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Ruddick, Colleen

From: Sandra_Hamilton@nps.gov
Sent: Wednesday, June 07, 2006 5:07 PM
To: Otto, Dana
Subject: Fw: Press Release "NPS Announces Beach Access Changes"

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cc: (bcc: Sandra Hamilton/DENVER/NPS)
Subject: Press Release "NPS Announces

Beach Access Changes"

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National Park Service News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DATE May 17, 2006
CONTACT: 252-473-2111 ext. 148

NPS Announces Beach Access Changes

On Wednesday May 18th, Superintendent Mike Murray announced several upcoming changes to beach access areas on Hatteras Island. "These changes reflect our best effort to provide access to popular areas while protecting bird hatchlings. These areas will be closely monitored and reopened as soon as chicks fledge," said Superintendent Mike Murray.

Current areas affected include 1.4 miles south of ramp 27, South Beach between Ramp 45 and Ramp 49, and the ocean shoreline near Hatteras Inlet.

The current resource closures in each area have been or will be modified for the protection of American Oystercatcher chicks. Whenever possible, alternative routes have been established to provide access to destinations on either side of the closures. These closures extend from the dune line to the water line, closing the shoreline to all ORV and pedestrian access.

Pedestrians and ORV users are asked to respect the closures by complying with all signs, not entering or passing in front of the closures, and keeping pets on a leash.

The resource closure area 1.4 miles south of Ramp 27 is 0.3 of a mile long.

This closure is a full beach closure, which restricts ORV and pedestrian access in front of the resource closure area. ORV and pedestrian access to either side of the closure is still available by using Ramp 27 or Ramp 30.

Two American Oystercatcher nests are ready to hatch on South Beach. Full beach closures will be installed west of Ramp 45 to protect hatching chicks at both sites. Areas on either side of the closure can still be accessed for recreational use. Ramp 49 in Frisco provides access from the south and the interdunal road system off of Ramp 44 in Buxton provides access from the north. Approximately 0.7 of a mile of beach is open to ORV and pedestrian access on the north side of the closure, and approximately 2 miles of beach between Ramp 49 and the closure is open for ORV and pedestrian access on the south side. The northernmost of the two closures will start 0.1 mile south of Ramp 45 and when combined with the southernmost closure will extend south approximately 1 mile.

At Hatteras Inlet, the existing safety closure 0.3 miles south of Pole Road has been converted to a full resource closure and expanded 300 feet to the north for the hatching of an American Oystercatcher nest. The ocean shoreline including "False Point," north of the closure is accessible via Ramp 55 and the ocean side corridor. The "Rip" at Hatteras Inlet (south of the closure) is accessible via the Pole Road/ Cable Crossing soundside route.

About American Oystercatchers

American Oystercatchers are protected under the Migratory Bird Treat Act and are listed as a North Carolina species of concern. Generally, birds remain monogamous for a season and will continue to re-nest until successful. Females lay 3-4 well camouflaged eggs which incubate for 24-29 days. After hatching, parents bring food to the chicks. Also, the parents will move the chicks to protect them from heat, predators, and disturbance. The chicks rely on camouflage for protection and often remain motionless when danger is detected. Consequently, the chicks are difficult to see and very vulnerable to being run over by moving vehicles. Chicks are attracted to lights including beach fires and car headlights. Chicks generally fledge (fly) after 35 days. At that time juveniles have plumages similar to their parents and will be more self-sufficient.

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