



Visitor Programs and Events

Spring 2018

Sandy Hook, New Jersey



Osprey approaching nest at Sandy Hook.

Year of the Bird

Birdwatching—or birding—is a form of wildlife study in which the observation of birds is a recreational activity or citizen science. It can be done with the naked eye, or using devices like binoculars and telescopes, and by listening for bird sounds, or by watching public webcams. Birdwatchers pursue this activity for recreational or social reasons, unlike ornithologists, who engage in the study of birds using scientific methods.

Birding is one of the most popular activities at all units of Gateway. Because we are on the Atlantic flyway—a flight path for migratory birds—there are great opportunities for seeing numerous species of birds as they fly south in the fall, and north in the spring. Thousands of visitors come to the park, especially during migration to search for the elusive never-before-seen bird. There have been more than 330 species of birds identified at Gateway.

But whether your birding activity is based on social, recreational, or scientific reasons, in 2018 help us celebrate the *Year of the Bird* to mark the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the most powerful and important bird protection law

ever passed. In honor of this milestone, nature lovers around the world are joining forces to celebrate the *Year of the Bird* and to commit to protecting birds for the next hundred years.

More than 80 organizations and associations are participating, but the chief sponsors are Audubon, Birdlife International, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Geographic. You may see more detailed information by going to www.birdyourworld.org, and #YearoftheBird and #BirdYourWorld. Naturally Gateway will be active in this program and we invite your participation and attendance at our birding activities presented here which will be noted by a bird icon.

But there are many other programs and activities besides birdwatching offered. Fort tours and history walks, talks and lectures, a book club, stargazing and night hikes, and activities for children. We also offer kayak programs for beginners and experienced paddlers.

If you want to help protect the park join us for various volunteer opportunities ranging from beach clean-ups, to wildlife monitoring, or if you have an inclination to help remove invasive species, we welcome your help. And check out the garden programs offered at Floyd Bennett Field. Check the listings below

in this guide to see what programs appeal to you; but if you just want to come and walk in the park, that's fine too.— C. Markis

What's with the ♥? Gateway's programs are wonderful opportunities to get some exercise. Our hikes, service projects, and paddles are great ways to get your heart going, while you enjoy the natural beauty and historic treasures that surround you. Look for the ♥ next to the program listing for programs that require walks of a mile or more, or moderate physical exertion, and let Gateway pump you up!

The bird icon denotes a program or event that celebrates the *Year of the Bird*.



Do you receive email notifications of Gateway's programs and events? If you would like to be on the mailing list, send a message to Charles.Markis@nps.gov, with 'program guide' in the subject line and we will add you.

Recurring Programs & Hours

Sandy Hook Keepers Quarters & Visitor Center

Daily, 10 AM - 4 PM, March & April
Daily, 9 AM - 5 PM, Starting May 1

Sandy Hook Lighthouse

Closed for the spring season.
Lighthouse restoration project is underway.

Eastern National Gift Shop

Visitor Center/Keepers Quarters
Daily, 10 AM - 4 PM
Starting May 1: Daily, 9 AM - 5PM

History House

Fort Hancock's Officers Row, Building 1
Weekends, 1 PM - 5PM
An 1898 lieutenant's quarters on "Officers Row" overlooking Sandy Hook Bay is furnished to resemble the WWII era, the busiest time in the fort's history.

Battery Potter Tours

Saturday, May 5, 12, 19, & 26
1 PM - 4:30 PM
Explore and tour Sandy Hook's oldest disappearing gun battery, and the first concrete disappearing gun battery ever built in America, completed in 1895.

Mortar Battery Tours

Sunday, May 6, 13, & 27
1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
Join a ranger guided tour of the Mortar Battery and learn about the first Endicott era (1890 - 1910) concrete gun battery built on Sandy Hook.

Nike Missile Radar Site

Parking Lot L at Horseshoe Cove
Saturdays, April 14, 21 & May 5, 12
Sundays, April 29 & May 20
12 PM - 4 PM
Tour the site where radar once guided nuclear armed Nike missiles during the Cold War era. Veterans of the Nike System serve as tour guides, pointing out and explaining all the radars and controls used to steer the Nike Guided Missiles.

MARCH

Searching for Seals in the Surf

U.S. Life-Saving Station at Spermaceti Cove (between Lot D and Lot E)
Sunday, March 11
10 AM - 12 PM
Hike to the Sandy Hook bayside with a park ranger to search for seal activity during their annual migration; and learn about marine

mammals that dwell in the waters of Sandy Hook at different times of the year. Reservations required, please call (732) 872-5970. ♥ 1 mile

Spring Equinox Walk on Sandy Hook

Building #18, Littoral Society Headquarters
Tuesday, March 20
5 PM - 7 PM
It is called the equinox because it's one of two days in the year when daylight and darkness agree to equally share the 24 hours in a day. Celebrate the equinox with an early evening walk on the Hook. Free, call the American Littoral Society at (732) 291-0055 to make a reservation. ♥ 2 miles.

Army Ground Forces Association

Battery Gunnison
Saturday, March 24
12 PM - 5 PM
The Army Ground Forces Association, dressed in 1943 era coast artillery uniforms, is a volunteer group restoring and interpreting Battery Gunnison/New Peck and its 6-inch guns. Visitors are invited to stop by on this work and training day to chat and learn more about the historic time period of March 1943, the preparation for the May 1943 reactivation of Battery Gunnison/New Peck, and the restoration and preservation projects currently underway.

Junior Ranger Animal Tracking

U.S. Life-Saving Station at Spermaceti Cove (Between Lot D and Lot E)
Saturday, March 24
10 AM - 11:30 PM
Identify tracks from the beach to the forest. A park ranger will teach children between ages 7 to 12 the skills of tracking wildlife by discovering tracks or remains that are left behind. Please call (732) 872-5970 to make reservations. ♥1 mile.

Holly Forest Walk

U.S. Life-Saving Station Lot at Spermaceti Cove (Between Lot D and Lot E)
Friday, March 30
4 PM - 6 PM
Some of the oldest American Holly trees in the country can be found among Sandy Hook's nearly 300 acres of holly forest. We will hike through the restricted 64-acre maritime forest area and get to see an undisturbed holly forest with some of its oldest, rarest, and largest trees. Waterproof footwear is recommended. ♥ 1 mile.

APRIL

Battery Gunnison/New Peck Restoration

Saturday, April 7
12 PM - 5 PM
The Army Ground Forces Association is a volunteer group in 1943 era coast artillery uniforms restoring and interpreting Battery Gunnison/New Peck and its 6-inch guns. Visitors are invited to

stop by on this work and training day to chat and learn more about the historic time period of April 1943 and the restoration/preservation projects currently underway.

Fort Hancock 1940s Ladies Tea

History House
Saturday, April 7
10:30 AM - 1 PM
The Ladies of the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) invite you to step back in time to enjoy a 1940s ladies tea at History House - an 1898 era officer's home decorated to the 1943 time period. 1940s period breads, sandwiches, and mini desserts will be served along with a sampling of hot tea and iced tea. The Ladies of AGFA will guide you on a journey back to a time where red lipstick, seamed stockings, and victory rolls were the norm. Please feel free to dress period, however it is not a requirement to attend. There are 20 tickets available for purchase at \$25 on the AGFA website at <http://armygroundforces.org/LadiesTea.html>. All proceeds support the work of AGFA, a public charity and park partner organization.

Holly Forest Walk

American Littoral Society
Parking Lot E
Saturday, April 14
10 AM - 12 PM
Some of the oldest American holly trees in the country can be found among Sandy Hook's nearly 300 acres of holly forest. We will hike through the restricted 64-acre maritime forest area and get to see an undisturbed holly forest with some of its oldest, rarest, and largest trees. Waterproof footwear is recommended. ♥ 2 mile
Spring Bird Walk - Monmouth County Audubon Society
U.S. Life-Saving Station at Spermaceti Cove (Between Lot D and Lot E)
Saturday, April 14
10 AM - 12 PM
Look for returning osprey, herons, egrets and other migrants. Bring binoculars and wear comfortable shoes. ♥ 1 mile

Surf Fishing Clinic

Building #18, Littoral Society Headquarters
Saturday, April 21
8 AM - 3 PM
Join Jeff Dement, Tagging Director, for a day of surf fishing and instruction on the beach. He will cover the basics of casting, knot tying, lure/bait selection, and "reading" a beach. All skill levels are welcome. Rods, reels and tackle will be pro-

vided. Children under 18 are welcome with a supervising adult. Bring lunch. This is a fee-based program. Call (732) 291-0055 to make a reservation.

Clean Ocean Action's 33rd Spring Beach Sweep

Parking Lot D
Saturday, April 21
9 AM – 12:30 PM

Clean Ocean Action's Beach Sweeps is a biannual, statewide beach cleanup that occurs at over 70 locations throughout the state of New Jersey. Each beach sweeper becomes a citizen scientist for the day as they record each piece of debris that they collect. This turns a one-day, cleanup event, into a legacy of data that impacts research and legislation. For more information, please visit Clean Ocean Action's website: www.cleanoceanaction.org or call (732) 872-0111.

Holly Forest Walk - Arbor Day Tree Walk

American Littoral Society
Parking Lot E
Friday, April 27
4 PM – 6 PM

Some of the oldest American holly trees in the country can be found among Sandy Hook's nearly 300 acres of holly forest. We will hike through the restricted 64-acre maritime forest area and get to see an undisturbed holly forest with some of its oldest, rarest, and largest trees. Waterproof footwear is recommended. ♥ 2 miles

Boy Scout Oceanography Merit Badge Program

Building #22, NJ Sea Grant Consortium
Saturday, April 28
10 AM – 2 PM

Explore Sandy Hook and experience the science of the ocean during this four hour "hands-on" program, conducted both outdoors and in the NJS GC laboratory classroom. Open to individual boy scouts. Advance registration required. Register online at www.njseagrant.org/education/scout-programs or contact Jody Sackett: JSackett@njseagrant.org or 732-872-1300, ext. 20. This is a fee-based program.

Secret Places of Sandy Hook

Parking Lot M
Sunday, April 29
2 PM – 4 PM

Join the park historian to learn about the rapid fire batteries in Fort Hancock. Explore Batteries Peck, Engle, Urmston, and Morris that date from 1898 through 1909. Bring flash-

lights/head lamps, insect repellent and wear comfortable shoes. Call the Sandy Hook Visitor Center at (732) 872-5970 to make a reservation.

♥ 0.5 mile

MAY

Boy Scout Environmental Science Merit Badge Program

Building #22, NJ Sea Grant Consortium
Sunday, May 6
10 AM – 3 PM

Discover the ecology of Sandy Hook's maritime environment in this highly active five hour program, conducted both outdoors and in the NJS GC laboratory classroom. Open to all individual boy scouts. Advance registration is required. Register online at www.njseagrant.org/education/scout-programs or contact Jody Sackett: JSackett@njseagrant.org or 732-872-1300, ext. 20. This is a fee-based program.

Year of the Bird Centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act



U.S. Life-Saving Station at Spmaceti Cove (Between Lot D and Lot E)
Saturday, May 12
10 AM – 12 PM

Celebrate the "Year of the Bird" with a park ranger and commit to protecting birds today and in the future. Visitors will look for osprey, herons, egrets, songbirds and other migrants. Bring binoculars and wear comfortable shoes.

Horseshoe Crab Walk

Parking Lot B
Tuesday, May 15
6 PM – 8 PM

Get up close and personal with a living fossil. Take an evening walk along Plum Island to look for spawning horseshoe crabs. Wear foot gear that can get wet. Free, call the American Littoral Society to make a reservation (732) 291-0055. ♥ 1 mile.

Clean Ocean Action's 30th Annual Spring Student Summit

Wednesday, May 16th & Thursday, May 17th
9 AM – 12:30 PM

Applications are available at www.cleanoceanaction.org

For more information call 732-872-0111

Stars of Sandy Hook

Parking Lot E, Beach Center
Thursday, May 17
8 PM – 10 PM

Join a park ranger and STAR Astronomy to observe Jupiter to the east, Venus in the west, and a 3-day old waxing crescent moon. Dress for the weather and bring telescopes.

Twilight by the Bay

Lighthouse Keepers Quarters/Visitor Center

Saturday, May 26
7 PM – 8:30 PM

Experience Fort Hancock at twilight with a park ranger. Learn about Fort Hancock's significance over the past 250 years. ♥ 1.5 miles

Horseshoe Crab Walk

Parking Lot B
Tuesday, May 29
6 PM – 8 PM

Get up close and personal with a living fossil. Take an evening walk along Plum Island to look for spawning horseshoe crabs. Wear foot gear that can get wet. Free, call the American Littoral Society to make a reservation (732) 291-0055. ♥ 1 mile

Junior Ranger Program: Horseshoe Crabs

Parking Lot B
Wednesday, May 30
5 PM – 7 PM

Meet up with a park ranger and learn about the natural history of horseshoe crabs, and why they annually visit Sandy Hook's shores during the full moon phases in May & June. Wear shoes that can get wet. Reservations required, please call (732) 872-5970.

Marine Science Day Camp

NJ Sea Grant Consortium, Building #22
June – August

9 AM – 3 PM (weekdays)

Registration is now open for NJ Sea Grant Consortium's Marine Science Day Camp. This camp is for children who love the ocean and want to learn more about it. The camp is held at NJS GC's Sandy Hook Headquarters and led by experienced NJS GC science educators for boys and girls in grades 3 through 9. Camp begins July 10. For details including registration information visit our website www.njseagrant.org/education/marine-science-day-camp or call 732-872-1300, ext. 19. This is a fee-based program.

More... see next page...

**COASTAL DEFENSE WEEKEND/
OCEAN FUN DAY- MAY 18 – May 20,
2018**

**World War II Harbor Defense Lantern
Tour and Battery Gunnison/New Peck**

Post Guardhouse (Fort Hancock Museum),
Building #28

Friday, May 18

6:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Volunteer living historians from the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) will be in uniform as World War II era coast artillery soldiers and will take you for a walk that includes several Harbor Defense gun batteries of Fort Hancock, portions of the Sandy Hook Proving Ground and highlighting Battery Gunnison/New Peck. Bring a flashlight and wear sturdy shoes. ♥1.5 miles

**World War II Harbor Defense Historic
Hike**

Battery Gunnison/New Peck

Saturday, May 19

1:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Volunteer living historians from the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) will be in uniform as World War II era coast artillery soldiers and will take you for a “tactical walk” across Fort Hancock, including the “disappearing search lights”, fortifications near Fishing Beach, light refreshments at Batteries Kingman and Mills and multiple remnants of fortifications along the route. Wear good walking shoes and bring a bottle of water. Reservations can be made at <http://www.armygroundforces.org/HistoricHike.html>. This is a fee-based program, \$15 fee required. ♥ 5 miles

Coastal Defense Day

Battery Gunnison /New Peck in World War II

Sunday, May 20

11 AM – 4 PM

Volunteers from AGFA in WWII uniform bring Battery Gunnison/New Peck and its 6-inch guns to life, as if they were in final modernization and activation in May 1943. Learn about Army Harbor Defense Operations, restored 1920s to 1940s vintage electric and telephone systems, and Fort Hancock Army medical support in May 1943. Visitors can participate in loading the guns, tracking ships, learn artillery math, machine shops and experience soldier life.

Mortar Battery & Battery Potter

Sunday, May 20

12 PM – 4 PM

Batteries will be open with tours provided by park rangers and volunteers.

Ocean Fun Day

Building #22, New Jersey

Sea Grant Consortium

Sunday, May 20

11 AM – 3 PM

Spend the day with your family enjoying hands-on fun while learning about our environment. Join NJS GC and their Ocean Fun Days partners for this popular pre-summer event. Learn how to use a seine net or join the youth fishing clinic. Test your boating safety knowledge or become a beachcomber and search for natural treasures on a guided tour. Hear from NJ scientists and researchers all about the inner workings of the ocean and how to protect it for generations to come. The event includes dozens of exhibits and children’s activities. Free admission.

—end of listings—