

Island Beach State Park
A-7/Southern Swimming Area
Questions and Answers

- **“Why is a \$3 fee being assessed for boater access at Island Beach State Park?”**

This fee promotes public safety in the A-7 section of Island Beach State Park by providing a guarded beach in this section of the Park. In years past, the beach in this area has not been protected by lifeguards, yet lifeguards assigned to other beaches have had to leave their posts to perform rescues of swimmers in distress at or near A-7. To keep the swimmers safe at this popular location, the State Park Service has decided to provide a lifeguard service.

The modest \$3 fee will cover the cost of providing this service, as well as other amenities, to visitors to this part of Island Beach State Park. The many people who anchor their boats at Tices Shoal and cross over Fisherman’s Walkway at A-7 to the ocean to swim will now be afforded the full protection that our lifeguards provide.

- **“Why do we need lifeguards?”**

Lifeguards will protect those who swim in the newly designated swimming area in the A-7 area of the park, which has become increasingly popular over the years. Unfortunately, many people disregard the signs stating swimming in unguarded portions of the beach is illegal and unsafe. Distress calls from unguarded sections happen frequently at Island Beach State Park. When guards respond outside the permitted bathing areas, resources and equipment at the bathing areas are compromised. Lifeguards, State Park Police, Good Samaritans and emergency responders from neighboring rescue squads are also put at risk. The establishment of this new bathing area will allow visitors from Tices Shoal to safely swim at Island Beach State Park without compromising safety at the other bathing areas.

- **“Hasn’t entry from across the A-7 walkway always been free?”**

The A-7 walkway has never been an official pedestrian access area into the Park. The walkway was constructed for fishing access to the ocean side, notably for those who have limited mobility. The bayside walkway was

constructed for park visitors to access the bay. However, over time, the walkways became heavily utilized by boaters from Tices Shoal. The Department supports public access and our intent with this plan is to enhance public access by creating a lifeguarded swimming area and legitimizing the access point.

- **“Why charge a walk-in fee at Tices Shoal, but not at the main gate?”**

The fee is being established because a new lifeguard service is being offered for those entering via boat or watercraft at Fishermen’s Walkway. Walk-in visitors at the gatehouse are more than 3 miles from a swimming pavilion and more than 4 miles from the Tices Shoal area. For the most part, these pedestrians, runners and bikers are not using the services provided by the Park. As there are no additional services planned for the gatehouse area for walk-in visitors, State Park Service does not feel it is appropriate to establish a new fee at this time at the gatehouse.

- **“Why charge boaters, who incur the expense of operating boats?”**

Boaters will not be charged for visiting Tices Shoal. Only boaters who leave their boats and go to the newly established, protected swimming area will be charged. All other persons who enter Island Beach State Park by car, truck or motorcycle are paying a fee. The fee may be a Park Pass, Mobile Sportfishing Permit, or a daily parking fee. All of these visitors pay for the services the Park offers. Increasing services in this area will have positive impacts throughout the Park.

- **“Why \$3 per person?”**

The fee is consistent with existing walk-in fees at other State Parks.

- **“When will the fee be charged?”**

The walk-in fee will only be collected when lifeguards are on duty. The area will be guarded, weather permitting, from 10 a.m. through 6 p.m. from late June through late August. There will be no fee collected and swimming will not be permitted from 6 p.m. through 10 a.m.

- **“How will the fee be collected?”**

The Park will have Walk-In Park Passes available for sale at the Island Beach State Park Gate House to be purchased in advance of visiting the

Fishermen's Walkway. Those without a Park Pass will be charged \$3 per person daily. Cash and Credit Cards will be accepted at the kiosk located at Fisherman's Walkway.

- **“Can I bring my pet on the beach at A-7?”**

Yes, Visitors can access the beach at A-7 with their pets as long as they are held on a leash, maximum length, six feet and you must clean up after your pet. Pets cannot be in the immediate swimming area.

- **“Why not have season passes for boaters?”**

Season passes are available for boaters who wish to enter the swimming area from Tices Shoal. The State PARK PASS became available for purchase and use at Fishermen's Walkway starting on May 1. The passes are sold only at the Island Beach Gate House which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Park Pass is \$50 (\$75 for Non-residents) for the year and will allow up to six (6) walk in visitors per day.

The pass will be laminated in plastic so it can be affixed to a key chain. The State Park Service will not have the pass available to purchase at the A-7 walkway. Therefore, all Tices Shoal boating visitors who want to purchase the pass must purchase it at the park gatehouse ahead of time. Please call 732-793-0506 with questions.

- **“Will NJ State Park Service Senior and Disability Passes be accepted to enter the new swimming area at A7?”**

Yes. The pass holder and up to five additional walk-in visitors will be admitted without an additional fee upon presentation of the pass to the attendant at Fisherman's Walkway.

- **“What other services is the fee supporting?”**

Aside from lifeguards, the Park operates and maintains existing restrooms at adjacent A-6. The Park keeps the bathrooms clean and free of trash. Although the Park is a “carry in/carry out” facility, the Park removes trash from the beach on a daily basis.

- **“What are the other benefits to having a designated swimming area at A7?”**

The walkways were constructed for fishing access. Over the years, as use of the area has increased, conflicts between swimmers and fishermen have also increased, especially in the summer season. By establishing the bathing area, delineating a fishing area, and having a staff presence, we are confident that potential conflicts will be minimized and all visitors may enjoy the Park.

- **“Where will the money go?”**

All revenue collected by the State Park, including the newly established fee, is deposited into the State Treasury. Those funds will be used to purchase equipment and pay for the staff for the new operation.

- **“Are boats or watercrafts being charged to dock at Tices Shoal?”**

The State Park Service does not regulate the Tices Shoal Area of Barnegat Bay. The area is “State-Owned Riparian Land” and is open to public access in accordance with the Public Trust Doctrine. Any suggestion that “boats will be charged at Tices Shoal” by Island Beach State Park is not accurate.

- **“Won’t boaters simply try to use other unauthorized access points or create new trails to enter the Park?”**

Access to the Park is only allowed at authorized access points. Other possible unauthorized access areas are difficult to traverse, with thick undergrowth of poison ivy and other vines and a large population of ticks. People who attempt to avoid the fee by entering through these unauthorized access areas are subject to immediate removal from the Park and may be assessed monetary penalties. As throughout the State Park system, protection of its natural resources, including vegetation and the dune system, is a priority.

- **“Alcoholic beverages are not permitted”**