

Visitor Services Project
Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Cape Hatteras National Seashore (NS) during July 12-18, 2002. A total of 356 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 263 questionnaires for a 73.8% response rate.
- This report profiles Cape Hatteras NS visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Twenty-eight percent of visitor groups were groups of two, 33% were in groups of six people or more. Sixty-one percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Fifty-five percent of visitors were aged 31-60 years and 25% were aged 15 or younger.
- United States visitors were from Virginia (24%), North Carolina (20%), Ohio (10%) and 29 other states and Washington, D.C. There were too few international visitors to provide reliable data.
- Most visitors (67%) had visited one or more of the Outer Banks Group parks in the past. The most used sources of information about the park were previous visits (58%) and friends/ relatives/word of mouth (39%).
- The most popular activities on this visit and past visits were sunbathing/swimming and visiting historic sites. The three most important reasons for visiting Cape Hatteras NS were 1) lighthouses, 2) swimming and 3) uncrowded/solitude/low population.
- With regard to use, importance and quality of services and facilities, it is important to note both the number and percentage of visitor groups that responded to each question.

Service/facility	Most used	Most important	Best quality
Bodie Island visitor services/ facilities, N=115	Bodie Island Lighthouse—77% Restrooms—65%	Restrooms—95%, N=74 Bodie Island Lighthouse—88%, N=87	Assistance from park staff—97%, N=33 Coquina Beach bathhouse—94%, N=32
Hatteras Island visitor services/facilities, N=166	Cape Hatteras Lighthouse—74% Restrooms—66%	Restrooms—97%, N=106 Assistance from park staff 87%, N=47	Assistance from park staff—93%, N=44 Park brochure/map—88%, N=76
Ocracoke Island visitor services/facilities, N=108	Ocracoke Lighthouse—73% Parking—61%	Restrooms—95%, N=61 Parking—91%, N=66	Assistance from park staff—97%, N=32 Ocracoke Island Visitor Center—89%, N=47

- When asked about crowding, 27% of visitors said they felt "crowded" to "extremely crowded," while 43% of visitors felt "somewhat crowded." Many visitor groups (49%) reported that crowding "detracted from" their park experience. Most (84%) of visitor groups reported that they felt most crowded in the afternoon.
- Most visitors (91%) felt prepared for common safety situations that they encountered in the parks.
- Most visitor groups (94%) rated the overall quality of visitor services at Outer Banks Group parks as "very good" or "good." One visitor group rated the overall quality of visitor services as "very poor."

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit; phone (208) 885-7863 or visit the following website: http://www.psu.uidaho.edu/
