

# REFUGE INFORMATION, REGULATIONS, AND MAP

**Coatue Wildlife Refuge and The Haulover**  
Nantucket Conservation Foundation, Inc.  
118 Cliff Road, PO Box 13, Nantucket, MA 02554  
(508) 228-2884

**Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge**  
The Trustees of Reservations  
44 Wauwinet Road, Nantucket, MA 02554  
(508) 228-0006  
Nantucket (508) 228-0006 [www.thetrustees.org](http://www.thetrustees.org)

**Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge**  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Cape & Islands Division, Great Meadow Refuge  
Wier Hill Road, Sudbury, MA 01776  
(508) 443-4661

## WELCOME!

Coatue Wildlife Refuge and The Haulover (489 acres owned by the Nantucket Conservation Foundation), Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge (1117 acres owned by the Trustees of Reservations), and Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge at Great Point (owned by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service) together protect more than 21 miles of ocean, sound, and harbor shoreline. *The refuges are cooperatively managed for scientific, educational, conservation, and certain recreational purposes.*

## For Your Protection

Although surfcasting, shellfishing (by properly licensed individuals), picnicking, scientific research, nature study, bird watching, hiking, and scenic viewing are encouraged, there are no lifeguard-protected beaches within the refuges. Extremely dangerous current and rip tide conditions exist at many shoreline locations, making swimming inadvisable for those unaccustomed to open surf conditions. Two areas that are potentially life-threatening to all swimmers are the east and west beaches at Great Point (extending 200 yards southward from the northern tip of Great Point). As harmless as these waters might appear to be, visitors should not venture beyond waist depth at these locations.

## Refuge Profile

Coatue, The Haulover, Coskata, and Great Point lie north of Wauwinet and can collectively be described as a barrier beach system. Composed of glacial debris and soft sands deposited by water and wind, the properties include beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes, and "forests" of wind-sheared oak and cedar. The area provides important habitat for sea, shore, and upland birds—including American oystercatchers, herring and black-backed gulls, and rare and endangered piping plovers and least terns. Nantucket Harbor and its salt marshes support populations of bay scallops, soft-shell clams, quahogs, and mussels. From spring through fall, bluefish and striped bass are found in the near-shore waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Nantucket Sound.

Coatue—which means "At the Pine Woods"—was used by Native Americans and early settlers for grazing livestock. At the northeast end of Nantucket Harbor, an extensive tidal marsh (called "The Glades") provided an large area for harvesting salt hay. In November 1883, the U.S. Lifesaving Service opened a lifesaving station nearby on Coskata's north beach. It was operated until 1947.

"The Haulover," just north of Wauwinet, was named for the location where fishermen would drag or "haul" their boats over the sand to get from the Harbor to the Ocean. In 1896, a Nor'easter cut a channel through this barrier beach that did not close until 1908. Similar breaks still occur to the north, along "The Galls." Most recently, a breaching took place in October 1991, when Great Point was separated from the rest of the Island for four months.

The original lighthouse at Great Point was built as a 60 foot wooden tower in 1784. Destroyed by a fire in 1816, the lighthouse was rebuilt two years later as a 70 foot stone tower. After being threatened by shoreline erosion for many years, it was finally destroyed during a severe coastal storm on March 29, 1984.

Relying on measured drawings provided by the Historic American Building Survey, the present lighthouse was built to closely resemble its predecessor. Completed in 1986, the structure was built 100 yards westward of the original lighthouse site.

## General Regulations

- To protect each refuge and to assure the safety and enjoyment of visitors, all persons using these properties shall comply with the regulations that follow:
1. Disturbing birds or other wildlife is prohibited. The refuges provide important nesting, feeding, and resting habitat for many sea, shore and upland birds. Entering areas where nesting birds or chicks are present or disturbing seals are prohibited.
  2. Kite flying, kite boarding and flying of drones is prohibited within 200 yards of nesting, territorial adult, or unfledged juvenile piping plover or tern colonies.
  3. Use of fireworks is prohibited.
  4. Cutting or removing plants is prohibited. Plant material—whether living or dead—helps to stabilize shorelines, dunes, tidal flats, and bluffs.
  5. Entering fenced or posted areas intended to protect nesting birds or fragile coastal plants is prohibited.
  6. **The refuges are closed between 10 PM and 5 AM, active surfcasting excepted.** Overnight camping is prohibited.
  7. Cooking fires are allowed—but only on open beaches. Fires are strictly limited

- to gas stoves or self-contained charcoal grills. Please be thoughtful and careful when disposing of charcoal. **All other fires are prohibited.**
6. Littering is prohibited. Take your trash with you when you leave the refuges.
7. Hunting is prohibited on the National Wildlife Refuge at Great Point. For the safety of visitors, gun testing and target shooting are prohibited.
8. **Dogs are not permitted from April 1 to Sept. 15. Not even in your vehicle.**
9. Commercial activities—providing any service, product, or activity for which a fee is charged—are prohibited.
10. **Non-commercial use of the refuges by groups of 20 or more is subject to the review and approval of the organization which owns the proposed gathering site. To be considered, written requests must be received by the owner not less than 14 days prior to a proposed gathering. All other group use is prohibited.**
11. Removing, altering, defacing, or otherwise causing damage to any natural or historic feature, sign, fence, post, building, or other refuge property is prohibited.
12. Conduct which disturbs the tranquility of the refuges or their enjoyment by others is prohibited. **The Foundation and Trustees reserve the right to prohibit the use of alcoholic beverages on their properties.**

## Vehicle Regulations

For the protection of these properties, as well as the safety and convenience of visitors, there is a system of existing soft sand roadways and marked crossovers maintained within the refuges. All drivers and vehicles using these areas shall be in compliance with the following regulations at all times:

1. **In order to comply with federal and state guidelines regarding the protection of rare and endangered shorebirds, portions of these refuges must be closed to vehicles for extended periods of time, when nests and flightless chicks are present. These sites will be clearly posted and frequently patrolled. Entry into these areas is strictly prohibited.** Kite flying is prohibited within 200 yards of the posted bird nesting areas.
2. A valid Oversand Vehicle Permit is required year-round for all vehicles. Transfer of this permit is allowed only (1) when the original stickers are surrendered to the issuing organizations and (2) when the transfer is to a vehicle of the same license plate number and remains in the same ownership.
3. Without exception, all vehicles using the refuges shall be four-wheel drive and shall use existing roadways and crossovers in order to prevent damage to fragile beach plants. **Tire pressure must be adjusted to not more than 15 p.s.i. prior to entering the refuges.**
4. Vehicles exceeding 6,000 pounds gross—as well as dune buggies, motorcycles, mopeds, bicycles, trailers, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and cycles, ground-effect or air cushion vehicles, jet skis and the like—are prohibited. Such vehicles can jeopardize the extremely fragile environment of the refuges and the safety of refuge visitors. Furthermore, prohibited from use within the refuges are any oversized or undersized vehicles whose width, in the opinion of Property Managers, would cause repeated damage by breaking down the edges and/or center humps of established roadways.
5. All vehicle operators shall be properly licensed. Vehicles shall be properly registered and insured for use on private property.
6. For the safety and protection of visitors, each vehicle shall contain a shovel, a vehicle jack, a 12" by 12" (minimum) piece of 3/4" plywood to act as a jack support, a full-sized spare tire, a low pressure tire gauge, and a tow rope or chain of reasonable length (3/4" by 20' polypropylene rope is suggested as a minimum).
7. Driving or parking on vegetation, sand dunes, or in nesting areas is prohibited.
8. **Speed shall not exceed 15 MPH.** Slow down when approaching people, other vehicles, and intersections. Obey all traffic control signs.
9. For the safety of visitors, riding on fenders, tailgates, roofs, or any other position outside the vehicle is prohibited.
10. When traveling on beaches, drivers should make every effort to stay well away from the vegetated edge of all sand dunes and drive within established tracks where they exist. Access from interior roadways to beaches is permitted only at locations marked by an orange triangular sign. When possible, drivers are urged to avoid interior roadways after dark.
11. Vehicles shall not drive or park so as to interfere with the flow of traffic.
12. Ruts or holes caused by digging out a stuck vehicle must be filled in and all debris removed.
13. Vehicles using the refuges are prohibited from towing waterskiers, dune skiers, hanggliders, paragliders, or the like.

