



DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

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Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor
Bob Martin, Commissioner



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW SOUTHERN SWIMMING AREA AT ISLAND BEACH STATE PARK ANNOUNCED

LIFEGUARD PROTECTION AVAILABLE THIS SUMMER NEAR POPULAR A-7 AREA

(15/P32) TRENTON – In another effort to make visits to New Jersey’s state parks a safer and more enjoyable experience, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin announced today the start of a new, lifeguarded swimming area near the popular A-7 section of the park for the summer season.

Lifeguard protection for swimmers and waders has traditionally been located behind the main pavilions at Ocean Bathing Areas 1 and 2. The new southern swimming area will be located about four miles beyond the entrance to the park, just to the north of the recently reconstructed Fisherman’s Walkway access point. It will accommodate all visitors, including those who arrive by boat at Tices Shoal and enter the park from a new designated entry point on the west side of the walkway.

Swimming at all other unguarded sections of Island Beach State Park remains prohibited.

“The safety of our park visitors is our first priority,” said Richard Boornazian, DEP Assistant Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources. “Emergencies in unguarded sections of the park often results in compromised lifeguard resources at our main pavilion areas where swimming is permitted. So providing this additional protection at the popular A-7 section will benefit all users of the park.”

The designation of a new southern swimming area will also give anglers who traditionally enter at Fisherman’s Walkway a more defined area to fish, without the intrusion of swimmers. These anglers, who use the walkway to enter the beach on foot or by wheelchair, will have a delineated area open exclusively for fishing south of the swimming area. Fishing will be permitted in the swimming area when lifeguards are not on duty.

Mobile sport fishing access at A-7 will also remain and not be affected by the swimming area. Those vehicles must park south of the pedestrian anglers fishing section.

“Our goal is to provide safe and equitable access to all of our visitors,” said Island Beach State Park manager Ray Bukowski. “The addition of this new swimming area will not only create a safe haven for swimmers with some of the best lifeguards at the Jersey Shore, but will also eliminate any conflicting use of distinct areas of the park.”

Once again, summer gate entry fees (\$6 New Jersey resident/\$12 non-resident on weekdays; \$10 New Jersey resident/\$20 non-resident on weekends and holidays) remain unchanged.

A \$3 walk-in fee (free for children under 3-years old) will be assessed for those who enter the park at Fisherman's Walkway adjacent to Tices Shoal while lifeguards are on duty. Access to the park by boat is only permitted at the Fisherman's Walkway bayside access. The State Park Service does not maintain or regulate Tices Shoal, but does regulate access and use of Island Beach State Park and its resources.

Island Beach State Park is one of the crown jewels of the state park system and one of the most popular summer destinations in all of New Jersey. Shaped by storms and tides, the park is a narrow barrier island stretching for 10 miles between the ocean and Barnegat Bay. It is one of New Jersey's last significant remnants of a barrier island ecosystem and is one of the few remaining undeveloped barrier beaches on the north Atlantic coast.

Since Superstorm Sandy hit in October, 2012, Island Beach State Park has seen the repair or restoration of the boardwalks and the lifeguard station at Ocean Bathing Area 1, the gatehouse and maintenance buildings within the park.

A major repair of the Sandy-damaged north jetty at Barnegat Inlet, at the southern tip of the park, was completed last October. A state-funded dune replenishment project to bolster a vulnerable section of the northern most section of the beach was completed in 2013.

For more on the restoration of Fisherman's Walkway, visit:

http://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2015/15_0011.htm

For more on Island Beach State Park, visit:

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/island.html>

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