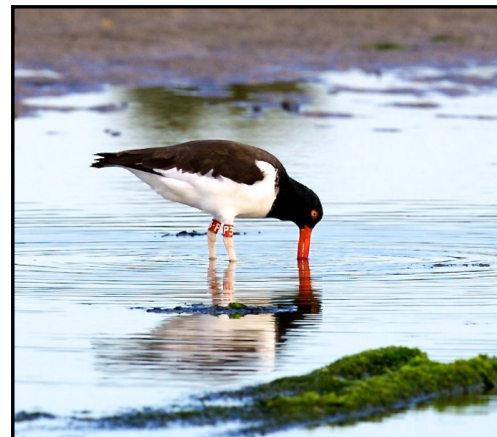


# Water Trail Descriptions

The best way to explore the Sedge Islands Marine Conservation Zone (SIMCZ) water trails is in a kayak. Waverunners and other personal watercraft are not permitted in the SIMCZ. The first three trails start from the Winter Anchorage Launch site at Area 21. You can drop off your boat at the Area 21 launch site but you must park your car in the A-21 parking lot. The Buster Island Trail starts at the less heavily used Area 15 launch site. A bay-side parking lot allows paddlers to leave cars very close to this launch site.

**Be aware that wind, tide, and current cause frequent changes in navigability. Strong wind can make paddling difficult in open areas. At low tide it may be necessary to carry boats across sandbars. Tidal current is often strong in narrow channels. Avoid Oyster Creek Channel and Barnegat Inlet due to heavy boat traffic and fast current. For your comfort you should carry: water, sunscreen, and insect repellent. For your safety you should carry: whistle, compass and cell phone. Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD). GPS points provide aid to navigation.**



American Oystercatcher Ray Halgreen

## GPS Points:

- ① East entrance to Horsefoot Slough: N 39°47' 08.5", W 74° 06' 27.1"
- ② Horsefoot Slough Beach: N 39°47'05.8", W74°07'00.3"
- ③ Entrance to Marsh Elder Thoroughfare: N 39°47' 10.7", W 74°06' 52.1"
- ④ North entrance to Snake Ditch: N 39°47' 02.9", W 74°06' 06.5"
- ⑤ South entrance to Sea Dog Island: N 39°46' 37.8", W 74°06' 09.7"

## Spizzle Creek Bird Blind Trail (1-2 hours; 1.5 miles) ◆

This trail is good for less experienced kayakers. It is short and close to land at all times. Follow the shoreline north turning into Osprey Pond. After you pass in front of the bird blind you will enter a protected area with ponds, natural channels, and mosquito ditches, all of which have a very muddy bottom. This is a dead end, so once you have explored this area you must return by the same route.

## Little Bay Trail (2-3 hours; 3 miles) ▲

This can be a challenging trail due to swift tidal currents in deep, winding channels, but this trail gives you great views of Barnegat Light. Head south from Area-21 launch site keeping to the east of a large sand bar at the north entrance to the Snake Ditch (GPS Point 4). Continue south through Little Bay to the dike. Do not venture into Barnegat Inlet as strong current and boat traffic can be dangerous. Return to Little Bay and turn left to enter the south entrance to the Sea Dog Island Thoroughfare (GPS Point 5). Paddle to a small beach at the western entrance of the Horsefoot Slough (GPS Point 3). Turn right following the Horsefoot Slough to the open water at the eastern entrance (GPS Point 1). At low tide it may be necessary carry boats across the sandbars in several areas.

## Marsh Elder Trail (2-3 hours; 2.5 miles) ■

Head west from Area-21 launch site crossing open water toward the east entrance to Horsefoot Slough (GPS Point 1). At low tide a large sand bar may make it necessary to carry boats to reach deeper water. Follow the Horsefoot Slough west to a small beach just before the Oyster Creek Channel (GPS Point 2). This is one of the few sand beaches in the SIMCZ. Head northeast across the slough into the south entrance to the Marsh Elder Thoroughfare (GPS Point 3). Follow the left shoreline as you approach the McLain house. Head east to return to the launch site.

## Buster Islands Trail (2-3 hours; 3miles) ●

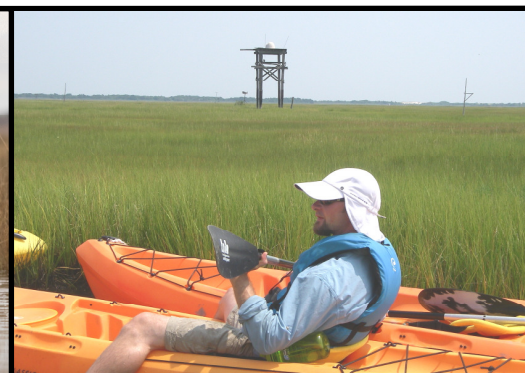
This trail is on open water most of the way. Head south from the Area-15 launch site along the shore for nearly a mile passing to the east side of Inner Buster Island. Turn west and head across the open water into the narrow channel south of Sedge Island. (Note: Landing on Sedge Island is prohibited. The Center is open only to pre-registered groups). Pass outside the poles marking the shellfish research area on the west side of the island before continuing around the island and back toward Big Buster Island as you return to the launch site.



Kayakers enjoying a view of Barnegat Light Katina Tsakiris



Paddling in Winter Richard Koppel



Kayaker with peregrine hacking tower Jim Merritt

## WHAT IS A TIDAL MARSH?

A tidal marsh is one of the most productive areas in the world. One acre of tidal marsh can produce twice the amount of nutrients as our most productive farmland. Two daily tidal cycles circulate plant and animal nutrients, forming a thick rich mud called detritus. This begins an intricate food web that is an important part of our coastal ecology and our quality of life. The richness of the tidal marsh provides habitat for a variety of wildlife. The tidal marsh is essential to all, from single celled organisms to predators, such as the osprey and peregrine falcon.



Juvenile Osprey William C. Vibbert

## OSPREY AND PEREGRINE FALCON

The Sedge Islands Marine Conservation Zone has roughly 30 osprey nesting platforms and a peregrine falcon hacking tower. These man-made structures provide the nesting and rearing sites for these amazing birds. The osprey and peregrine falcon return to this area every year. These birds, along with many other species, have suffered from the loss of critical nesting habitat. The osprey is now listed as a threatened species and the peregrine falcon is an endangered species. Conservation of habitat is one of the major actions essential to the survival of these species.

# Sedge Islands Marine Conservation Zone

## A Guide to a Unique Tidal Marsh Ecosystem

Island Beach State Park  
Ocean County, NJ

### Sedge Islands Marine Conservation Zone

The 1,900 acre Sedge Islands Marine Conservation Zone (SIMCZ) is located at the southern end of Island Beach State Park. Floating buoys and signs along the boundary notify the public that they are entering the SIMCZ. This is one of New Jersey's most productive wildlife habitats because it contains a combination of maritime forest, thicket, and an extensive tidal marsh. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection manages the area to protect it while making it accessible to the public for a variety of recreational uses.

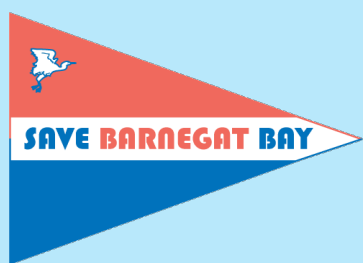
#### Permitted

- ◆ Boating
- ◆ Recreational clamming
- ◆ Recreational crabbing
- ◆ Fishing\*
- ◆ Birding
- ◆ Hunting\*†
- ◆ Kayaking and Stand Up Paddleboarding

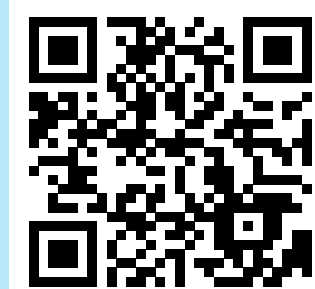
\* NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife regulations apply  
† Except on mainland

#### Prohibited

- ◆ Use of Wave Runners or Personal Water Crafts
- ◆ Violating NO wake areas
- ◆ Approaching Osprey or Peregrine Falcon nest platforms
- ◆ Entering designated bird nesting areas
- ◆ Use of alcohol or illegal drugs



For emergencies call  
**911** or **877-WARNDEP**



Editor: Michael J. Winters 2016  
Executive Director: Britta Wenzel