



# DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Chris Christie, Governor  
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## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## FREE “OCEAN FUN DAY” SLATED FOR SATURDAY, MAY 21, AT ISLAND BEACH STATE PARK

*FUN AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PART OF FAMILY-ORIENTED EVENT*

**(16/P44) TRENTON** – Island Beach State Park, one of the most popular destinations in the New Jersey State Park System, will kick off its summer event season by partnering with the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium in hosting a free Ocean Fun Day on Saturday, May 21.

The annual event, geared to families and nature lovers, will offer eco-tours of the island, a host of hands-on activities, educational displays, a variety of classes, and exhibits that celebrate the natural wonders of the Jersey Shore. The goal of the Ocean Fun Day is to raise awareness of the need to protect coastal resources in a fun and hands-on way. The event runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



“We’re excited to again provide this unique opportunity for visitors to learn about the fragile coastal ecosystems of an unspoiled barrier island in ways that are fun, exciting and even inspirational,” said Mark Texel, the DEP’s Director of Parks and Forestry. “Island Beach State Park, at nearly 10 miles long, protects the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier island remaining in New Jersey. Island Beach makes for a perfect outdoors classroom on how ocean dynamics create barrier islands and the plants and animals that are adapted to live in this often harsh environment.”

A record number of exhibitors have committed to be a part of this year’s Ocean Fun Day. Events offered this year include coastal crafts, fiddler crab races, eco-tours, workshops, using seines to

net fish and other aquatic life, an energy scavenger hunt, games and prizes, youth fishing clinics, Beachcombing 101, face painting, and sea-creature touch tanks and exhibits.

A second Ocean Fun Day is planned for Sunday, May 22, at the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium's facilities on Sandy Hook. This event will also run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visitors will have an opportunity to visit the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's marine lab.



The events will also feature a "Picture This" photo and caption contest, open to students in grades 3 through 5 and grades 6 through 8.

The students are asked to depict how they conserve energy and natural resources. At either event, visitors can vote on their favorite photo. The winners will receive field trips for their entire class to either Island Beach State Park or Sandy Hook.

Partners in Ocean Fun Day include founding sponsor New Jersey Natural Gas, the Asbury Park Press, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the DEP's Division of Parks and Forestry.

"Each year we look forward to partnering with NJDEP and the staff at Island Beach State Park to host this event. They are truly committed to our state's incredible shoreline and share with us the importance of educating the public about its sustainable use and care," said Claire Antonucci, Executive Director of New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium.

Visitors coming on Saturday to Island Beach State Park for Ocean Fun Day are directed to go to Ocean Bathing Area 1, which is about four miles past the park's gatehouse.

Shaped by storms and tides, Island Beach State Park is one of the few remaining undeveloped barrier beaches on the north Atlantic coast. The park encompasses about 3,000 acres of beaches, dunes, maritime forests, freshwater wetlands and tidal marshes. It is home to the state's largest osprey colony, as well as peregrine falcons, wading birds, shorebirds, waterfowl and songbirds.

The New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium is an affiliation of colleges, universities and other groups dedicated to advancing knowledge and stewardship of New Jersey's marine and coastal environment. NJS GC meets its mission through its innovative research, education and outreach programs.

The events will be held rain or shine.

### **Getting to Ocean Fun Days**

#### **Island Beach State Park**

From Garden State Parkway North or South:

- Take GSP to exit 82.
- Follow Route 37 east to Route 35 south to park entrance.
- Once you enter the park follow the Ocean Fun Days signs.

## Sandy Hook

From Garden State Parkway Heading South:

- Use Exit 117. Take Route 36 east.
- Follow signs to the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreational Area, approximately 12 miles.
- Once you enter the park follow the Ocean Fun Days signs to the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium's headquarters at 22 Magruder Road, within the Fort Hancock Historic District.

From Garden State Parkway Heading North:

- Use Exit 105. Take Route 36 east, approximately 6 miles.
- At the intersection of Ocean Boulevard, turn left (north).
- Continue on Ocean Boulevard for approximately 8 miles.

For more information about NJSGC, visit: [www.njseagrant.org](http://www.njseagrant.org)

For more information about Island Beach State Park, visit:  
[www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/island.html](http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/island.html)

**Photo/Courtesy New Jersey Natural Gas**

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