

Rules & Tips For Visitors

Permuda Island Reserve
ONSLOW COUNTY, NC



- For the most up to date rules and guidance**
visit: deq.nc.gov/reserve-rules
- The reserve is open to visitors year round.
 - Visit at your own risk. The site is remote and conditions can include natural hazards such as biting insects, poisonous plants, and venomous snakes.
 - Off-leash pets are prohibited.
 - Fires, fireworks, target shooting, nudity, and camping are prohibited.
 - Hunting is allowed per state and local hunting rules.
 - Producing noise that is disruptive to wildlife or other visitors is prohibited.
 - Removal or disturbance of plants, animals, fungi, or cultural resources is prohibited.
 - Littering is prohibited. Leaving any personal property unattended within the boundaries longer than 24 hours is prohibited.
 - Written authorization is required for organized events, commercial activities, and other special activities.

North Carolina
Coastal Reserve & National
Estuarine Research Reserve

deq.nc.gov/ncreserve



The Permuda Island Reserve is managed by the N.C. Division of Coastal Management to protect the ecosystems for research, education, and compatible traditional uses. Support from the N.C. Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the N.C. Coastal Federation for the protection of the site is gratefully acknowledged.

The North Carolina Coastal Reserve & National Estuarine Research Reserve is a part of the N.C. Division of Coastal Management, a division of the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality.



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This natural area is one of 10 sites that make up the N.C. Coastal Reserve & National Estuarine Research Reserve. Preservation of the Permuda Island Reserve allows this coastal ecosystem to be available as a natural outdoor laboratory where scientists, students and the general public can learn about coastal processes, functions, and influences that shape and sustain the coastal area. Traditional uses, including recreation or organisms or interfere with archaeological elements or research and educational activities.

Purpose of the Reserve

Permuda Island was acquired by the state in 1987 using funds from the state and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The state acquired fee simple title to the island from the N.C. Chapter of The Nature Conservancy that purchased Permuda Island from a private property owner. Preservation of the island concluded a lengthy public debate pitting development interests versus local conservationists and fishermen.

Creation of the Reserve

The Permuda Island Reserve encompasses 63 acres of subtidal flats, tidal marshes, and shrub thickets surrounded by the rich estuarine waters of Stump Sound. The island is of national archaeological significance because it contains remains from various periods of early habitation by American Indians. The island was designated as a significant coastal archaeological resource Area of Environmental Concern by the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission in 1985.

Natural and Archaeological Features

Wildlife:

Various species of snakes, raccoons, opossums, marsh rabbits, cotton rats, river otters, American oystercatchers, egrets, painted buntings, and numerous other resident and migratory bird species.

Habitat:

Subtidal flats, tidal marshes, shrub thickets, and successional areas

Facilities:

There are no designated trails, public restrooms, or facilities available at the Permuda Island Reserve.

Guidance:

It is prohibited to remove or disturb archaeological resources, including pottery shards.

Access:

Access is by boat only. Wildlife and habitats can be best enjoyed by shallow-draft vessels such as canoes or kayaks.

Visitor Information

How to Find Us



The Permuda Island Reserve is situated in Stump Sound between Topsail Island and the mainland town of Holly Ridge. Permuda Island is only accessible by boat. Boating around the island by kayak or canoe rather than landing is the best way to enjoy the site. Various public and private boat ramps are found along the sound side of Topsail Island as well as the mainland shoreline.

Permuda Island Reserve

Unique Features

A major portion of the upland area of Permuda Island has been either farmed or disturbed in the past, yet typical estuarine and barrier island plant communities are found along its periphery.

Physical Setting

Permuda Island is situated on the sound side of Topsail Island and across from the town of Holly Ridge on the mainland.

Permuda is thought to represent a remnant of a former barrier island that was gradually separated from the ocean by the geological development of Topsail Island.

Now surrounded by the estuarine waters of Stump Sound, the site is protected from high energy ocean waves.

Stump Sound is designated as an Outstanding Resource Water by the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality to maintain the high water quality of the sound and important shellfish resources.

Many shellfish leases are found in Stump Sound and adjacent to the site.

Upland Habitats

The shrub thicket community consists of clumps of stunted trees, shrubs, and vines such as live oak, red cedar, yaupon, silverling, and greenbrier.

The central portion of the island contains a series of former agriculture fields partitioned by strands of shrub thicket.

Within the old agricultural fields, broomsedge, dogfennel, aster, goldenrod, and Mexican Tea can be found.

Salt Marsh

Lunar tides flood the intertidal salt marshes twice each day. Supratidal marshes remain above water except during occasional spring tides and storm tides.

Salt marsh cordgrass dominates the intertidal marsh. It is adapted to dramatic changes in salinity and temperature. This abundant, tall plant regulates salt concentrations in its cells by releasing excesses through pores on its blades.

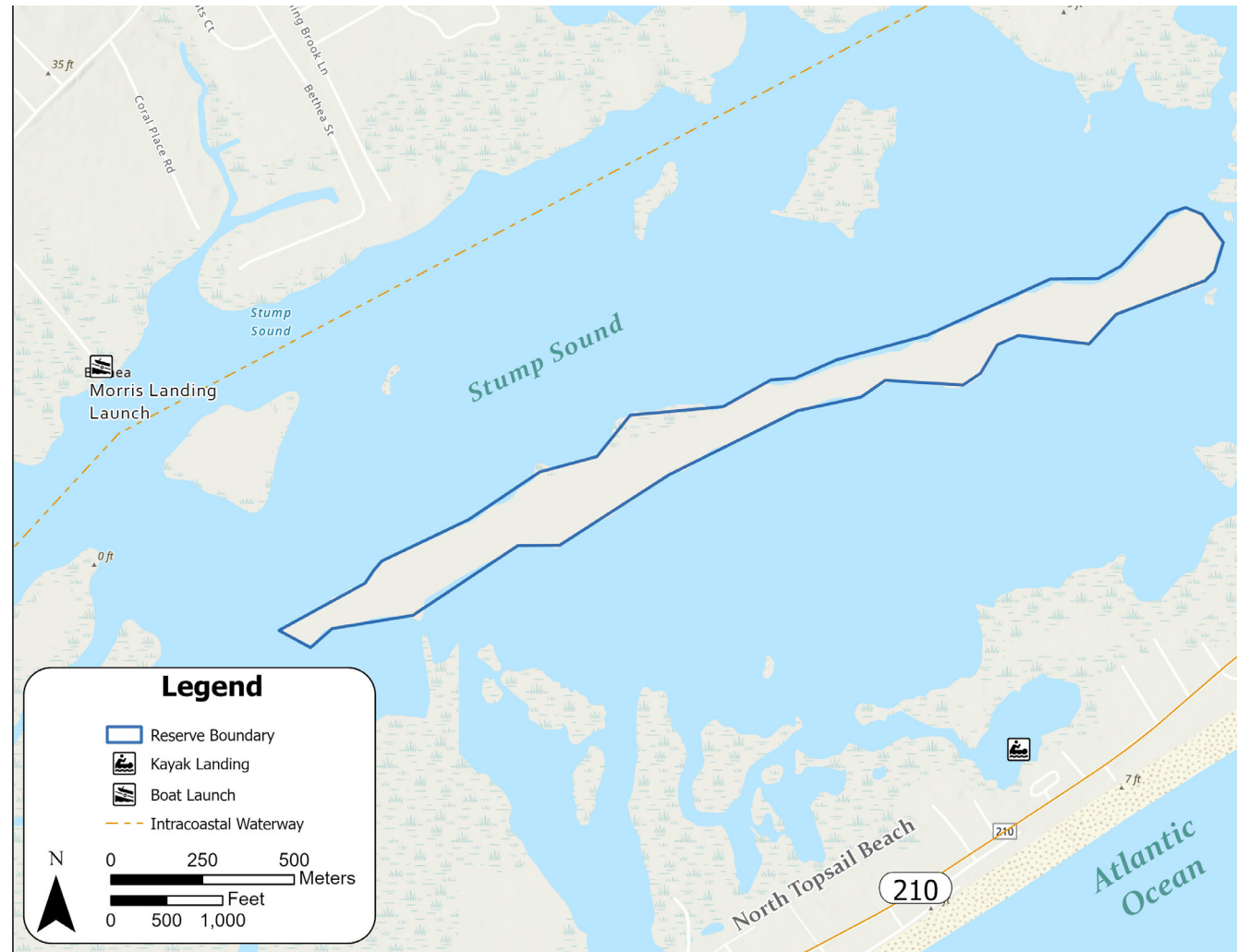
Plants found in the supratidal marsh include black needlerush, sea oxeye, and seaside aster.

Animals of the intertidal marsh are either permanent residents or species from nearby habitats that forage in the marsh. Permanent residents include parchment tube worm, marsh periwinkle, ribbed mussel, oyster, mud snail, fiddler crab, and several species of whelk.

Birds

Willetts, American oystercatchers, egrets, herons, black skimmers, sandpipers, and gulls are commonly observed on the island.

Upland portions of the island are home to sparrows, warblers, painted buntings, and other songbirds.



Mammals

Mammals found within the Permuda Island Reserve include opossums, raccoons, marsh rabbits, and cotton rats. River otters are occasionally found in the marsh and sound areas.

Reptiles

The eastern box turtle and venomous snakes including the copperhead are commonly found on the island.

Restoration

At one time Permuda Island was connected to Topsail Island by a causeway. Two restoration projects were conducted to remove remnants of the causeway, restore natural marsh, and improve water flows.

Archaeological Elements

The archaeological resources of Permuda Island are considered significant as the site possesses potential for yielding new knowledge about the prehistoric adaptations of the Middle Woodland (300 B.C. – 800 A.D.) and Late Woodland (800 – 1650 A.D.) American Indians who occupied the southern coastal region of North Carolina.

Shell middens, piles of mollusk shells, deposited by American Indians, are found throughout the site.