

## *Might we suggest...*

There's **PLENTY TO DO** during your visit to Bald Head Island. From kayaking in the creeks to exploring the island's maritime history to napping the day away under a beach umbrella, you can find an activity that satisfies your adventurous cravings or just lets you unwind. Read on to learn what Bald Head Island holds for you and start planning your vacation today.



# OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

## **Explore the Beaches**

Bald Head Island's beautiful beaches beg you to build sandcastles, stroll, take a swim or just unwind. With 14 miles of pristine beaches, you shouldn't have a problem finding your perfect spot.

South Beach features long stretches of sand and calmer waters, perfect for walking and spending the day with the family. East Beach is ideal for boogie boarding and surfing. Can't-miss spots include Cape Fear Point, where Frying Pan Shoals extends 30 miles offshore, and the wide stretch of sand where West Beach meets South Beach, a great area for beachcombing.

Public beach access points are plentiful, but please note that the island does not offer public restroom facilities near the beach. If you



have a Shoals Club membership, use their beach access and pick up a towel, umbrella and chair on your way to the beach. Indoor and outdoor shower facilities and an indoor changing area and restroom are also available here.

If you're looking for a different type of beach activity, try slacklining with the folks from Coastal Urge. Slacklining is a practice in balance that uses flat nylon webbing tensioned between two anchor points. Unlike tightropes, slacklines are typically low to the ground. Participants can balance and walk on the line, and with some practice perform tricks.

Beach equipment rentals, including umbrellas, chairs and beach games like bocce, croquet and bean bag toss, are available through Riverside Adventure Company on a daily and weeklong basis. Beach & Baby Equipment Rental also offers beach rentals including bocce ball sets, beach carts, chairs and tents. Island Hardware rents chairs and umbrellas.

## **Ride a Bike**

The island's gentle coastal terrain offers bicyclists an easy pedal, but with more than 15 miles of roadway to ride, more experienced cyclists can get their fill too.

Bike rentals by the hour, day or week are available through two island outlets: Coastal Urge and Riverside Adventure Company.

Coastal Urge's beach cruisers come with a basket, perfect for toting your towel to the beach. Fitness bikes, tandem bikes, kids' bikes, trailers and baby joggers are also available. Stop by their shop along Maritime Way or have a bike delivered to your home. Coastal Urge is also a full-service bicycle shop, offering repairs and parts from a certified bike tech.

Riverside Adventure Company, located just steps away from the ferry landing, rents single and multi-speed beach cruisers, tandem and adult trikes and children's bikes (with training wheels available if you need them), as well as bikes with baby seats and baby trailers.

If you want something a little different, try a Pedego electric bike. These battery-powered bikes can reach cruising speed with the twist of a wrist, perfect for tackling a hill or just taking it easy. Pedego bikes are found at Riverside Adventure Company.

When you're touring the island on your bike, remember two things: always wear a helmet, and be sure to pull over to the right side of the road to allow carts and trams to pass.

## **Take a Hike**

What better way to explore Bald Head Island's environments than with a hike through the maritime forest, Middle Island or Bluff Island? Hikes vary from self-guided trails to tours led by naturalists from the Bald Head Island Conservancy and outdoorsmen (and women) from the Sail Shop.

On Federal Road near the Maritime Market, the M. Kent Mitchell Nature Trail provides nearly 360° views of the marsh. Markers on the trail identify the flora. While you're on the trail, if you're still enough, a few of the bolder fiddler crabs may come out of their holes to investigate. Even if you're just passing through, look for them at the base of the marsh grass where you'll see more than one scurry into its hole.

The Bald Head Woods Maritime Forest Preserve offers several trailheads along either side of Federal Road. Trails range from easy to moderate and lead you through the woods, beneath an enchanting canopy of trees. Be sure to check out the Timmons Oak, one of the largest live oaks on Bald Head Island. And be sure to wear bug spray.

The Bald Head Island Conservancy offers several organized hikes and nature walks to give visitors a chance to learn about the importance of the maritime forest and explore it alongside an experienced naturalist. All of the Conservancy's hikes are family-friendly and are offered throughout the year.

On the Bluff Island Hike, offered by the Sail Shop, you're guaranteed a day of adventure. Groups access Bluff Island via kayak or skiff, then spend time exploring the "wilds" of Bluff and Kim Islands. Be sure to bring your camera and binoculars as the views on Cape Creek are unparalleled.





## ***Kayak the Creeks***

Imagine gliding through the creek, as silent as the grass around you, coming within feet of egrets and herons, or hearing the call of an osprey circling overhead. The creeks on Bald Head Island are easily accessed by kayak and canoe and experienced naturalists and expert guides can show you the ropes. Even if you've never dipped a paddle in the water, you'll learn to love experiencing nature like this.

The Bald Head Island Conservancy offers guided kayak and canoe tours for individuals and small groups. These tours are perfect for any age or skill level and the Conservancy's expert naturalists can help identify all of the flora and fauna you see (and trust us, you'll see a lot).

The Sail Shop's fleet of kayaks and canoes fill the marsh on any given day. Their guides know their way through the creeks and can help beginner kayakers get started. Self-guided tours are also available. Kayak trips with the Sail Shop include paddles on Bald Head, Fishing and No Name Creeks, and some of their most popular tours are at sunset or under a rising full moon.

## ***Sail Away***

Experience the thrill of sailing during your visit, whether you're new to this sport or a seasoned sailor. The Sail Shop offers sailing experiences for any skill level.

For kids, learning to sail on the creek in one of the Opti Prams will be a memory they'll never forget. More experienced youth may want to try sailing on the river in one of the 420s, a larger, but still manageable, sailboat designed to help young sailors reach their next skill level.

Two 26' J-80 Olympic-class sailboats, *Jive* and *Joyride*, are ideal for adult instruction from the basics up to certification through US Sailing.

For a more relaxed, introductory experience, try one of the Fun Sails aboard *Jive* or *Joyride*. An instructor will take you and up to four others for a two-hour tour of the Cape Fear River and along South Beach for views of the island seen by few other visitors.

Memberships in the Bald Head Island Sailing Club are available on a temporary or annual basis, allowing experienced sailors to reserve boats for use during their stay.

## ***Try Standup Paddleboarding***

One of the island's most beautiful and unspoiled environments is the marsh with its miles of winding creeks, and standup paddleboarding (SUP) is one of the best ways to discover its secrets.

SUP is a relatively new sport that's gaining converts with every trip through the marsh. Paddlers use large boards resembling surfboards and a paddle to maneuver. There's a learning curve to standing on the board and gaining balance, but it's fairly quick to master, making this sport popular with all ages and degrees of experience with water sports.

Once you're up and paddling there's plenty to explore. Try Lighthouse Creek, an easy loop that puts you in the shadow of Old Baldy and gives you a chance to get your feet under you. For a longer paddle, follow

Bald Head Creek to the boathouse that used to serve as a supply point and storage building for the lighthouses and U.S. Lifesaving Service Station on the island.

When you have the feel for the sport and want more of a challenge, take your board out to West Beach, south of the marina entrance, to test your skill against some small, but fun, waves. Learning to keep your balance in the pitching seas will take a little time, so expect to get wet, but once you have it, get close to shore and try to ride a wave in.

And if you're a fisherman, don't feel left out; join the growing SUP fishing community with one of the specialized boards designed with fishing in mind. Casting a line and reeling in a fish are a challenge anyway, but on a paddleboard, they're an adventure.

Coastal Urge is your headquarters for all things SUP on Bald Head Island—rentals, guided excursions and instructional sessions take place at the Board Room, located in the harbor. Paddleboards are available for daily or weekly rental and Coastal Urge will deliver them to your house and provide basic instructions there.



## ***Fly High on a Kiteboard***

If skimming across the surf, shooting over the lip of a wave and catching some air, all while harnessed to a giant kite, sounds like fun, then Bald Head Island has the perfect thing for you—kiteboarding.

Coastal Urge's kiteboarding lessons are ideal for those new to the sport. Start with a 90-minute lesson on land, where you learn flying techniques with a trainer kite, then graduate up to Level 1 lessons that will teach you to launch your board and get you on the water. Level 2 teaches board skills and riding techniques. Customized coaching is available for advanced riders. All lessons include rental of required equipment.

For those who want to experience the thrill of kiteboarding on land, Coastal Urge also offers land traction kiting lessons. A traction kite

can pull you across the sand and teach you the basics of large kite maneuvering. Traction kites are suitable for all ages.

New for 2012, Coastal Urge is adding windsurfing lessons and rentals to the adventure lineup. Windsurfing is similar to SUP, but with a sail attached to the board. Be one of the first to try this activity on Bald Head Island.

## ***Hang Ten***

Did you know that the North Carolina coast offers some of the best surfing on the Eastern Seaboard? Bring your board or rent a long or short board from the Sail Shop and catch some waves on East Beach, the best spot on the island for surfing. Boogie boards are also available.



Always wanted to try surfing but don't know where to start? The Sail Shop's Surf Camp provides group and private instruction that will have you "dropping in" on your first lesson.

## ***Go Fish***

Fishing on the island can take you from tuna fishing offshore to reeling in red drum in the creeks to bringing home a flounder hooked in the surf.

From the shore, flounder, red drum, blue fish, mullet, pompano and more wait to be caught. On the creeks you'll find speckled trout, grey trout, flounder, red drum, blue fish and spots. Offshore fishing trips can put you on blue fish, grouper, mackerel, tuna and even some sailfish. A variety of outfitters and guides provide boats and gear and can pick you up in the harbor.

Both the Bald Head Island Conservancy and the Sail Shop offer instruction, so if you're new to fishing or just want to know where to go, they can help put you on the fish.

The Conservancy's Fishing Bald Head Island program offers tips, techniques and tricks for fishing enthusiasts, and the Thad Wester Fishing School draws crowds every fall for instruction from expert fishermen.

The Sail Shop's fishing programs are designed to get you started and keep you hooked on the sport. Surf fishing along East and South Beaches gives beginners a great introduction to fishing, while more experienced fishing enthusiasts will enjoy the challenge of exploring Bald Head and Cape Creeks, either in a kayak, canoe or flat-bottom creek skiff.

Please note that a valid North Carolina fishing license is required for all persons over 16. Many charter boats carry blanket licenses that allow you to fish from the boat, but to fish on your own, you'll need to purchase a fishing license. Licenses are available online at [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org).

## ***Discover Geocaching***

Want a family-friendly outdoor game that's one part treasure hunt and one part island tour? Try your hand at geocaching. In geocaching you use a GPS-enabled device to track down a box or "cache" hidden at a set of coordinates. Caches range in size from film canisters to larger boxes and contain a sign-in sheet and "treasures" like toys, key chains, figurines and even trackable items. You can go to [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com), create an account and upload the dozen geocaches hidden on Bald Head Island to your phone.

The Bald Head Island Conservancy has a Geocaching and Letterboxing (a cousin to geocaching) program that includes the use of a GPS unit. Riverside Adventure Company offers a GPS Scavenger Hunt that sends you around the island to a preprogrammed series of coordinates. Prizes are awarded weekly for the most accurate answers.

## ***Walk with the Sea Turtles***

Did you know that scores of loggerhead sea turtles return to Bald Head Island each summer to lay their eggs? The Bald Head Island Conservancy is dedicated to protecting these amazing creatures and their Turtle Walk program gives you the chance to experience them close up.

Turtle Walks begin with a brief classroom presentation, after which Conservancy turtle interns take you to the beach for a lesson in beach biology while you wait to hear from one of the Turtle Patrols. When they've located a nesting turtle, the group heads off to watch the turtle lay her nest. Not every group sees a giant loggerhead turtle lay her clutch of eggs, but if you're lucky enough to see it, you'll not soon forget it.

Turtle Walks start around the first week of June and run nightly through the first week of August. The Conservancy focuses on nesting mothers during this time, but switches to nest monitoring from mid-August through late September.





Volunteer nest monitors—often Bald Head Island residents—watch nests 24 hours a day, seven days a week as they draw close to hatching. They're watching for the nest to "boil," where the sand above the eggs churns and moves as the turtle hatchlings dig their way out. Nest monitors and Conservancy staff keep predators away from the hatchlings and help them out to sea.

Seeing a nesting sea turtle or watching a nest boil and release a hundred turtle hatchlings are once-in-a-lifetime experiences, so be sure to become a member of the Conservancy and participate in a Turtle Walk during your stay on Bald Head Island.

## HISTORIC SITES AND TOURS

### ***Take a Historic Island Tour***

Did you know that Bald Head Island was home to a British fort and hospital in the Revolutionary War? That during the Civil War several Confederate gun emplacements helped secure the mouth of the river? That in the early 1900s visitors came to the island to hunt wild pigs?

Find out the details of these stories and more on a Historic Tour from the Old Baldy Foundation. The tour gives you a glimpse into the history of Bald Head Island from its first appearance on maps in the 1500s to the Cape Fear Light in the 1950s to the development of the island in the 1980s.

Tours originate on the island at the ferry terminal in the harbor (for on-island guests) and from Deep Point Marina (for day visitors). Each lasts approximately 1.5 hours. On your tour try to figure out which road on the island used to be a railroad bed where lighthouse keepers and U.S. Lifesaving Servicemen used rail cars to haul supplies.

### ***Climb Old Baldy and Visit the Smith Island Museum***

One of the prettiest sights on Bald Head Island is Old Baldy rising above the trees, looking out over the sea, marsh and harbor, and greeting you when you arrive on the ferry. Did you know you can climb to the top and enjoy the view from above?

Old Baldy, North Carolina's oldest standing lighthouse and one of three that once graced Bald Head Island, is only a short walk from the ferry landing. Admission to the Smith Island Museum of History allows you to climb Old Baldy's 108 steps for an incomparable view of the island. While you're there, take a look at the artifacts in the Smith Island Museum and learn more about Bald Head Island's seafaring history or pick up a souvenir in the gift shop.

For those wanting to delve deeper into Bald Head Island's past, the Smith Island Museum offers self-guided audio tours.

### ***Walk with Ghosts***

Have you seen a ghostly figure walking at the edge of the marsh at night? It might be an apparition of Theodosia Burr or it may be one of the guides on the Sail Shop's Ghost Walk.

This family-friendly ghost experience comes in two flavors—scary and really scary—but don't be afraid to bring the kids, as they'll love knowing the secrets and lore of Bald Head Island's ghosts. Tours last about two hours and take you through more than 350 years of island history, introducing you to the tales of lighthouse keepers and life savers, pirates and river pilots, that make up Bald Head Island legend.

The Enchanted Island Treasure Hunt and Story Hour is new in 2012. Conducted by the Sail Shop's troupe of professional actors and performers, the program allows children from the ages of 5-12 to piece together treasure map clues, cross swords with seafaring pirates, and dig for gold along the enchanted cove of North Beach.

Ghost Walks and the Treasure Hunt take place regularly throughout the summer—be sure to call for the schedule and to reserve your spot.



## SPORTS AND RECREATION

### ***Hit the Links***

The golf course at the Bald Head Island Club is, without a doubt, one of the most beautiful in the Southeast. The George Cobb-designed course winds through the forest, under the eye of Old Baldy, and out onto the dune ridge where a 180° view of the ocean greets you for the final holes. In 2010 the course was renovated by Tim Cate, and includes redesigned bunkers, expanded fairways and the widespread use of native plants in the landscaping.

The course has a high slope rating—143-115 for the men's tees, 144-118 for women's—and the ocean breeze can be tricky, but the beauty and challenge of the course will make for a fun day. A downloadable yardage map showing a view of each hole is available on the Bald Head Island Club website at [www.bhiclub.net](http://www.bhiclub.net). Can't miss holes include Nos. 6 and 7, where Old Baldy watches over the course, and 16, a par three set high on the dune ridge with sweeping ocean views.



An on-site practice facility provides a space where golfers can warm up, and PGA professionals on staff can give lessons to youth and adults of all skill levels. A clubhouse that offers men's and women's golf apparel, golf equipment and shoes, as well as club fitting and re-gripping services, is open year-round. Club rentals are also available for a fee.

Golfers must have a temporary or full membership or be the guest of a member to enjoy golf privileges. A "Stay and Play" package is also available, giving you discounted accommodations and unlimited access to the course for the length of your stay on Bald Head Island.

### ***Try Your Hand at Croquet***

The championship croquet greensward at the Bald Head Island Club regularly hosts United States Croquet Association tournaments and is the home greensward of several of the nation's top players. Don't let this scare you off; croquet at the Bald Head Island Club is open to beginners as well as seasoned veterans.

If you've never played or just want to hone your skills, lessons and clinics are available and can be tailored to your skill level.

All-white attire is required, although light-colored (tan) attire is permissible for guests. Check with the staff in the Golf Shop for availability, to arrange lessons, sign up for a clinic or to rent equipment.

### ***Tennis, Anyone?***

The four courts at the Bald Head Island Club's Tennis Center were resurfaced in 2009 with MondoTen, a rubberized coating that's easy on the joints but doesn't impact the spin of the ball.

During the summer season, daily clinics, social activities, private lessons and programs for children 3 and up are available with one of the United States Professional Tennis Association pros.

A Tennis Pro Shop, located near the pool, features men's and women's apparel, Babolat tennis racquets, balls and accessories, and offers racquet stringing services. Hours for the tennis courts and pro shop vary by season.

### ***Take a Dip in the Pool***

Swimming in the ocean is great, but sometimes a pool is what you need. On Bald Head Island you'll find two pools—one at the Bald Head Island Club, and one at the Shoals Club.

At the Shoals Club, a lap pool overlooks a shallow children's pool and fountain area. Poolside food and beverage service is available from the Sandbar Grille. Towels, showers, changing areas and restrooms are available. An adjacent beach volleyball court and bocce ball court are also available. The Shoals Club staff offers water aerobics, water Zumba and parent/tot swimming lessons. The Shoals Club pools are open to members, guests and temporary members only. The pools are closed November through March, and hours vary by season.

The Bald Head Island Club's heated 25-meter pool includes a slide for children 10 and under, showers, shaded poolside seating, towels, an adjacent restaurant, playground and beach volleyball court. Bald Head Island Club membership is required to use the facility. The pool is open from April to October. Daily lap swim times allow swimmers to get their laps in, and water aerobics classes held three days a week provide a great, low-impact workout. Pool hours vary by the season.

## JUST FOR KIDS

### ***Camps and Recreation***

The Bald Head Island Conservancy conducts a wide range of outstanding children's camps throughout the summer.

Camp Pollywog, a camp for children age 4 through rising 1st graders, gives kids a chance to catch bugs and critters, hold snakes and make island-oriented arts and crafts. For rising 2nd-6th graders who want to get out and experience nature on Bald Head Island, Conservancy Camp is perfect. Kayaking, nature hikes, crabbing and shell collecting are only a few of the activities available. Kids will learn about sea turtles, plant and animal identification and Bald Head Island's unique ecosystem.

C-Patrol gives tweens and teens age 11-14 a great way to get involved with the Conservancy's efforts to protect Bald Head Island. Activities vary but have included bird watching adventures, kayaking the creeks





# MARTHANNA YATER PHOTOGRAPHY

WWW.MARTHANNAYATER.COM

MARTHANNA@MARTHANNAYATER.COM | 919 489 3321

and maritime forest exploration. See page 107 for a day in the life of C-Patrol campers.

The Shoals Club's kids' programming varies daily, but staffers offer a full week of activities including a day camp, kids' night out, movie nights, family scavenger hunts, arts and crafts (like the always-popular Tie Dye events), and daily games on the pool deck and in the water.

The Bald Head Island Club's programming also varies based on season and day. Program offerings include a kids' day camp, junior golf play day, family craft night and even Parents' Night Out, where kids are treated to an evening filled with swimming, fun and pizza with Club staff while the parents enjoy an evening to themselves.

## ***Nature Programs***

In addition to hikes, kayaking trips and birding adventures, the Bald Head Island Conservancy offers a wide range of kid and family-friendly programs.

Sea Turtle Patrol lets you ride along with Conservancy staff or interns as they patrol the beach for nesting sea turtles. On the Wildlife Patrol, you'll join Conservancy staff or interns to get an up-close-and-personal look at conservation efforts involving American alligators. Participation is limited to two people per patrol, so reserve your spot early; these are must-have experiences for nature lovers.

You can join Conservancy staff at the Village Creek Access on North Bald Head Wynd to learn about crabbing and cast netting. Crab lines, bait, cast nets, tips and tricks, and a lesson in the importance of marsh ecology are included.

Explore the darker side of Bald Head Island with the Bald Head After Dark program and learn about active nightlife on the island—bats, frogs, toads, alligators, fireflies and more.

Other programs offered by the Conservancy include Geocaching and Letterboxing, Beachcombing Biology, ECO-Crafts, Mythbusters: Bald Head Edition and more. Hours, prices and availability vary. 🌿

**FIND CONTACT INFORMATION  
FOR THE OUTLETS LISTED HERE  
IN THE ISLAND PHONE AND  
WEB DIRECTORY ON PAGE 123.**