



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Outer Banks Group:

- Cape Hatteras National Seashore
- Fort Raleigh National Historic Site
- Wright Brothers National Memorial

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National Park Service News Release

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Vandalism of Resource Protection Area Closure Signs South of Ramp 38 Results in Expansion of Buffers

The first deliberate vandalism incident of a resource protection area during the 2010 shorebird breeding season has occurred, resulting in an automatic expansion of the protected area. The incident was discovered by NPS bird monitoring staff on Thursday, April 22 and is being investigated by NPS law enforcement personnel. The expansion was implemented on Friday, April 23, 2010.

The incident occurred at the north end of the resource closure located 0.8 of a mile south of Ramp 38. Tire tracks and footprints were observed in the area where five wooden closure signs were found broken and a 4X4 post was pulled out of the ground. The red and white colored rope connecting the posts into the tidal zone was removed and missing. Tire tracks were observed traveling through the closure. The area was established on April 20, 2010 for a pair of breeding American Oystercatchers. As a result of the deliberate violation, the buffer expansion reduces access by 50 meters on the north side of the current resource closure.

The court ordered consent decree mandates that if a confirmed deliberate act that disturbs or harasses wildlife or vandalizes fencing, nests, or plants occurs, NPS shall automatically expand the buffer by 50 meters on the first offense, 100 meters on the second, and 500 meters on the third. Under consent decree modifications approved in June 2009, NPS is not required to expand the buffer if information from the public or developed by NPS leads to the apprehension of a violator. If a buffer has been expanded because of vandalism, as is the case here, and subsequent information leads to violator apprehension, NPS may retract the expansion.

NPS law enforcement personnel continue to investigate the incident. If anyone has information about any of these violations, please call Dare Community Crime Line at 252-473-3111. Destruction of government property and entering a resource closure are federal criminal violations, each subject up to a \$5,000.00 fine and up to six months imprisonment.

For up-to-date information on currently open or closed areas, check the Cape Hatteras National Seashore's Google Earth maps at: <http://www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/googleearthmap.htm>