

TRAILS OF ISLAND BEACH STATE PARK

Island Beach State Park is a narrow barrier beach that stretches nearly 10 miles between the Atlantic Ocean and Barnegat Bay. With 3,000 acres of sandy beaches, maritime forests, tidal marshes, and sand dunes, the park provides a rich variety of habitats for maritime plants and animals and recreational opportunities for visitors. The trails of Island Beach State Park offer a chance to explore these habitats from the brackish bay to the ocean. You can experience primal habitats, listen to chattering songbirds, watch fiddler crabs, and spot wading shorebirds, and, if you're lucky, marvel at an osprey carrying the catch of the day to its nest. Be aware that insects are very much a part of this ecosystem (especially on the bay side) and while the swallows may enjoy their abundance, you should be prepared with insect repellent, a hat and extra clothing.

Reed's Road Trail

Green • 0.4 miles • Hiking

Easy to moderate • A flat, sandy, wide path leads to bay

Trailhead Half a mile south of the park entrance on the west side. **Reed's Road Trail** offers a chance to see both the human and natural history of Island Beach State Park. As you walk towards Barnegat Bay, you will pass through a coastal thicket and into mature maritime forest with beautiful examples of pitch pine, oaks, and large American hollies. The trail passes the site of the historic Reed Hotel, which hosted artists, fishermen and sportsmen in the late 1800s. A model of the hotel is on display in the #112 Interpretive Center.

Coast Guard Station #110 Trail

Yellow • 0.15 miles • Hiking

Moderate • Loose sand

Trailhead Half a mile south of the park entrance on the east side. **Coast Guard Station Trail** is a short trail through shifting dunes. South of the trail is a former U.S. Coast Guard Station (#110), part of the historic United States Life Saving Service, and the remaining one of three lifesaving stations along this portion of coast. This trail, located across the road from the Reed's Road Trail, begins along the outside of the tall fence.

Aeolium Trail

Red • 0.2 miles • Hiking

Easy to moderate • Loose sand, no beach access

Trailhead 1.1 miles south of the park entrance on east side. **Aeolium Trail**, a short loop, is a good starting point for your visit to Island Beach State Park. The trail wanders through examples of barrier island plant communities and highlights important native plants. This is a great spot to familiarize yourself with common plants seen on other trails in the park.

Tidal Pond Trail

Light green • 0.2 miles (right); 0.1 miles (left) • Hiking

Easy • Grass and firm sand, right branch has uneven surfaces

Trailhead Directly across from the entrance to Ocean Swimming Area 1 (approx. 3.5 miles into the park).

Tidal Pond Trail is a forked trail. The right fork takes you through a young forest of shadbush, bayberry, and eastern red cedar before reaching the bird observation blind. The left fork takes you through a stand of common reed to a lovely view of Barnegat Bay.

Fisherman's Walkway Trail

Orange • 0.3 miles • Hiking

Easy • Fully accessible boardwalk

Trailhead Located at parking area A-7, five miles south of the park entrance. On the east side, **Fisherman's Walkway Trail** is an elevated boardwalk that begins with a ramp that leads through the dune onto the beach. On the west side, the elevated boardwalk leads through forested thicket and ends in a platform at Barnegat Bay.

Cranberry Trail

*Pink • 0.1 miles • Hiking
Easy to moderate • Boardwalk and loose sand*

Trailhead 6.5 miles south of the main gate at parking area A-13. **Cranberry Trail** leads to the dune and beach. A bridge crosses over a small freshwater wetland, where rainwater collects in the hollow between dunes. This creates a soggy environment that is perfect for freshwater wetland plants.

Johnny Allen's Cove Trail

*White • 0.4 miles • Hiking
Easy • Wide, flat, with compact sand*

Trailhead Next to the Interpretive Center, seven miles from park entrance. The east side of **Johnny Allen's Cove Trail** takes you through Island Beach's best example of a coastal thicket. When you exit the coastal thicket, you enter into the secondary dunes. The plants of the secondary dunes are adapted to survive harsh conditions – dehydrating salt spray, harsh winds, and intense sun – and often have adaptations similar to desert plants. The ocean view from the primary dunes is spectacular. The west side of this trail leads to a salt marsh with an osprey nesting platform rising above it. The salt marsh is home to fiddler crabs, mud snails, and small fish including mummichogs and silversides. All are eaten by flounder and striped bass that infiltrate the marsh during high tide.

Spizzle Creek Trail

*Dark yellow • 0.8 miles • Hiking
Easy • Wide, flat trail with sandy patches and some mud*

Trailhead Between parking areas A-19 and A-20, the trail entrance is behind a vehicle gate on the west side. The right fork of **Spizzle Creek Trail** leads to a bird observation blind. The left fork follows a raised path through a salt marsh. At the end of the trail, Barnegat Bay spreads before you. This is an excellent place to watch osprey.

Ocean View Trail

*7.6 miles • Multi-use & motorized
Easy to moderate • Ocean front trail along beach*

Trailhead Trail can be accessed on foot from any marked trail leading through the dunes to the beach. Vehicles require Mobile Sport Fishing Vehicle Permit and must use designated mobile sport fishing entry points. Specific equipment is required. Please visit the park website or call the park office for details. Ocean View Trail is on the beach adjacent to the dunes.

Sedge Islands Water Trails

The Sedge Islands of Island Beach State Park contain one of New Jersey's most productive wildlife habitats. Four water-based kayak/ canoe trails allow for exploration of this unique ecosystem. The trailhead for Buster Islands Trail is the boat-top launch site at parking area A15. The trailhead for Spizzle Creek Bird Blind Trail, Marsh Elder Trail, and Little Bay Trail is the Winter Anchorage Kayak Launch adjacent to parking area A21.

Buster Islands Water Trail

Blue circle blaze • 3 miles • Moderate

Buster Islands Trail heads east into open water to Big Buster Island, around Sedge Island and returns by Inner Buster Island.

Spizzle Creek Water Trail

Green pentagram blaze • 1.5 miles • Easy

Spizzle Creek Trail is a short trail that follows close to land and into Osprey Pond. Good for beginner kayakers.

Marsh Elder Water Trail

Red square blaze • 2.5 miles • Moderate

Marsh Elder Trail heads west into the Sedge Islands and explores the tidal areas of Horsefoot Slough and Marsh Elder Thoroughfare.

Little Bay Water Trail

Pink triangle blaze • 3 miles • Moderate

Little Bay Trail heads southeast into the southern portion of the Sedge Islands. The trail makes a loop through the Snake Ditch and into Little Bay with views of Barnegat Inlet and Lighthouse.

TRAIL SENSE AND SAFETY

Be alert, be careful Parks include natural hazards such as ticks and poison ivy. Horses and bicycles must stay on designated trails or roads; hikers are encouraged to stay on trails.

Kayakers, fishermen, clammers, etc, must adhere to basic water safety guidelines.

Be respectful Please keep off the dunes as they are critical to the ecology of this area and are sensitive to human impacts. Do not feed or harass wildlife.

Tick protection Use insect repellent and wear light-colored clothing; tuck pants into socks and stay on trails, check yourself when you get home, shower, and launder clothes immediately.

Report trail issues to Island Beach Office (732) 793-0506. Emergency numbers: 1-877-WARN-DEP (1-877-927-6337) or 911

Island Beach State Park

PO Box 37 Shore Road
Seaside Park, NJ 08752