



For additional visitor information, please visit:

[www.outerbanks.org](http://www.outerbanks.org)

National Park Service  
Cape Lookout National Seashore  
252.728.2250 | [www.nps.gov/cal](http://www.nps.gov/cal)

Core Sound Waterfowl  
Museum & Heritage Center  
252.728.1500 | [www.coresound.com](http://www.coresound.com)

### 1. Cedar Island Bay Paddle (Moderate)

Cedar Island Bay is a great paddle to experience a natural landscape in a quiet and serene manner. There are two locations to begin your paddle in this area: Driftwood Campground or Lola Road Boat Ramp. Various species of birds, sea life, marshland, and maritime forest abound on small islands. Semi-feral cattle can be seen grazing along the shoreline.

### 2. Cedar Island National Refuge Paddle (Difficult)

The refuge was created to protect and provide a wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl. Winter months are best for seeing a huge variety of ducks and shorebirds. The Refuge contains 11,000 acres of marshland and almost 3,500 acres of pocosin and woodlands. Paddling this outstanding trail can begin at the Monroe Gaskill Memorial Bridge or at Lola Road Boat Ramp.

### 3. Thorofare and Styron Bay Paddle (Moderate)

To explore nature in solitude, this is the paddle for you. This is one of the wildest and most scenic paddles Down East, particularly in the winding Thorofare area. Wildlife of all sorts abound, as well as a stunning variety of plant life. This paddle begins at the Monroe Gaskill Bridge and ends at the Driftwood Campground or Lola Road Boat Ramp.

### 4. Nelson Bay Paddle (Easy)

Paddle the Nelson Bay to relax and experience the stillness of the natural landscape. Launching from Salters Creek Ramp, paddlers can travel along the shoreline to see nature up close. Local wildlife is abundant.

### 5. Oyster Creek to Great Island Ferry Dock (Moderate)

This paddle offers many options to travel Core Sound. The launch point for this paddle is at the Oyster Creek Boat Ramp in Davis. Once on the banks, paddlers can explore the soundside shoreline or walk across to the Atlantic Ocean. Core Banks is an uninhabited area and is part of Cape Lookout National Seashore.

### 6. Core Banks Paddle (Difficult)

The Core Banks Paddle begins at the Oyster Creek Bridge boat ramp in Davis. One can paddle east across Core Sound, and then northward along Core Banks. Once past Drum Inlet, a popular destination is Old Drum Inlet Creek on the soundside of Portsmouth Island. This paddle is lengthy and is for the experienced individual.

### 7. Whitehurst Creek Paddle (Easy)

The Whitehurst Creek paddle begins at the Straits Landing Boat Ramp and continues east along the shoreline. Although several houses are located along the creek, this is a birder's paradise, as sea gulls, pelicans, herons, egrets, shorebirds, osprey, oystercatchers, terns, and cormorants are abundant. During the winter months, paddlers will see variety of ducks and geese.

### 8. Browns Island Paddle (Moderate)

Browns Island is an uninhabited island off of Harkers Island. The route begins at the NPS Visitor Center at Shell Point on Harkers Island and then heading left/due north. The island is visible as you round the point, a short distance across Core Sound. Wild horses and cattle graze along the shore of Browns Island. Feral hogs and biting insects live in the woods and can be dangerous; we advise you to avoid exploring the island on foot. Paddlers may get the chance to see eagles that have recently made the island their home.

### 9. Cods Creek Paddle (Difficult)

The Cods Creek Paddle takes the kayaker to a popular local site. Leaving from NPS Visitor Center at Shell Point, the paddler crosses Core Sound and continues north along Core Banks to Cods Creek where a dock awaits. En route the paddler will cross beds of sea grasses, home to crabs, scallops, and various types of fish. Once at Cods Creek, it's an easy walk to the Atlantic Ocean.

### 10. Cape Lookout Lighthouse Paddle (Difficult)

The Cape Lookout Lighthouse Paddle is one of the most beautiful and exciting adventures. The best location to begin this journey is at the NPS Visitor Center at Shell Point on Harkers Island. Along the route, the paddler will pass large numbers of pelicans, ibis, egrets, and other waterfowl. In the surrounding waters, you may see stingrays, dolphins, and sea turtles that may cross your path, as well as wild horses grazing on Shackleford Banks.

### 11. Whale Creek Paddle (Moderate)

For this paddle, launch at the Harkers Island beach access site on the south side of the Harkers Island bridge. Heading west, you will round Harkers Island point, and then travel due south to Shackleford Banks across Back Sound; this will take you to about the middle of Shackleford. You will pass several marsh areas. Upon reaching Shackleford, the site of a 19th century whaling community, you may observe wild horses grazing salt grasses and shrubs. Camping is allowed. Check Park rules for details.

### 12. North River Estuary Paddle (Easy)

The North River Estuary Paddle offers the paddler a quiet trip. The launch area is at Straits Landing Boat Ramp by the Harkers Island Bridge. Head right/due north toward Goose Bay or explore the many marshes on the western side of this waterway. While paddling, the height of the marsh grass creates the illusion of becoming part of the estuary. A variety of birds can be observed; prehistoric pottery has been found along the mud banks of the marsh.

### 13. Goose Bay Paddle (Moderate)

The Goose Bay Paddle can begin at the Straits Landing Boat Ramp. Paddlers travel through marsh and will see a variety of birds. Areas of the marsh are home to nests of birds. The bay is somewhat protected and is a popular place for crab pots. On low tide, a nice sandy bottom provides opportunities for paddlers to stop, get out of their kayak, and explore the shoreline to see periwinkles, minnows, fiddler crabs, and possibly prehistoric pottery shards.

### 14. North River Paddle Extended (Moderate)

For a longer trip, take the Goose Bay paddle and extend it with the North River Paddle. The paddle can include a return trip back to Straits Landing Boat Ramp or with an arranged pickup at Wards Creek Bridge. The extended paddle will provide the travelers with opportunities to view estuaries rarely seen by vehicle or boat.

### 15. Rachel Carson Preserve Paddle (Easy)

The Rachel Carson Preserve is located along the Beaufort waterfront and is easily viewed from that area. It is a very short paddle across Taylor's Creek to the Preserve. The islands and estuarine waters at the Rachel Carson site are strongly influenced by river and inlet dynamics. Various species of birds can be observed at the site. The launch for this paddle can be found at the Beaufort Boat Ramp Front Street.

### 16. Beaufort to Shackleford Banks Paddle (Difficult)

The paddle from Beaufort to Shackleford Banks provides an opportunity to see wild horses on Rachel Carson Preserve and on Shackleford Banks. The best place to launch is from the boat ramp on the easternmost end of Front Street in Beaufort. Head due east out of Taylor's Creek. Then paddle due south along several small marsh islands to Shackleford Banks. Once on the banks, paddlers will be able to explore the barrier island and its maritime forest. An easy walk from the western end of Shackleford brings you to the Atlantic Ocean for excellent shelling and body surfing.

# Down East Paddle Trails

Part of the  
Outer Banks Byway



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