



- [Trip Planner](#)
- [Exploring Fire Island](#)
- [Safety](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Park Resources](#)
- [Getting Involved](#)
- [Other Links](#)
- [Park News](#)

Trash Free Park

Fire Island National Seashore proudly instituted a "Trash Free Park" program in the spring of 1999. The concept was initiated to actively reduce solid waste within the park. The premise is a partnership that provides a safer, healthier, more satisfying experience for all of us who enjoy the park and its exceptional resources.

The success of this type of program has been realized in many parks and park systems across the country.

Under the guidelines of the "Trash Free Park" program, trash receptacles were removed from portions of the park and visitors are now required to take their refuse when they depart, leaving an unspoiled, trash free park! This initiative began at Talisman in 1999 and was expanded to include the Fire Island Lighthouse and the Wilderness Visitor Center areas in the spring of 2000. It encompasses all recreational sections including all beaches, boardwalks, picnic areas, and hiking trails. Concession areas still have trash cans.

Fire Island National Seashore has installed "Trash Free" signs at the various access points throughout the park as a reminder of the Trash Free Program. However, please plan ahead when you visit the park. As you prepare items to carry into the park, make accommodations to carry your garbage out when you leave. Make creative choices on what to bring, as trash receptacles are not available in these areas of the park. This program is designed to encourage reuse and recycling practices, so we all share in being responsible for managing solid waste and the park's environment.

Reduce wasteful habits by purchasing reusable products, avoid individually wrapped products, use less paper.

Reuse resources by selecting washable and refillable items (and containers), prepare for leftovers and borrow or rent items infrequently used.

Recycle and return glass, plastic, paper and metal products.

The many benefits of this program include removing garbage and recycling containers within the park and associated odors, reducing annoying pests and unsightly conditions, and helping users to be more aware of the need to recycle. Eliminating the need for trash receptacles and disposal services will also allow the park an opportunity to make more productive use of its available resources.

Please take your trash when you go! When everyone does their part, the reward is realized by all users when we return to a beautiful park.

Thank you for taking Pride in Your Park!

[Return to Fire Island Home Page](#)



- [Trip Planner](#)
- [Safety](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Park Resources](#)
- [Getting Involved](#)
- [Other Links](#)
- [Park News](#)

Park Resources

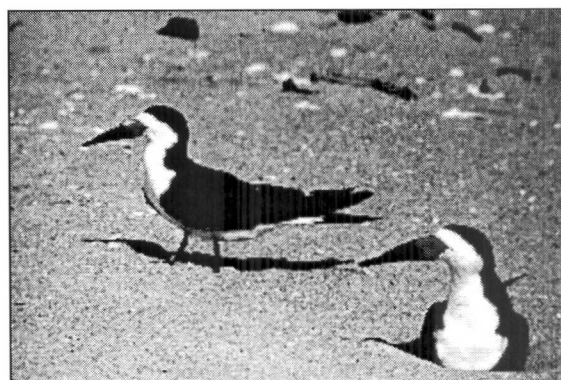
Natural Resources

1. Wildlife

Owing to its diverse habitats and location on a major migration route, Fire Island is home and resting spot to a wide variety of wildlife species.

o Birds

Over 330 species of birds have been recorded on Fire Island, more than 1/3 of all species found in North America. Fire Island is without a doubt one of the best birding locations in the New York area, particularly during the spring and fall migrations. Thousands of songbirds, hawks and other birds fly over and rest on the island on their journeys north and south.



[Click here for Fire Island's Bird Checklist](#) (Requires Adobe Acrobat. [Go to Adobe Acrobat now.](#))

[Click here for Fire Island Hawk Watch](#)

[Click here for Fire Island National Seashore Dead Bird Protocol 2002](#)

o Mammals

Over 30 species of mammals either live in or visit Fire Island National Seashore. These range in size from finback whales and other whales which occasionally swim close to shore or wash up on the beach to the tiny masked shrew, which though rarely seen, is very common throughout the island.

o [Click here for information on Deer and People at Fire Island National Seashore.](#)

o Reptiles and Amphibians

Around 30 species of reptiles and amphibians live within or visit Fire Island National Seashore, from giant leatherback sea turtles to the secretive Fowler's toad.

o Fish and Marine Life

Fire Island National Seashore's boundaries include up to 1,000 feet into the Atlantic Ocean and 4,000 feet into the Great South Bay. Here are found an incredible variety of marine life forms--striped bass, seastars, clams, oysters, and much, much more.

- [Click here for information on fishing at Fire Island.](#)
- [Insects and Allies](#)
Hundreds of species of insects live on Fire Island, from dragonflies to monarch butterflies to the ubiquitous mosquitoes and ticks.
- [Click here for information on Mosquito Surveillance and Management at Fire Island 2002.](#)
- [Threatened and Endangered Species](#)
The piping plover is federally listed threatened species of shorebird that is found on Fire Island National Seashore. This bird lays its eggs directly on the sand, which makes the nest vulnerable to off-road vehicles, unleashed pets and other threats.
- [Click here for more information on Threatened and Endangered Species.](#)

2. Plants

More than 420 species of plants have been recorded on Fire Island. The Conservation Management Institute has prepared a vegetation mapping report for Fire Island for December 1999 - May 2000. Click on the following link to access the report: [Conservation Management Institute Report](#). There are several images here, so please give your browser a minute or so to upload.

3. Resource Management

Some of the major natural resource management issues include the following:

[Fire Island's deer population](#)

[Deer and People at Fire Island National Seashore.](#)

[Endangered species habitat](#)

[Mosquito Action Plan 2002](#)

[Mosquito Surveillance and Management Protocol 2002](#)

- [Preserve the Dunes](#)
- [Building on the Dunes](#)
- [Ticks](#)
- [Driving on the Beach](#)
- [Mosquitoes](#)

Help Preserve the Dunes

The dunes are one of the most vital features of Fire Island. Primary dunes protect everything behind them from the force of the wind and waves. However, nature builds primary dunes very slowly. Winds deposit the sand, then beach grass takes root. The root system of living beach grass holds the sand in place. Layers of sand and beach grass slowly mound higher and higher. A fungus in the roots helps bind the sand to the plant. A large dune takes years to form, yet it can easily and quickly be destroyed if people walk on it. Please respect these fragile areas and walk only on beaches or boardwalks.



Building on the Dunes

The National Park Service encourages homebuilders to avoid building on the fragile dunes. As the paragraph above mentions, the dunes are critical features of the stability of Fire Island National Seashore. Therefore, when building a home damages the dunes, they can no longer act as a barrier to the extreme winds and waves of the ocean. This can place the house and the houses behind it in jeopardy during future storms.

Ticks

Ticks are generally found in wooded, brushy or grassy areas. They can attach themselves to animals (or people) as the animal brushes up against the tick. White-tailed deer are common carriers of deer ticks. The ticks attach themselves to the deer, crawl to an area of the body where they attach themselves and remain until they are fully engorged. At this stage, they look much like a blueberry with tiny legs and mouthparts.

Lyme disease is an infection which is spread to people through the bite of an infected tick. The tick must be attached for at least 24 to 48 hours in order to transmit Lyme disease. For more information and a brochure on Lyme disease, contact the park headquarters.

Driving on the Beach

Many species of wildlife use the beach in some way. The piping plover, a small shorebird which lays its eggs right on the sand, is an endangered species. The "nest" is extremely vulnerable to predators, people, and vehicles. Please observe all signs in piping plover areas and help protect these endangered birds.

Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes thrive in almost any wetland in the world and Fire Island is no exception. Although mosquitoes can be bothersome to people, they play an important role in the ecological relationships of wildlife within the national seashore. Mosquito larvae are eaten by frogs, fish, and waterfowl. The adult mosquitoes are a food source for insect-eating birds such as swallows, fly-catchers, and nighthawks. Bats can also consume up to 500 mosquitoes per hour.

If mosquitoes are bothersome to you, be aware of the following:

1. Mosquitoes tend to be most active when there is little wind, i.e. early morning and around sunset. Breezy and windy days will have fewer mosquitoes than still days.
2. Open spaces, such as the beaches, will have fewer mosquitoes than the wooded areas.
3. Cover exposed skin and consider using mosquito repellent when necessary.

The National Park Service has developed a brochure, "Mosquitoes and You" that explains these insects and their important part of the natural environment and it will help minimize your concerns about them. The brochure also discusses current concerns with Eastern Equine Encephalitis. Please contact the park headquarters for a copy of the brochure.