mackerel:** Excellent for small fish in spring and summer. Late summer and early fall sometimes produce Spanish over five pounds. These delicious fish are caught most often near the inlets and out to about ten miles from shore on trolled spoons.

**False albacore:** Excellent for five to 15 pound fish along the beaches and out to the edge of the continental shelf on trolled bait strips and cast metal squids retrieved rapidly.

**Gray trout (weakfish):** Migrate along the beaches and out several miles in spring and fall and summer in the sounds. Grays are often caught by anglers drifting in deep inlet channels, in deep holes in the sounds and around structure in sound or ocean. Favorite lures are metal squids and lead-head jigs worked near the bottom.

**Speckled trout:** Caught in the sounds and over shell bottom off the beaches, especially in the fall. Favorite lures are soft tail jigs and mirror plugs.

**Flounder:** Excellent spring through fall in inlets and sounds. Flounder is the most favored food fish in the state. Boat anglers prefer to drift a white strip of flounder or shark behind a spinner blade, but flounder can be caught with a variety of artificial lures.

**Black sea bass:** Excellent in the sounds and along the continental shelf near structure and rough bottom. Larger fish are caught in the ocean. They take metal jigs readily, but most are caught on cut bait.

**Spot and sea mullet:** Sea mullet are excellent in spring; spot in late summer. They are caught along beaches and in sounds, most often on bloodworms fished near the bottom.

**Amberjack:** Excellent around buoys, wrecks and navigation towers as far as the Gulf Stream. Jacks are among the strongest fish in salt water and readily take live baits and trolled spoons. They also like large chugging plugs retrieved quickly over the surface.

**Cobia:** Excellent on fresh cut bait in sounds and near inlets in deep channels. In the ocean, they tend to inhabit wrecks and hang around bouys. Cobia will take trolled and cast lures and heavy jigs worked deep under the boat. Many over 40 pounds are caught each year.

**King mackerel:** Excellent in spring and especially in fall and winter on live baits under a float and on trolled jigs and spoons. The largest are taken close to shore on live menhaden, bluefish, pinfish or mullet.

**Channel bass (red drum):** North Carolina may be the best spot in the country for these fish. Puppy drum are plentiful in sounds and inlets and along beaches, except in winter. Large drum take cast lures; the metal squid is probably best. More are caught, however, on natural baits, and many weigh over 50 pounds. State regulations require that red drum under 14 inches be released alive. Anglers may kill only two drum over 32 inches in length per day.



## HUNTING

Coastal North Carolina offers a wide variety of opportunities for the hunter. Big game species in the area are deer, bear and turkey. In many locations there are high populations of the region's primary big game species, the white-tailed deer. Except in cases of crop depredation only antlered bucks may be killed. Small game hunting for quail, woodcock, squirrels, rabbits and doves is widespread throughout the Coastal Plain.

Vast sounds and numerous rivers make waterfowl hunting an excellent sport in eastern North Carolina. Guides and lodges can be found all over the area. Waterfowl marsh impoundments on Pamlico Sound and on reservoirs within the Holly Shelter and Croatan Game Lands have been established by the state Wildlife Resources Commission. Hunting can be done there on a first come basis. Currituck Sound is widely known for its duck and goose hunting. There are also guides at Ocracoke, Lake Mattamuskeet and Cedar Island.

Hunting is under the supervision of the Wildlife Resources Commission and, for migratory birds, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Seasons, bag limits and other regulations are subject to annual change. Current copies of hunting rules and game land maps may be obtained from license dealers or the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Division of Game, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh, N.C. 27611. Permission should always be obtained from landowners for hunting on private property.

## CAMPING

Whether you travel by auto or boat, whether you prefer wilderness or luxury trailer camping, you will have little trouble finding suitable campsites in coastal North Carolina. Public and private campgrounds abound in coastal woodlands and along the estuaries, rivers and ocean. Many of the 14 state-operated parks in the coastal area offer tent or trailer camp sites in a variety of natural settings: from one of the East's few remaining stands of Atlantic white cedar at Dismal Swamp State Park to the luxuriant evergreens hung with Spanish moss on the shores of the Pamlico River at Goose Creek State Park. Three public campgrounds at Cape Hatteras National Seashore are open all year; two additional ones are open during the summer season. Camping sites are also available in the Croatan National Forest in the central section of the coastal plain.

For a complete listing of public and private campgrounds in North Carolina, write: N.C. Travel and Tourism Division, P.O. Box 25249, Raleigh, N.C. 27611. The list includes a description of facilities available in each camping area.

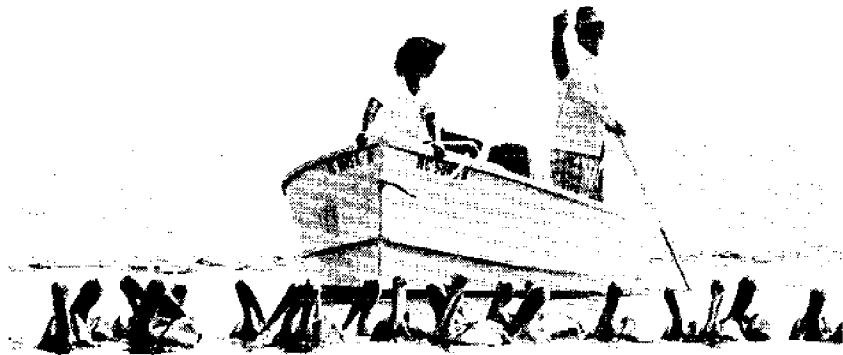


## SURFING

The ever-changing coastline of North Carolina offers a variety of excellent surfing locations for both board and body surfing. Due to its variable geography, which includes three major capes and numerous isolated points, the shoreline is subject to ocean swells from almost any direction, creating breaks all along the coast.

Light summer winds, however, and the lack of distant ocean storms, make surfing conditions inconsistent. Prevailing southwesterly and southerly winds blow parallel to most of the beaches, except off Cape Hatteras, Shackleford Banks and Bogue Banks. Frequent northeasterlies north of Cape Hatteras can be counted on to raise some good surf, particularly in late August and September.

For the protection of fishermen and surfers, ordinances in many locations prohibit surfing within a certain distance of piers. Surfers should always check with local officials.



*A flock of young pelicans near Ocracoke*

## BIRD WATCHING

Coastal North Carolina is a birdwatcher's paradise, offering a unique mix of northern and southern birds. More than 400 species of shore and inland birds can be spotted here during the year. In addition, the meeting of the Gulf Stream and the Labrador Currents creates a rich area which draws a great variety of offshore species not found elsewhere in the East.

Birdwatching is particularly spectacular during fall migrations (from late August into November). Then there is a tremendous influx of shorebirds, waterfowl, hawks and small land birds. Great flocks of snow geese and other waterfowl overwinter on many of the fresh and brackish water ponds that dot the coast. During the summer, a variety of gulls and terns can be seen on the beaches; further inland, small land birds such as the colorful painted bunting are common.

## SCUBA DIVING

Scuba diving is one of the fastest growing sports on the North Carolina coast. A combination of a long warm-water season, relatively good visibility and a vast array of shipwrecks makes North Carolina waters especially appealing to divers along the East coast.

A series of fickle shoals has earned these coastal waters the nickname Graveyard of the Atlantic. Sunk in this graveyard are nearly 700 wrecks, ranging from Civil War Blockade Runners to World War II German U-boats. As natural collecting locations for a variety of marine flora and fauna,

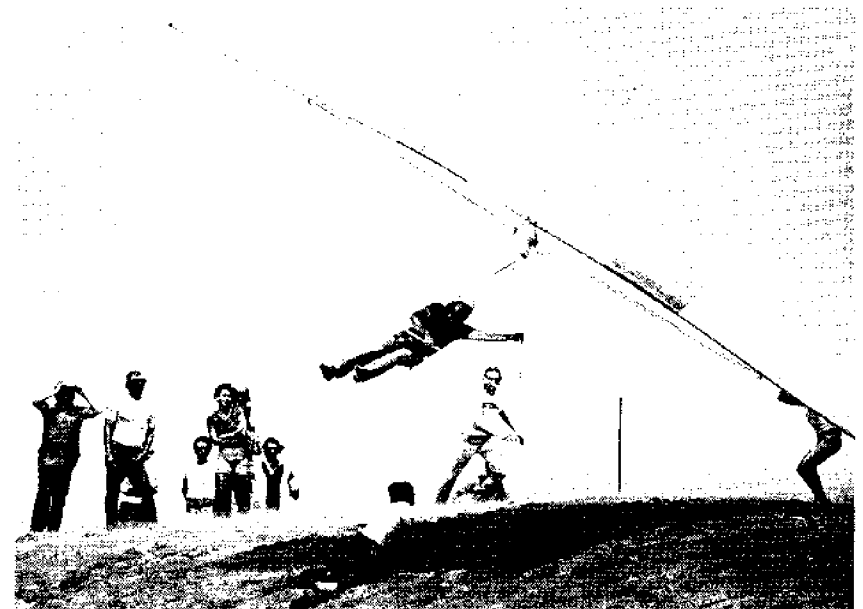
the wrecks—many of them in shallow waters—are excellent places for observing marine wildlife. Gear rentals and charter boats in many sections of the coast provide support for the growing sport.

For more information write for a copy of *Wreck Diving in North Carolina*, a directory of popular shipwreck diving sites, UNC Sea Grant, P.O. Box 5001, Raleigh, N.C. 27650.

## HANG GLIDING

North Carolina's Outer Banks are home to the largest live sand dune on the East Coast. Jockey's Ridge, now a state park lying in the shadow of the memorial to the Wright Brothers first powered flight, draws thousands of visitors each year. Consistent gentle winds and soft sands make it an ideal place for both experienced and beginning gliders. Professional instruction and service are available at the ridge.

The only winds not conducive to sky surfing from the dunes of Jockey's Ridge are northerlies and northwesterlies. Ideal windspeeds are in the five to 13 knot category with gusts less than five knots. The winds at Cape Hatteras indicate that speeds of seven to 16 knots from the northeast through west blow at least 50 percent of the time from March through September. During May, June and July these conditions prevail more than 65 percent of the time. Early afternoon is usually the best time of day for hang gliding.



## FOR A CHANGE OF PACE

Tired of the beach? Take in one of coastal North Carolina's many cultural or educational experiences. Hardly a week goes by without a festival or celebration somewhere in the coastal area. Among the more renowned are the Azalea Festival in Wilmington and the old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration in Belhaven. For a calendar of events, write: N.C. Division of Travel and Tourism, P.O. Box 25249, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.

During the summer, three outdoor dramas depict aspects of coastal North Carolina's rich history. *The Lost Colony*, produced near Manteo on Roanoke Island, is the oldest outdoor drama in the United States. It tells the story of the settlement and disappearance of the first English colony in America. *Night of the Black Flag*, produced in Bath, deals with the life of the notorious pirate Blackbeard, who at one time lived in Bath. In Kenansville, *The Liberty Cart* paints the history of Eastern North Carolina from the Revolutionary War through the Civil War. And for repertory theatre, there is The Curtain Call Company in Wilmington, a summer stock and touring company.

There are a number of public and private museums of art, science and history along the coast. Even the kids will enjoy the extensive marine aquaria at the state's three Marine Resources Centers on Roanoke Island, Bogue Banks and near Fort Fisher. And for a look at maritime history, there's the Hampton Mariners' Museum in Beaufort.

## HISTORY

Coastal North Carolina is the ideal vacation spot for the history buff. Its long, rich history is proudly preserved at many sites which are open to the public.

Nearly 400 years ago the first English colony in the New World was settled by Sir Walter Raleigh on Roanoke Island. It mysteriously disappeared three years later. Today Ft. Raleigh National Historic Site near Manteo commemorates the history of that early colony as part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore program.

More than a century later, nearby Ocracoke became headquarters for the fearsome Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard the pirate. The reformed pirate lived for a short time in Bath before he returned to pirating and was finally killed in Ocracoke Inlet. You can hear about the lives of Blackbeard and the colonists among whom he lived at the National Park Service headquarters in Ocracoke.

The relationship of men to the ferocious seas of the Graveyard of the Atlantic has spawned many fascinating stories. Tales of heroic rescues by the earliest lifesaving services are told at several of the lighthouses in the

Cape Hatteras National Seashore at Kitty Hawk. Another historic site in the seashore marks the spot where in 1903 Wilbur and Orville Wright made the world's first successful manned flight.

Part of what was the world's largest earthenwork fort still stands today at Ft. Fisher, just south of Wilmington. This fort was the last stronghold of the Confederacy during the Civil War. A state park is now located at another renovated Civil War fort, Ft. Macon near Morehead City.

Historic preservation is taking place in many coastal communities. The list of state historic sites located in the coastal area is a long one, including Tryon Palace in New Bern, the Iredell House in Edenton, the state's oldest incorporated town of Bath, and Brunswick Town north of Wilmington.

Somerset Place, adjacent to Pettigrew State Park on the shores of Lake Phelps, is one of several Nineteenth Century plantation homes in the coastal area which are open to the public. The Iredell House is the Eighteenth Century home of U.S. Supreme Court Justice James Iredell. Tryon Palace is a reconstruction of a magnificent governor's mansion built in 1770 when the seat of the state's government was in New Bern. The complex includes palace gardens and three historic houses. In Bath, North Carolina's first incorporated town, guided tours are available through several historic houses.



*A reenactment of the Confederate surrender at Fort Macon*

## WEATHER HAZARDS

Along the North Carolina coast the most hazardous weather and ocean conditions include hurricanes, winter storms, thunderstorms and rip currents.

**Hurricanes** (tropical cyclones with winds of 64 knots or more) are a rare event. An average only of six come to life over the entire North Atlantic each year and usually two of these cross a United States coastline somewhere between Brownsville, Texas, and Eastport, Maine. The main season runs from June through November; hurricanes are most common between August and October. As indicated in the table below the chances of a storm affecting any point along the coast, particularly during a two-week vacation, are remote. This does not minimize the danger of these storms, which can bring winds of 100 knots or more, devastating tides and torrential rains. For planning purposes, however, they are more important to property owners than to visitors. Hurricanes are also among the most accurately forecasted of all weather events. Warning time is ample if evacuation becomes necessary. Most of the tragedies in recent years have involved people who refused to heed the warnings.

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### COASTAL HURRICANES (1886-1977)

	Cape Fear	Cape Lookout	Cape Hatteras	Nags Head	False Cape
June-July	2	2	2	1	1
Aug. 1-15	2	2	2	3	3
Aug. 16-31	1	4	7	4	2
Sept. 1-15	1	5	9	3	4
Sept. 16-30	4	4	3	3	2
Oct. 1-15	2	0	0	1	1
Oct. 16-31	3	1	1	1	0
Nov.-Dec.	1	1	0	0	0

Table depicts number of hurricanes that have passed within 60 miles of each location. Statistics provided by the National Hurricane Center.

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**Winter storms** can occur in any season although they are most likely from December through April. They are responsible for the wind, rain and erosion that characterize winter. Although the waters off Cape Hatteras serve as a spawning ground for winter storms, most of them move north-eastward before intensifying. Consequently, strong winds are relatively infrequent.

**Thunderstorms** are most likely in the summer. They can develop rapidly. They are usually brief but can bring strong gusty winds, hail and heavy rain. They can be a single cell or embedded in a squall line. While they can occur during the day, along the shore they are most likely between sunset and sunrise. Lightning is one of their most dangerous aspects. It kills more people each year than any other weather event. Lightning is particularly dangerous if you are on the beach, in a boat or on a golf course. During a thunderstorm the safest place to be is indoors or even in a car. If you get caught outside and you feel an electrical charge—if your hair stands on end or your skin tingles—lightning may be about to strike you. Drop to the ground immediately.

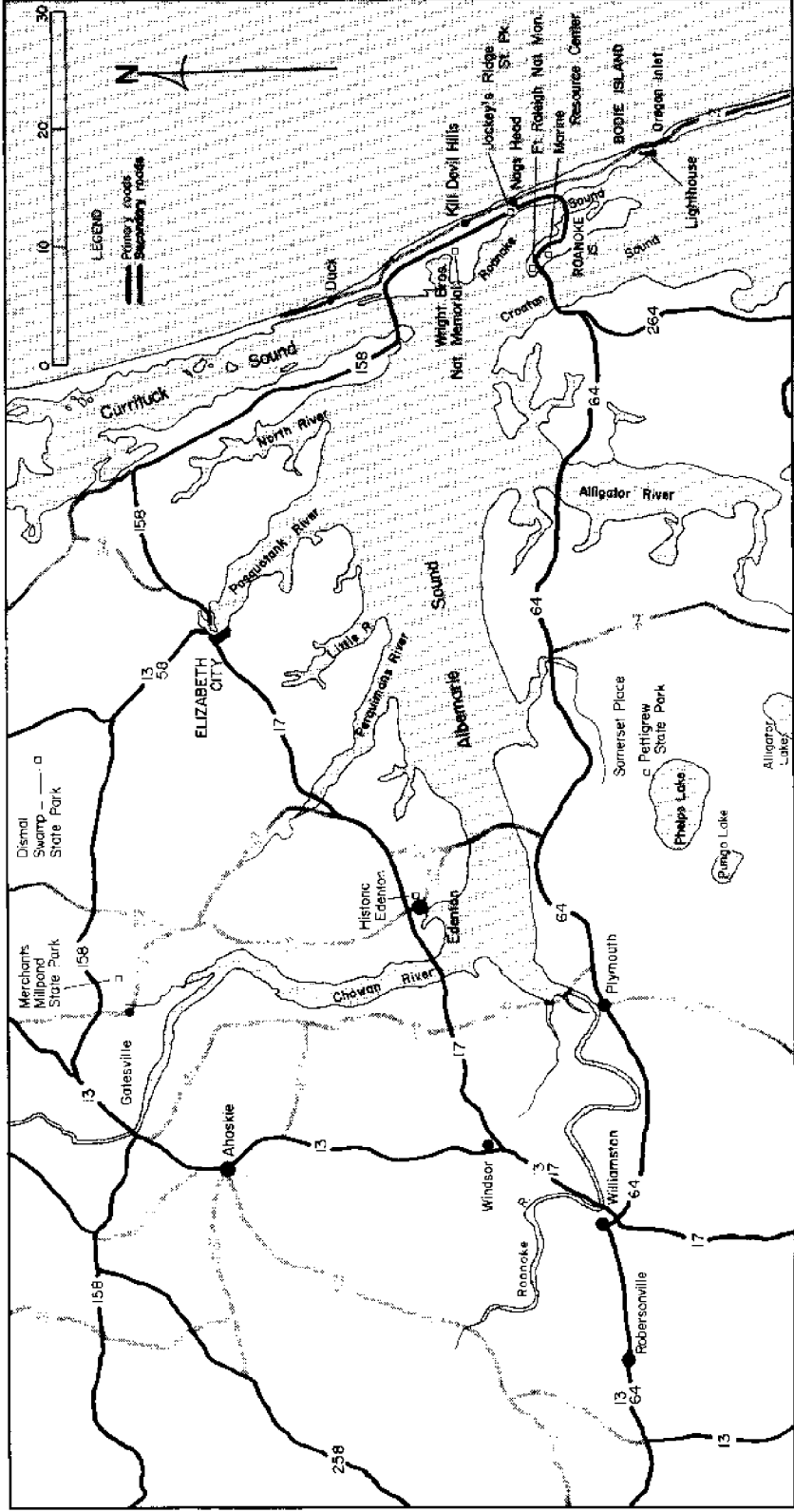
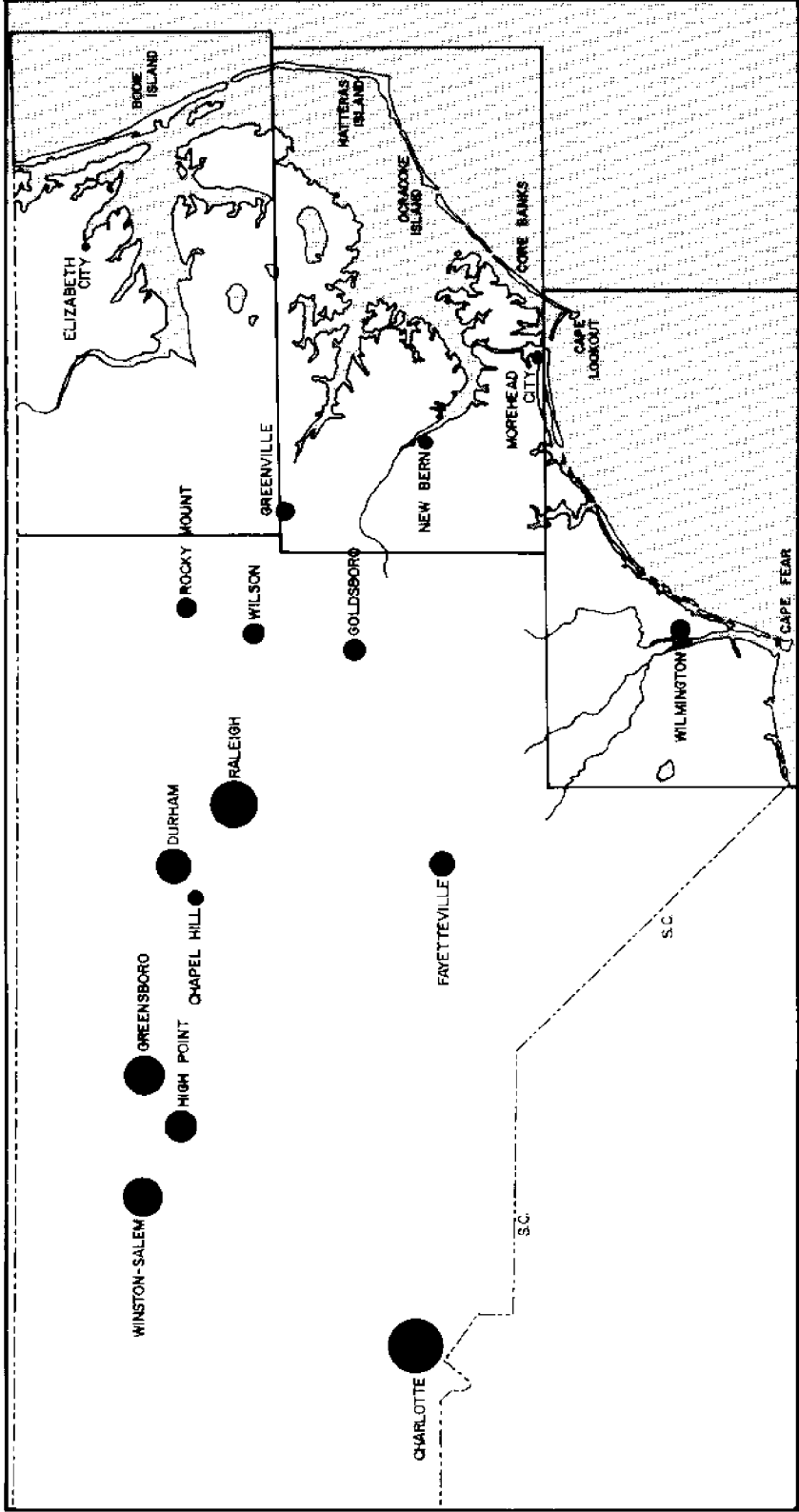
**Rip currents** are a strong, narrow outflows of ocean water that carry back to the sea water brought in by waves. The same beach may have several of these strong currents at one time and then go for weeks with none. Swimmers caught in these currents often try to fight them in an effort to get to shore. This can cause exhaustion, panic and can even lead to drowning. The best precaution is to avoid rip currents. They are usually apparent—they break up the normal wave pattern, so the surf is usually lower where they pass through the breakers. If you get caught in a rip current, don't panic. Since the current is seldom more than 10 to 20 feet wide, swim parallel to the beach and you will soon be out of it. Or you can let it carry you out beyond the surf zone where it quickly dissipates. Never fight a rip by swimming directly toward the shore.

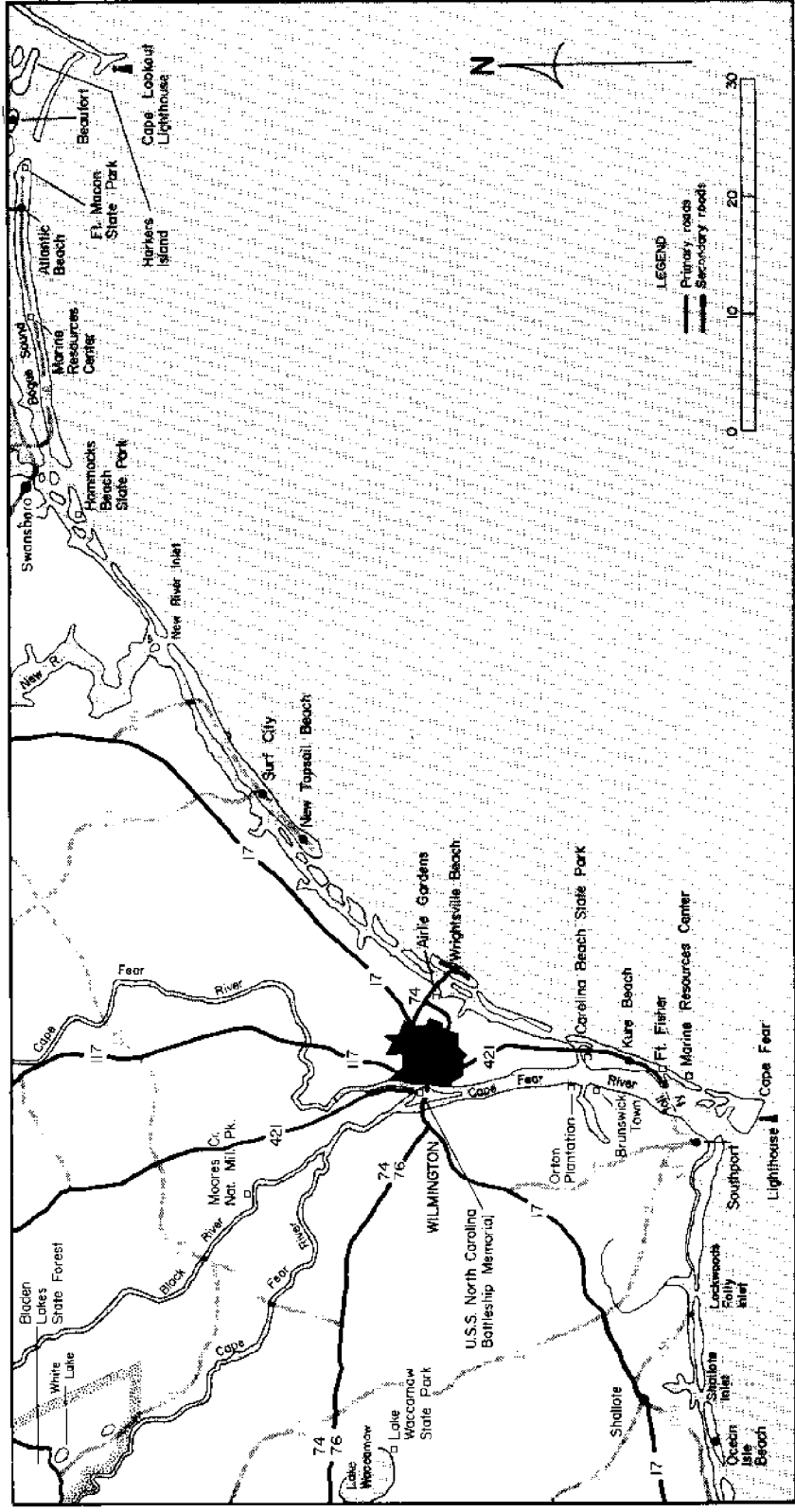
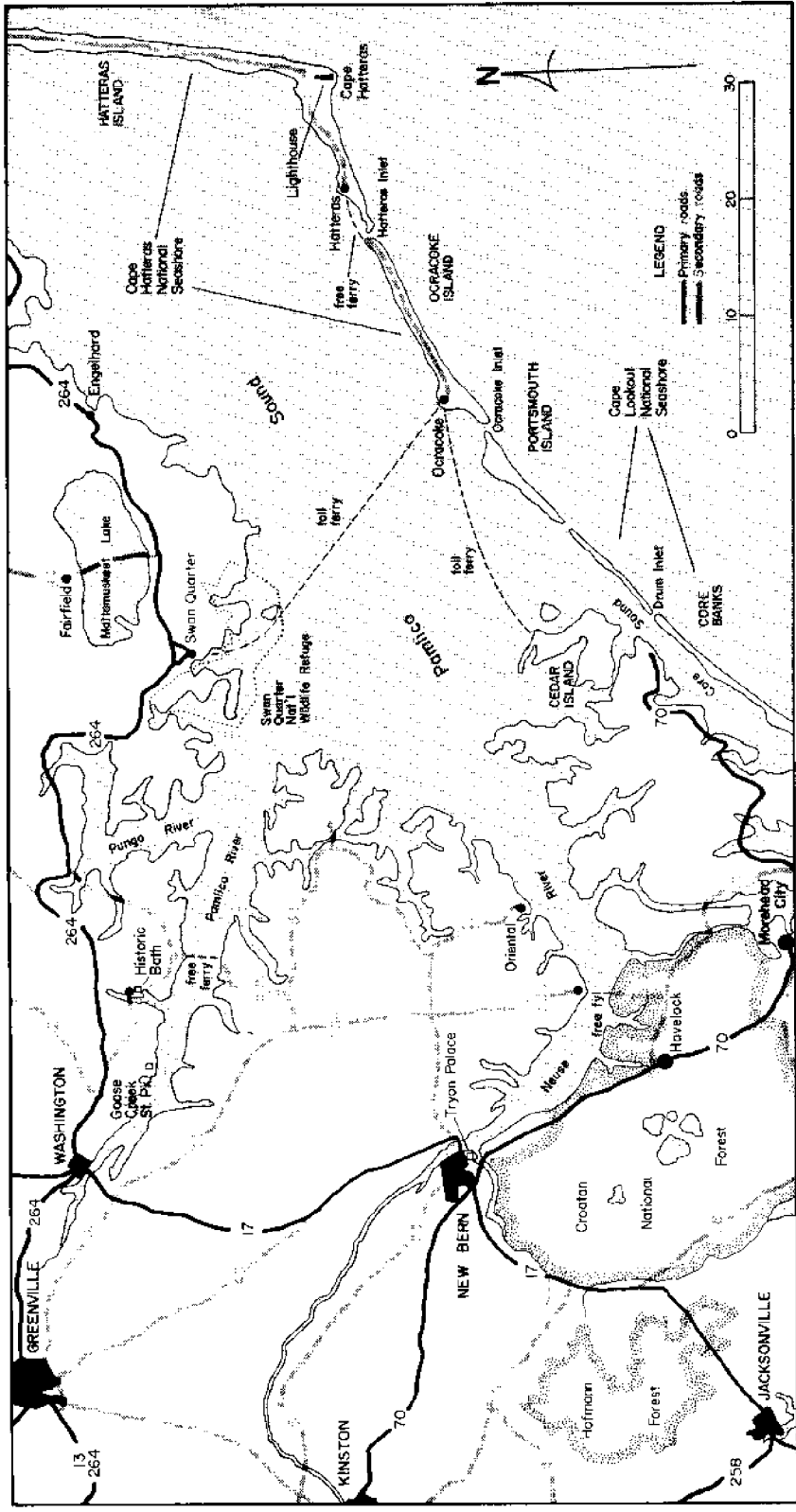
### MARINE WEATHER SERVICE

NOAA's National Weather Service regularly provides marine weather forecasts, reports and warnings. Weather forecasts for boating areas in the United States and Puerto Rico are issued every six hours by the National Weather Service. During severe weather, high tides are also broadcast. For coastal and marine forecasts, listeners should tune to the 162.55 MHz broadcasts from Norfolk, Va., Hatteras and Wilmington; the 162.475 MHz broadcasts from Tarboro; and 162.4 MHz broadcasts from New Bern and Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Recorded five-day forecasts can be heard by calling National Weather Service offices in Wilmington (919/762-3240) and at Cape Hatteras (919/995-5610). The Wilmington forecasts cover the coastal area between Cape Hatteras and the Little River Inlet, including offshore waters. The Cape Hatteras forecasts cover the Outer Banks and the coastal area between Kitty Hawk and Cape Lookout. On weekdays during office hours callers can ring through to office personnel for more information.

Recorded weather forecasts also can be heard by calling inland weather stations in Raleigh, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Charlotte and Asheville.







Available from: UNC Sea Grant College Program  
 P. O. Box 5001  
 Raleigh, N.C. 27650

- Don't Waste That Fish**, tips on taking care of your catch, UNC-SG-75-23, free.
- New Hanover Banks: Then and Now**, a field guide to the New Hanover County beaches, UNC-SG-77-14, \$2.00.
- Bringing the catch home**, a brochure on the proper methods of traveling with fish, UNC-SG-78-05, free.
- Storms, People and Property in Coastal North Carolina**, historical and meteorological data on the states major coastal storms. Includes tips on survival and safety, UNC-SG-78-15, free.

Available from: Historical Publications Section  
 Division of Archives and History  
 109 E. Jones St.  
 Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

- Bath Towne**, a history of the Colonial town of Bath; guide to the Bath State Historic Site. Illustrated. 50¢
- Historic Halifax**, a history of the Colonial town and guide to Historic Halifax State Historic Site. Illustrated. 50¢
- The Pirates of Colonial North Carolina**, the story of piracy along the coast during the 17th Century. Illustrated. 50¢
- The "Unpainted Aristocracy": The Beach Cottages of Old Nags Head**, the story of Nags Head as a beach resort in the 19th and early 20th Centuries. Illustrated. \$1.00.
- The Wright Brothers and Their Development of the Airplane**, the story of Wilbur and Orville Wright who made the first successful air flight near Kitty Hawk, 1903. Illustrated. 50¢
- Dare County: A History**, brief history beginning with English settlements in the 1580s. Illustrated. \$1.00
- New Hanover County: A Brief History**, Brief history of county from 1739 to the present. Illustrated. \$1.50.

For the other publications, contact: Superintendent, **Cape Hatteras National Seashore**, Rt. 1, Box 675, Manteo, N.C. 27954; Superintendent, **Cape Lookout National Seashore**, Box 690, Beaufort, N.C. 28516; **N.C. Division of Travel and Tourism**, P.O. Box 25249, Raleigh, N.C. 27611; **N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission**, Archdale Building, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.

## HELPFUL PUBLICATIONS

Listed on these pages is a variety of publications which might interest vacationers in coastal North Carolina. This is just a sampling of publications offered by several state and federal agencies. For publication listings, write or call the agencies.

Available from: Distribution Division, C44  
 National Ocean Survey, NOAA  
 Riverdale, MD 20840

U.S. Coast Pilot 4: Atlantic Coast, Cape Henry to Key West	\$6.00
Nautical Chart Catalog 1, U.S. Atlantic and Gulf Coasts	Free
Tide Tables: East Coast, North and South America	\$5.00
Tidal Current Tables: Atlantic Coast of North America	\$5.00
Nautical Charts (replaces small craft charts) 12205, 12206, 11553, 11541, 11534	\$3.50
Harbor Charts 537, 538, 419, 420, 423, 777, 426.	\$3.25
Marine Weather Services Charts. (1) Manasquan, N.J. to Cape Hatteras, N.C., and Chesapeake Bay; (2) Cape Hatteras, N.C. to Savannah, Ga.	\$ .25

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The University of North Carolina Sea Grant College Program works to promote the wise use and development of North Carolina's coastal resources through education, research and extension. The Sea Grant advisory services staff includes two experts in marine recreation. Their job is to lend a hand to individuals and businesses. For more information, contact:

Leon Abbas	Dennis Regan
Recreation Specialist	Recreation Agent
105 1911 Building	Marine Resources Center/Roanoke Island
N.C. State University	P.O. Box 699
Raleigh, N.C. 27650	Manteo, N.C. 27954
(919) 737-2454	(919) 473-3937

## CREDITS

This brochure was created by two components of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Department of Commerce; the National Oceanographic Data Center (Environmental Data and Information Service) and the Marine Advisory Service of the UNC Sea Grant College Program. Meteorological data was obtained from the National Climatic Center.

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UNC Sea Grant Publication, UNC-SG-79-02.

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For copies of this brochure, UNC-SG-79-02, write:  
UNC Sea Grant College Program, 105 1911 Building,  
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N.C. 27650.