

CAPE MAY POINT State Park





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TRAILS

TRAILS OF CAPE MAY POINT STATE PARK

Cape May Point State Park’s constantly changing shoreline, dunes, freshwater marsh and ponds, forested uplands and beaches make it a well-known location for walking, hiking and wildlife viewing, especially during the fall bird migration. The park is located on the southern tip of New Jersey where the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay meet. The park’s interpretive center houses a classroom and museum that highlight the area’s natural and historic importance. Visitors climb the 199 steps to the top of Cape May Lighthouse for spectacular views. Six blazed trails lead visitors through the park’s varied habitats. Wildlife can be viewed from observation platforms.

Cattail Trail

Orange • 0.2 miles • Walking/Hiking
Easy dead-end trail • This short spur trail to the pond may be muddy or flooded.

Trailhead: Off Plover Trail. **Cattail Trail** winds through dense stands of invasive plants such as privet, clematis and multiflora rose. There are plans to remove the invasive plants, but in the meantime, they provide habitat for wildlife that prefers dense cover. Cattail Pond is gorgeous but may be difficult to reach due to the vegetation. Please respect the neighbor’s fence at the end of the trail.

Duck Pond Trail

Red • 0.5 miles • Walking, Hiking and Accessible
Easy • Boardwalk trail to ponds

Trailhead: East side of parking lot. **Duck Pond Trail** is wheelchair accessible and offers visitors access to Lighthouse Pond West and East. Each pond has a platform at the water’s edge to view wading birds, ducks and muskrats, as well as the occasional osprey or river otter. In late fall and winter, these freshwater ponds may be covered with many species of wintering ducks. In July and August, the marsh is covered in white and pink

crimson-eyed rose mallow (a native wild hibiscus). The woodlands along the trail are being managed to control invasive plants and hundreds of native trees have been planted. Watch for black rat snakes, rabbits and box turtles. Birding highlights include common yellowthroat, yellow warbler, white-eyed vireo and yellow-breasted chat. In late summer and fall, the trail edges are a riot of colorful wildflowers and butterflies. Watch your step, praying mantis often bask right on the trail in the fall.

Hibiscus Trail

Pink – 0.1 miles – Walking/Hiking
Easy • Trail leading to Lighthouse Pond


Trailhead: Off Duck Pond Trail. **Hibiscus Trail** is a short boardwalk path leading to one of the most beautiful lighthouse views in the park. In late July and early August, the view is spectacular due to thousands of white (and occasionally pink) native hibiscus. During the summer osprey fish in the pond while late fall brings hundreds of ducks including the rare Eurasian widgeon.

Monarch Trail

Yellow • 1.2 miles • Walking/Hiking
Easy • Loop trail through center of park

Trailhead East side of parking lot. Start on Duck Pond Trail. Go right at the first fork. **Monarch Trail** splits off at the second fork. The trail is partially boardwalk. Monarch Trail offers hikers the opportunity to see different habitats, including a reforestation area, a freshwater marsh, coastal dunes and the beach. Monarch butterflies migrate through here in the fall. Birding highlights include indigo bunting and blue





CAPE MAY POINT STATE PARK
305 Lighthouse Ave.
Cape May Point, NJ 08212
609-884-2159

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TRAIL SENSE AND SAFETY

Trail Markings: Official trails are marked with colored blazes on trees. For your safety and habitat protection, please stay on the trails and do not alter trail markings or create new trails. Be aware of changing trail conditions.

Be respectful: Foot traffic only. No bikes, skateboards or pets on trails. Please keep off dunes as they protect the fragile freshwater wetlands from coastal flooding. Stay out of roped-off beach nesting areas and don't feed or harass wildlife. Swimming is not permitted.

Be aware: The trails are utilized for a variety of activities, including jogging, strolling and painting. **Preparations:** Consider bringing water, snacks, sunscreen, insect repellent and a hat. Dress for the weather. Tell someone where you plan to go and when you expect to return.

Pets: Pets are NOT permitted on the trails. Pets must always be on a leash no longer than six feet in length and under the control of the owner at all times. Please clean up after your pets.

Keep It Clean and Green: Bring a bag or two and carry your trash out with you. Trash cans are not provided. Don't forget to recycle!

Tick Protection: Bring insect repellent, wear light-colored clothing, tuck pants into socks, stay on trails, check yourself thoroughly, shower and launder clothes immediately.

Report issues to the park 609-884-2159.

Emergency Numbers: 1-877-WARN-DEP (1-877-927-6337) or 911



Raptor Trail
Purple – 0.2 miles – Walking/Hiking
Easy • Connector trail from Seagrove Ave. to the Monarch Trail.
Trailhead: Seagrove Ave. **Raptor Trail** is an old gravel farm road offering views of reforestation in progress performed by Cape May Point State Park and NJ Audubon staff and volunteers. Red-tailed hawks and osprey are regularly seen perched in the larger trees that have been saved from being smothered by invasive vines. Deer and wild turkey can regularly be seen in the old hay field. The Cape May Raptor Banding Association captures and bands hawks and an occasional golden eagle in the field every fall. Please respect closed areas and obey posted notices.

on the beach. Least terns and oystercatchers may also nest here. During the fall and winter, visitors may return behind the sand dunes while watching waterfowl in Shallow Pond or return on the beach and view the World War II Gun Battery. The end of Plover Trail is closed in the spring and summer for beach nesting birds so visitors must retrace their steps and exit via Monarch Trail. The neighboring trails of the Cape May Migratory Bird Refuge/Nature Conservancy Property can be accessed near the end of Plover Trail.



grosbeak. White-tailed deer and wild turkey may be seen in the reforestation area. Red-tailed hawks hunt here in the winter. A service road in the reforestation area adds an extra loop in the trail, allowing additional wildlife viewing opportunities. Al's Pond, at the edge of an oak/hickory grove, has a viewing platform to watch for waterfowl. Hikers may return behind the sand dunes while watching waterfowl in Shallow Pond or return on the beach to view the World War II Gun Battery. Showy, black and white oystercatchers are often seen on the beach in summer.

Plover Trail

Blue • 1.5 miles • Walking/Hiking
Easy • Long loop trail around ponds and beach dunes

Trailhead: East side of parking lot. Start on Duck Pond Trail, go right at the first fork and then take Monarch Trail at the second fork. The trail is partially boardwalk. **Plover Trail** splits off at Al's Pond. Plover Trail offers a longer hike along the beach and coastal dune and was named for the endangered piping plovers that occasionally nest



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