



**National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Outer Banks Group:**

· Cape Hatteras National  
Seashore  
· Fort Raleigh National  
Historic Site  
· Wright Brothers National  
Memorial

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## **Outer Banks Group News Release**

Release Date: October 17, 2005

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### **NPS Opens Public Scoping for Interim Protected Species Management Strategy**

Through several public scoping opportunities, the National Park Service (NPS) is looking for public input on the development of a Cape Hatteras National Seashore Interim Protected Species Management Strategy (Strategy). This Strategy will be the guiding document for protected species management at the Seashore until the park's Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan is completed in 2008 as currently scheduled.

Public participation is vital to the NPS planning process. Public scoping is an early and open process to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the Strategy and associated Environmental Assessment (EA). The NPS looks forward to receiving input from everyone, particularly on issues identified, concerns you may have, and any ideas for alternatives that will meet the need, purpose, and objectives of this planning process. The comments and concerns gathered during public scoping will be used in the development of the Strategy and EA.

In order to provide for broad public comment, the NPS will be holding three public scoping meetings and accepting comments on-line at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/CAHA> or by direct mailing.

The three public scoping meetings are scheduled on:

- November 1, 2005 from 5:30 – 9:00 p.m. at the Dare County Fessenden Center, 46830 NC12, Buxton, NC.
- November 2, 2005 from 5:30 – 9:00 p.m. at the Wright Brothers National Memorial First Flight Centennial Pavilion, 8 ½ Milepost Hwy. 158, Kill Devil Hills, NC.
- November 3, 2005 from 5:30 – 9:00 p.m. at the City Museum, 801 K Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Each meeting will run as follows; 5:30 – 6:30 sign-in and open house, 6:30 – 7:00 short presentation, 7:00 – 8:00 public hearing, and 8:00 – 9:00 open house.

If you cannot attend the public scoping meetings, you can easily participate by submitting

comments by November 17, 2005 directly on-line on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) web site at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/CAHA>.

Select the Interim Protected Species Management Strategy project, and use the *Submit Your Comments for Public Scoping* link found in the "Documents and Links" section.

If you can not use the internet, you may mail written comments to: Superintendent, Outer Banks Group, 1401 National Park Drive, Manteo, NC 27952

Please include your full name, mailing address, and e-mail address with your comments so that we may add you to our mailing list and provide you with information throughout this planning process. Comments must be received by November 17, 2005.

Following public scoping, the NPS will complete the development of alternatives, analyze impacts of the alternatives, and prepare a draft Strategy and EA for public review. Following analysis and response to public comments on the EA and any revisions needed to the Strategy, and conclusion of consultation with the USFWS regarding the Strategy, a decision will be made and the Strategy implemented in the Spring of 2006.

Updates on the planning process, meeting notices, and documents will be provided as they become available on PEPC at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/CAHA> in the Interim Protected Species Management Strategy/EA project.

Interim Protected Species Management Strategy Project Information (open for public comment).

#### BACKGROUND AND NEED

An Interim Protected Species Management Strategy/EA would meet the following needs until the long-term ORV Management Plan is completed:

- The need for a clear and consistent set of management strategies. The lack of an approved strategy over time has led to inconsistent management of protected species and has created confusion for both the public and the park staff.
- The need for a management strategy on which to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- The need for a management strategy that complies with the ESA, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), NPS management policies, and park enabling legislation, and that avoids adverse effects to protected species.
- The need to immediately address public concerns about species management and recreational use.

#### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES FOR TAKING ACTION

The purpose of taking action at this time is to evaluate and implement strategies to protect sensitive species and provide for recreational use as directed in the enabling legislation, NPS management policies, and other laws and mandates until the long-term ORV Management Plan is developed.

Some of the objectives the NPS hopes to achieve through this planning process and the evaluation of strategies include:

*Management Methodology*

- Establish adaptive interim management practices and procedures that have the ability to respond to changes in the Seashore's dynamic physical and biological environment.
- Establish procedures for prompt and efficient public notification of protected species management actions and the reasons for these actions.

*Civic Engagement*

- Establish an ongoing and meaningful dialogue with the multiple publics interested in and affected by protected species management to ensure development of an implementable strategy.

*Visitor Use and Experience*

- Provide for continued recreational use and access consistent with required management of protected species.
- Increase opportunities for public awareness and understanding of NPS resource management and visitor use policies and responsibilities as they pertain to the Seashore and protected species management.

*Threatened, Endangered, and Other Protected Species*

- Provide threatened, endangered, and other protected species (e.g., state-listed species) and their habitats protection from adverse impacts related to recreational uses as required by laws and policies, such as the MBTA, ESA, and NPS management policies.
- Consult with the USFWS to ensure that NPS management actions comply with the requirements of the ESA.

*Park Operations*

- Provide for effective protected species management while maintaining other park operations.

## ISSUES IDENTIFIED

The following highlights several of the issues identified early on in the planning process:

- *Visitor Use and Experience:* Management of protected species could result in adverse and beneficial changes to visitor use and experience.
- *Economy of Communities within the Seashore:* Management of protected species could affect the local and regional economy.
- *Local Commercial Fishing Activities:* Management of protected species could affect access for commercial fishing.
- *Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species:* Recreational activities at the Seashore could impact federally threatened or endangered species and their habitat, on the beach and soundside of the Seashore. Conflicts between the listed species and recreational use could create direct or indirect losses to the species.
- *Other Sensitive Species:* Habitat for the American oystercatcher and other locally sensitive species, as well as species listed by the State of North Carolina, may be vulnerable to recreational uses.
- *Soundscapes:* Recreational activities at the Seashore could create noise that could impact protected species by altering the natural quiet and sounds of the Seashore.
- *Wetlands:* Human activities in wetland areas could adversely affect wetlands including

moist substrate habitat, ephemeral ponds, and other habitat important to protected species.

- *Coastal Barrier Ecosystem:* Natural processes such as hurricanes and other storm events may create habitat for protected species resulting in conflicts between management of the area as habitat and management of the area for recreation.

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