



NIGHT BEACH DRIVING

PERMIT

SEPT. 16 – NOV. 15

Permit Procedures:

1. Read Sections #1, #2 and #3 inside this permit brochure.
2. Sign and date below.
3. Place this permit on your vehicle dashboard in plain view while driving on seashore beaches from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

I have read and understand
Sections #1, #2 and #3 of this permit.

Signature _____

Name _____

(please print)

Date _____

Persons violating any of the conditions and/or requirements of the permit may be subject to civil and/or criminal penalties and revocation of this permit.

ORV Map Key:

- Beach Access Ramp (Ramp numbers refer to the approximate miles on NC-12 south of Nags Head.)
- Seasonal Beach Access Ramp
Closed May 15 – Sept. 15
- ORV Use Prohibited
- ORV Sand Route
- ORV Soundside Access
- Closed To ORV Use May 15 – Sept. 15
- NPS Campground
- NPS Ranger Station / Visitor Center
- Lighthouse
- Life-Guarded Beach (Seasonal)
- Cape Hatteras National Seashore
- Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge

TO REPORT VIOLATIONS AND EMERGENCIES:
Emergency: Dial 911 • Non-Emergency: 252-473-3444



Section 1:

Sea Turtle Protection

Cape Hatteras National Seashore provides crucial nesting habitat for three species of sea turtles. Loggerhead and green sea turtles are threatened under the Endangered Species Act and the leatherback is considered endangered. Female adult turtles nest on seashore beaches from April through September; depositing around 100 eggs in each nest, which will hatch about 60 days later.

Emerging hatchlings use light cues to find their way to the ocean, making hatchlings vulnerable to artificial lights. By following lights from houses, piers and headlights, the hatchlings move away from the ocean and can eventually die from exhaustion or predation as they wander about the beach. It is estimated that between one in 1000 and one in 10,000 will survive to adulthood.

When driving at night on the beach, to protect these animals, observe the following:

- If you see a turtle, turn off headlights, use running lights, and move the vehicle away from the animal.
- When parked on the beach, use headlights only when necessary. Use flashlights or headlamps instead and consider using red lenses to reduce chances of hatchling disorientation.
- Never shine headlamps, flashlights or camera flashes at nesting females or hatchlings. This may cause disorientation and hatchling death.
- Expanded nest closures extend into the water. Follow signs to walk and/or drive, where allowed, around the back of the closure. Tracks and tire ruts between the nest and water can trap hatchlings, causing hatchling death.
- To report turtle sightings, call 252-216-6892 and leave a message.

*Thank you for doing your part
to protect park resources!*



Section 2:

National Seashore Regulations You Need To Know & Observe

- **Night Driving:**
 - **September 16 to November 15:** Night driving is allowed with a permit only.
 - **November 16 to April 30:** Night driving is allowed.
 - **May 1 to September 15:** Night driving is prohibited 10 p.m. until 6 a.m.
- **Observe Posted Closures.** If violations of protected species closures result in disturbance or harassment of wildlife, or the vandalization of fencing, nests or plants, the closure is mandated to be expanded 50 meters for the first violation, 100 meters for the second violation and 500 meters for the third. Violators are subjected to a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or imprisonment up to 6 months.
- **Pets Must Be On A 6-Foot Leash At All Times.** Pets are prohibited within any resource closure. They can disturb nesting adults, kill chicks or crush eggs.
- **Beach Fires** may be ignited and maintained seaward of the ocean dune below the high tide mark, but in no case less than 100 feet from a vegetated area. No fires are allowed within 100 yards of turtle closures. All fires must be no greater than 3 feet in diameter. The use of non-wood products or wood products containing non-wood items (glass, plastics, cans) for fire construction is prohibited. No beach fires are allowed in posted bird or turtle nest protection areas. All beach fires are prohibited from 12 a.m. (midnight) to 6 a.m.
- **Remove ANY Trash Or Litter From The Beach,** including bait, fish parts or dead fish. Trash attracts predators.
- **Feeding Wildlife (Including Gulls) Is Prohibited.** Human food is unhealthy for wildlife and may create a harmful dependence on humans for survival. Feeding may artificially inflate animal populations, create aggressive behavior, and force other species out of habitat.
- **Fireworks And Metal Detectors Are Not Permitted.**
- **Return All Fish Not Being Kept Back To The Water Alive,** including skates and sharks.
- **Camp ONLY In Designated Campgrounds,** not on the beaches.
- **Do Not Dump Wastewater Or Graywater On The Beach.** Use park dump stations for this purpose.

Section 3:

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Use: Traffic Laws Apply to Beach Driving

- Drive only on marked ORV routes and comply with posted restrictions. Driving on dunes and vegetation is prohibited.
- Observe posted speed limits.
- Any law applicable to vehicle use on a paved road in North Carolina also applies to ORV use.
- A current, valid driver's license, valid vehicle registration, insurance and license plate are required on all vehicles. Only vehicles licensed for highway use are allowed on seashore beaches.
- Reckless driving (i.e. cutting circles, throwing sand, too fast for conditions) is prohibited.
- Pedestrians always have the right of way.
- Open containers of any type of alcoholic beverage are prohibited in vehicles.
- Seat belt use is required.
- Passengers riding on the exterior of vehicles or being towed by a vehicle are prohibited. Passengers in truck beds must be seated on the floor with the tailgate closed. Children in truck beds must be accompanied by an adult.

Portions of the beach may be temporarily closed to ORVs due to mandated protection of wildlife and plant species, such as protected birds and sea turtles. Closure boundaries may shrink or expand given the specific behavior or requirements of protected wildlife.

In addition, certain areas of beach may be closed due to seasonal pedestrian use or if the beach is too narrow for safe driving. Alternative routes may be established if possible. For current information, visit one of the seashore visitor centers or www.nps.gov/caha.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Cape Hatteras National Seashore
1401 National Park Road • Manteo, NC 27954
Phone: 252.473.2111 • www.nps.gov/caha