

## WHEN YOU VISIT

Most barrier islands are open to the public for low-impact, recreational day use, such as hiking, bird watching, surf fishing and photography. Camping, campfires, vehicles and pets are prohibited on most islands. Please help protect sensitive habitats and wildlife by observing all visitation policies and seasonal restrictions. Learn more at [exploreourseaside.org](http://exploreourseaside.org).

## VISITATION POLICIES

**Cobb, Metompkin, Mink, Myrtle, Parramore and Smith Islands:** **CLOSED** above high tide line April through Aug.



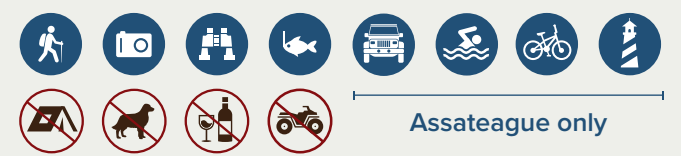
**Wreck Island:** **CLOSED** April 15 through Aug 31.



**Cedar and Hog Islands:** **CLOSED** above high tide line April through August. **BE AWARE:** private inholdings exist and visitors should respect property boundaries.



**Assateague and Assawoman Islands:** Contact Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge for more details or visit: [exploreourseaside.org](http://exploreourseaside.org). Note Assawoman Island is **CLOSED** Mar 15 – Sept. 15.



**Mockhorn Island:** For hunting, camping and other use policies: [dwr.virginia.gov/wma/mockhorn-island](http://dwr.virginia.gov/wma/mockhorn-island)  
**Dawson Shoals and N. Cedar Island :** All visitors, pets and activities must remain outside of posted bird nesting areas. For more information visit [exploreourseaside.org](http://exploreourseaside.org).



**Wallops, Ship Shoal, Little Cobb and Fisherman Islands:** **CLOSED** to the public (guided tours are available on Fisherman Island).

## PROTECTING MIGRATORY BIRDS

Virginia's Seaside is incredibly important for migratory birds throughout the year. The spring and summer months are particularly sensitive times when thousands of pairs are attempting to raise their young throughout the barrier island and marsh habitats. These birds need your help to survive. Please be aware of policies and seasonal restrictions that are in place to protect them. You are visiting but for these birds, the Seaside is home.

The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) designated the Virginia and Maryland barrier islands as a **Site of International Importance** because of their importance to migratory birds.

The National Audubon Society identified the Virginia Barrier Islands as a high-priority **Global Important Bird Area** for the conservation of bird populations.

## SEASIDE BIRD NESTING HABITATS



### Ocean or inlet intertidal zone

Areas below the high tide line are safe for low-impact visitor activities.

Please stay in the **INTERTIDAL ZONE** and **DO NOT WALK** through bird nesting habitats during the breeding season – April through August.



### Berm

Nesting habitat for ground nesters such as terns, skimmers, and shorebirds.



### Dune

Nesting habitat for ground nesters such as shorebirds, gulls, waterfowl, and terns.



### Back dune

Nesting habitat for shorebirds, gulls, waterfowl, pelicans, songbirds, herons, and egrets.



### Mudflat and salt marsh

**Mudflats** are critical feeding habitat for shorebirds and their young. **Salt marsh** provides nesting and feeding habitat for marsh dependent species such as rails and several species of gulls, waterfowl, shorebirds, terns, and songbirds.



### Washover

A flat expanse of beach, created by major storm events, that forms an extension of the berm to the backside of the island. Washovers are important nesting areas for ground nesters such as shorebirds, terns, and skimmers.