

Ten reasons to love North Carolina beaches



And why we should protect them for future generations

1. The Outer Banks are home to North Carolina's **official state animal**—wild horses originally descended from Spanish mustangs.
2. In 2014, tourism brought a record **\$2.4 billion in revenue** into ten coastal county economies.
3. North Carolina beaches provide nesting habitats for **five of the seven endangered species of sea turtles**, including the loggerhead, green, and leatherback sea turtles.
4. The **largest estuary on the Atlantic coast** is in North Carolina, providing 2.5 million acres of spawning and nursery grounds for various fish and shellfish.
5. The infamous **Venus flytrap** is native only to the Wilmington area.
6. The **Great Dismal Swamp**, which stretches from Virginia to Georgia, is not only the largest wetland in North Carolina, but also one of the largest swamps in the country, covering 750 square miles.
7. **Recreational and commercial fishing** maintain a billion dollar industry thanks to North Carolina's coastal fish habitats.
8. More than **2,000 shipwrecks** lay off the coast of North Carolina. Beaufort was home to Blackbeard, the notorious pirate who endured various battles just off the coast in the early 1700s.
9. National Geographic lists Wrightsville Beach as **one of the world's 20 best surf towns** for its laid-back, welcoming environment and consistently above-average waves.
10. North Carolina is home to **ten historic and distinctly painted lighthouses**. The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, the tallest in the United States, has helped sailors navigate the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" since it was first lit in 1803.

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Sources: 1: ncwildhorses.com | 2: partners.visitnc.com/uploads/teim/2014-County-Level-Visitor-Spending-by-Total-Expenditures.pdf | 3: ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Conserving/documents/FactSheets/nongame_seaturtle_hires.pdf | 4: 7: portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/fen-05-08/chpp-facts | 5: 10: media.visitnc.com/news/facts-for-north-carolina-s-coastal-region | 6: ncpedia.org/geography/region/coastal-plain | 8: blackbeardthepirate.com/history.htm; history.com/this-day-in-history/blackbeard-killed-off-north-carolina; ourstate.com/shipwrecks | 9: adventure.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/trips/best-surf-towns-photos