



**Tour:** Going Coastal in North Carolina  
**Destination:** Topsail Island, Sneads Ferry & Wilmington, North Carolina  
**Itinerary:** 5-days / 4-nights

Going Coastal in North Carolina					
Day	Morning	Afternoon		Evening	
1	Travel to Topsail Island area, North Carolina; transfer to hotel		Welcome, Safety & Orientation Meeting	Welcome Dinner	
2	Mountains-to-Sea Trail Ecology Trek, Master Class & Volunteer Project	Shellfish Sustainability Master Class	Beach Combing & Shark Tooth Hunt	Local Dinner	Camp Bonfire, Pirate & Shipwreck Tales
3	Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue & Rehabilitation Center / Master Class	Tidepooling & Shallow Water Treasure Search	Beach Martial Arts Class	Free Time	Local Dinner
4	Battleship North Carolina Museum with Private Tour	Fort Fisher State Historic Site & Civil War Museum	North Carolina Aquarium & Marine Master Class	Farewell Dinner	
5	Depart North Carolina for home				



As with all sample itineraries, please be advised that this is an 'example' of a schedule and that the activities and hotels shown may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.



**STEM STUDY TOURS**  
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Get ready for a fun 5-day journey to the beaches of North Carolina! The coastal areas are brimming with life and adventure and during this trip, students will explore coastal activities and learn about the history and marine habitats that enchant this stunning region.

*This trip is available year-round but please know that many of the planned activities are outdoor and therefore, weather dependent.*

### **Day 1 – Welcome to North Carolina!**

Welcome Dinner

**North Carolina...** A story at every stop! The once-popular pirate hideaway of Topsail Island is now a haven for beachgoers searching for rest and relaxation. Where pirates once laid in wait for merchant ships – with only their top sails visible – today you'll find a tranquil region loved by anglers, boaters and sea turtles alike. The North Carolina coast comprises 300 miles of barrier-island beaches, each with its own unique vibe and variety of things to do. And quaint coastal towns and endless activities guarantee there's always something new to explore – a fresh perspective in a familiar setting that brings visitors back year after year.

## North Carolina Fun Facts

- ✓ In 1903 the Wright Brothers made the first successful powered flight by man at Kill Devil Hill near Kitty Hawk. The Wright Memorial at Kitty Hawks now commemorates their achievement.
- ✓ Known as "Fish Town" in the early 1700's when Blackbeard frequented the coast, "Beaufort Town" was established as a seaport with the right to collect customs, in 1722.
- ✓ The University of North Carolina's mascot, the Tarheels, is a nickname for North Carolinians that supposedly came from the days when NC produced a lot of tar, and someone saw a set of footprints made by someone who had stepped in the tar.
- ✓ Havelock is home of Marine Base "Cherry Point." It is the largest air base in the Marine Corps.
- ✓ North Carolina is the largest producer of sweet potatoes in the nation. Students at a Wilson County school petitioned the North Carolina General Assembly for the establishment of the sweet potato as the official state vegetable.
- ✓ The World War II battleship 'North Carolina' is permanently berthed on the Cape Fear River in Wilmington. She was saved from the scrap heap in the 1960's by public subscription, including donations of dimes by schoolchildren.
- ✓ The first English colony in America, founded by Walter Raleigh, was located on Roanoke Island. The colony mysteriously vanished with no trace except for the word "Croatoan" scrawled on a nearby tree.
- ✓ The Venus Flytrap is native to Hampstead, North Carolina.
- ✓ Many people believe that North Carolina was the first state to declare independence from England with the Mecklenburg Declaration of 1775.
- ✓ Grandfather Mountain, highest peak in the Blue Ridge, is the only private park in the world designated by the United Nations as an International Biosphere Reserve.
- ✓ Pepsi was invented and first served in New Bern, North Carolina in 1898.
- ✓ North Carolina leads the nation in furniture, tobacco, brick, and textile production.



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Upon arrival, we'll get checked into our hotel, have our Welcome, Safety & Orientation Meeting, and then set off for dinner locally. If you arrive early and have extra time, we'll roll out some fun games and ice-breaker activities.

**Sample Hotel – Hampton Inn, Sneads Ferry:** Beach decor, modern amenities and proximity to the ocean are just some of the things you'll enjoy at the Hampton Inn Sneads Ferry North Topsail Beach hotel. You'll be close to local seafood restaurants, Topsail Beach and Camp Lejeune. Unwind in modern guest rooms with free WiFi, 42-inch HDTV and plenty of plugs to charge your devices. Head to the lobby for a hot breakfast each morning or grab a Breakfast Bag, available Monday through Friday. Bask in the warm North Carolina sun in the seasonal pool and keep up with your exercise routine in the fitness center. Students will sleep up to quad occupancy and staff will sleep up to double occupancy in great rooms with two queen beds.

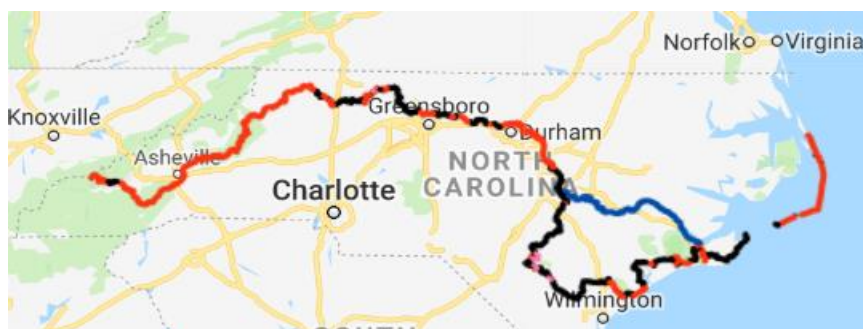


## **Day 2 – Inland Forests & Topsail Island**

*Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own*

Rise and shine North Carolina! Today is a day of adventure as we start off in the country woods and finish up on the shore!

**The Mountains-to-Sea Trail Ecology Trek, Master Class & Volunteer Project** - Get ready to have fun and get your hands dirty on North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The Mountains-to-Sea State Trail is a long-distance trail for hiking and backpacking that traverses North Carolina from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks. The trail's western endpoint is at Clingman's Dome, where it connects to the Appalachian Trail in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. More than just a walk in the woods, the trail traces the diversity that is North Carolina to experience ancient mountains and small farms, coastal swamps and colonial towns, changing textile villages and barrier islands. [www.mountaintoseatrail.org](http://www.mountaintoseatrail.org)



Groups will hike a section of the trail with a local Naturalist to learn about the flora and fauna in this beautiful wilderness. Afterwards, we'll assist the trail volunteers in a service project.

After our morning on the trails, we're off to Sneads Ferry, the Shrimp Capital of North Carolina!



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**Clamming / Shrimping / Oystering Sustainability Master Class** – This area of North Carolina abounds with natural resources. Shellfish farming ranks high in food chain cultivation. In the wild, oysters are harvested from the bottoms of sounds and estuaries, where young oysters, known as spat, attach to older shells. To achieve single oysters, producers obtain water column leases from the state, and then use containers — bags, baskets and cages referred to as gear — to hold and grow oysters until harvest. This afternoon we will meet with a local aquaculture farmer to learn more about the industry as a whole and the production of food that will feed the masses. We'll explore the growth process and sustainability needed in this ever-changing industry.

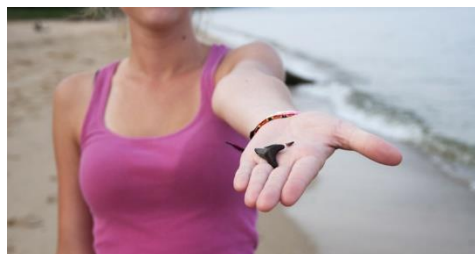


**Topsail Island** - Welcome to Topsail Island, North Carolina's untapped paradise, only 30 minutes north of the historic seaport of Wilmington. Surrounded by the tame Intracoastal Waterway and the wild Atlantic Ocean, Topsail Island offers a wide range of activities - beachcombing, bird watching, fishing, tidepooling, surfing, sculpting sandcastles, flying kites, biking, kayaking, investigating pirate history, shipwrecks, space history and more in this natural dreamland!

This is home to the loggerhead turtle and brown sea pelican. Many guests who have witnessed the turtles nesting have scheduled a return to the island to view the hatching of nests each year. Egrets and waterfowl abound in the marshes, inlets and other natural areas surrounding the island.

Topsail is steeped in maritime and military history. As early as the 1700's, the island was known as Topsail Island. The name "Topsail" (pronounced Topsul) is said to have originated during the days of piracy. Pirates hid their ships in the channels behind the dunes and waited for passing merchant ships, which they would pursue and attack. As the freighters became wise to the pirates' ploy, they began watching for the tops of the pirates' sails showing over the dunes - hence the name "Topsail Island".

During the late 1940's Topsail Island hosted a Navy missile development program, Operation Bumblebee, which was the precursor to the NASA program that is now found in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The Assembly Building in Topsail Beach was where the experimental missiles were produced. The concrete towers you can see scattered about the island were observation towers for tracking the flight of the missiles.



**Beach Walk with Shell & Shark Tooth Hunt on North Topsail Island** – Join a local to hike the beach in search of fun jewels from shells to shark teeth. Collecting seashells is a time-honored tradition - the thrill of the hunt, the anticipation of what you might find and the optimistic search for that big, beautiful, unbroken shell that you can put on display when you get back home. Are you ready?



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Prizes will be awarded for best finds!

- **Know your shells!** Knowledge is power so go ahead and brush up on your North Carolina seashell identification skills. Here are some of the most popular NC shells that you might come across in your seashell hunt.
  - Auger Shells
  - Conch Shells
  - Coquina Clam Shells
  - Lightning and Channeled Whelks
  - Moon Snail Shells
  - Oyster Shells
  - Pen Shells
  - Sand Dollars
  - Scallop Shells
  - Scotch Bonnets
  - Slipper Shells
  - Tulip Shells



Visit [ncshellclub.com](http://ncshellclub.com) if you want to brush up on shell identification. It provides professional photographs, scientific names, and all the information you need to learn more about the most common North Carolina shells and how to identify them.

**Pop Quiz:** Do you know what the state shell of North Carolina is? It's the Scotch Bonnet! It's a beautiful shell and you are incredibly lucky if you find one.

- **Keep an eye out for shark teeth.** Shark teeth are found quite often on Topsail Island and are a coastal treasure all their own. When you think about shark teeth washing ashore on Topsail's beaches, images of giant, fossilized Megalodon teeth may come to mind but there are plenty of smaller, more common shark tooth finds to be found, too. Most common are:
  - Bull Shark Teeth
  - Tiger Shark Teeth
  - Sand Shark Teeth
- **Don't forget about sea glass hunting.** You see a glint of shine and reflection in the sand drawing you closer to see what's catching your eye. It's most likely sea glass in a variety of colors of the rainbow. Some are rarer than others, but they're all uniquely gorgeous in their own way. Keep your eyes open for some as you stroll the sand.

**Campfire, S'mores & Storytelling of Pirates & Shipwrecks** - After our beachy afternoon, we'll have a local dinner and then wrap up with an expert storyteller sharing their tales at our campsite bonfire – with s'mores!



### **Day 3 – Topsail Island**

*Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own*

Good morning Topsail! Today we'll dip into Marine Bio and conservation as we study Sea Turtles. Later we'll have another afternoon on the beach with a tidepooling exercise and a Tai Chi class!



***The Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue & Rehabilitation Center*** – The mission of the center is the conservation and preservation of all species of marine turtles, both in the water and on the beach. This is accomplished through the rescue, care, and release of sick and injured sea turtles, public education regarding the plight of sea turtles and the threat of their extinction, and learning opportunities for students of biology, wildlife conservation, and veterinary medicine from around the world.

Their story: In 1996 a small group of dedicated volunteers with the Topsail Turtle Project stood on an empty lot in Topsail Beach. The group shared a dream.... They had the opportunity to care for an injured sea turtle who came to be called Lucky. Lucky was the sea turtle who pointed the way to the need for a place in North Carolina for sick and injured sea turtles, who required long term rehabilitation. Lucky was cared for with lots of TLC and was able to be returned to the wild. The question was, where would other sick and injured sea turtles in need of medical attention go for treatment and care? Thus, the dream of a place on Topsail Island to provide that kind of sanctuary for sea turtles in need was born.

In North Carolina, the nesting season is mid-May through August. The Loggerhead Sea Turtle comes ashore to nest 3 to 5 times during a nesting year. She deposits an average of 120 eggs per nest. The eggs will incubate in the sand for about 60 days. After all the hatchlings have popped out of their eggs, they emerge from the nest together and race to the sea. Weighing in at about two ounces, their first challenge on the beach is escaping the deadly grasp of the ghost crabs. Once in the water they must hide from both bird and fish predators where they swim to seaweed rafts and the Sargasso Sea begins.

It is a long swim to maturity. It is estimated that 1 in 1000 survives the first year, and as few as 1 in 5,000 – 10,000 survive to adulthood. No one has the answer to this. In 20 to 30 years the surviving hatchlings will reach adulthood. The females will return to their natal beaches to lay their eggs and the cycle begins again.

### **RESCUE CENTER MISSION STATEMENT**

- The conservation and protection of all species of marine turtles both in the water and on the beach.
- The rescue, rehabilitation, and release of sick and injured sea turtles.
- To inform and educate the public regarding the plight of all sea turtles and the threat of their extinction.
- To provide an experiential learning site for students of biology, wildlife conservation, and/or veterinary medicine from around the world.

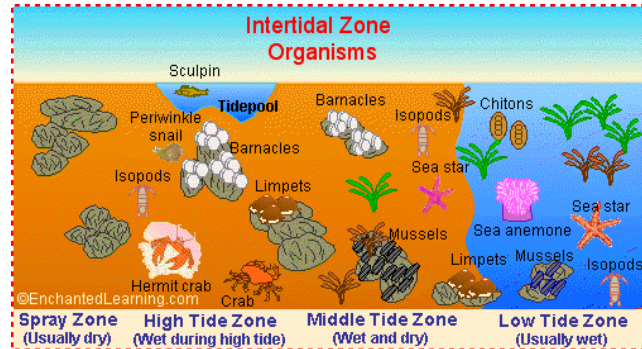
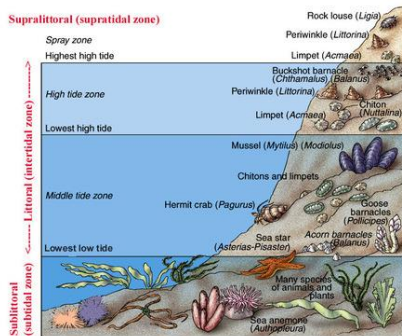


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***Tidepooling & Shallow Water Treasure Search*** – Break out the nets and search the sea for treasure! Explore the shallows to find geology and sea life. The "intertidal zone" is divided into four sub-sections. Sea cucumbers and sponges live in the low tide zone but can only be seen during extreme low tides. The mid-tide zone offers the most exciting finds including hermit crabs, sea stars and anemones. Look for hard shelled creatures like barnacles in the high-tide zone. And at the high-water mark, or splash zone, one might find dead seaweed, driftwood and marine debris washed ashore.



***Beach Martial Arts Class*** – Join Master James Hammock on the beach in a Martial Arts stretching and movement class to get you refocused and feeling great. Learn about ancient martial arts forms that rejuvenate your movement and refresh your attitude. Maybe even try a bit of karate!

*Mr. Hammock has been practicing Martial Arts for 45 years. He holds the rank of 5th Degree Black Belt in Karate plus numerous black belts in Tae Kwon Do, Akido, Tomili Ryu, Traditional Jujitsu and Shaolin Kung Fu. He is also a certified Krav Maga instructor. Mr. Hammock has been inducted into the **United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame** on three occasions for both personal achievement as well as teaching. He is the owner of TCB Martial Arts in Sneads Ferry.*

If time remains, we can explore beach shops, walk the pier, talk to local fisherman or even go back to our hotel for rest, relaxation or games. This evening, we'll have dinner locally.

## ***Day 4 – Wilmington***

*Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own*

After breakfast at our lodge, we'll check out of our hotel, load our bags into the coach and set off for the Wilmington, North Carolina area, approximately a 1-hour drive. First stop, Battleship North Carolina!



**Private Tour of Battleship North Carolina** - Moored in quiet dignity and majesty, the Battleship North Carolina sits across the river from downtown Wilmington, beckoning visitors to walk her decks. Envision the daily life and fierce combat her crew faced in the Pacific Theatre during World War II.

From across the nation they came, young men who had grown up in the crucible of the Great Depression and now determined to serve their country in its time of need. These are the men whose stories you will encounter through their oral histories, photographs, and mementos as you experience the ship and the exhibits. Step back in time and let history come alive.

Next, we'll enjoy a **catered lunch** while visiting the battleship grounds, then venture south to Fort Fisher State Historic Site.

**Fort Fisher State Historic Site & Civil War Museum** - In the Civil War, the agricultural South depended on Europe for manufactured goods and war materials. To stop the importation of these items, President Abraham Lincoln declared a naval blockade of Confederate ports. Wilmington's proximity to Bermuda and the Bahamas, added to its rail connections to Virginia, made it the lifeline of the Confederacy. Nicknamed "the Gibraltar of America," Fort Fisher's massive earthen walls stretched almost a mile and a half and averaged 30 feet high. The fort also had 30 underground bombproofs and magazines. Under the protection of Fort Fisher's 44 big guns, 4 field pieces, and 3 mortars, tens of millions of dollars' worth of goods and war material came into the Confederacy. After two attacks, Fort Fisher was finally captured in January 1865. The Confederacy's main supply line was severed. Three months later, out of supplies and hope, the Confederacy surrendered and the Civil War ended. The fighting at Fort Fisher was the largest combined operation undertaken by the US Army and Navy of the Civil War and wouldn't be surpassed until June 6, 1944.



Through tours, weapons demonstrations, and hands-on activities, students can step back in time and learn what it was like for soldiers on both sides of the fort – those protecting it and those trying to capture it.

**North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher & Marine Master Class** - Make connections with the natural world at the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher. Feel the smooth skin of a gliding stingray. Climb along Adventure Reef. Talk with a diver swimming the depths with eels and sharks. Look an albino alligator in the eye. Wonder at baby sea turtles.

#### Sample Class Options include topics such as:

- ✚ **Behind-the-Scenes Tour:** Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes at the Aquarium? Come explore spaces for animal holding, husbandry, life support systems, and backstage access to exhibits. Participants should wear closed-toed shoes.
- ✚ **Reptiles-R-Us:** Learn about the habits and habitats of various reptiles in the Cape Fear Region. Alligators, turtles, and snakes will be highlighted.
- ✚ **Invertebrate Interview:** Uncover the hidden world of clams, snails, crabs, sea urchins, sea stars, and other invertebrates. Learn what makes a coral an animal, where the eyes of a sea star are located, how an urchin gets around, and much more!
- ✚ **Sharks – Inside & Out:** Learn the characteristics of sharks in this interactive presentation on shark



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anatomy and behavior. Discover how sharks swim, how they get along without bones, and how they replace their teeth!

- + **Whales & Dolphins:** How do we compare to some of the largest animals on earth? What is the difference between a dolphin and a porpoise? Learn the answers to these questions and more in this fun, interactive program highlighting the whales and dolphins that frequent North Carolina's coast.
- + **Exploring Our Ecosystems:** Learn about the different ecosystems we have here in coastal North Carolina during this interesting and interactive program. Explore why these ecosystems are important and meet some of the creatures that inhabit them.
- + **Animal Life Cycles:** Learn about different life cycles of various animals during this interesting and interactive program.

### ***Day 5 – Goodbye North Carolina!***

*Breakfast, lunch & dinner on own*

After our fascinating trip, it's time to start to say goodbye to this stunning region. From the beaches to the mountains, we will take memories away that will inspire us in our years to come!



# GOING COASTAL IN NORTH CAROLINA

**Minimum Booking Numbers:** 20 students

**What's Included:**

- Roundtrip flights OR motorcoach transportation
- 4-nights' accommodation in the Sneads Ferry area
- North Carolina airport transfers plus transportation for noted activities
- Breakfasts & dinners daily starting with dinner on arrival and ending with breakfast on departure
- Mountain-to-Sea Trail Ecology Trek & Master Class with a Naturalist
- Group Volunteer Project on the Mountains-to-Sea Trail
- Clamming / Shrimping / Oystering Sustainability Master Class
- Beach Combing & Shark Tooth Hunt with a local Islander
- Bonfire & S'mores + Pirate & Shipwreck Tales Storyteller
- Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue & Rehabilitation Center
- Tidepooling & Shallow-Water Treasure Search on Topsail Island
- Beach Martial Arts Class with a Master
- Battleship North Carolina – Private Tour
- Lunch at Battleship North Carolina Site (catered; sandwiches)
- Fort Fisher State Historic Site & Civil War Museum
- North Carolina Aquarium & Marine Master Class
- Personal Tour Ambassador
- Fund-a-Forest: A tree is planted in the name of each guest
- Dollar\$ For Scholars: \$2 donation in the name of each guest
- 24-hour emergency cover

**What's Not Included:**

- Airport transfers in your home area
- Fully comprehensive insurance (mandatory)
- Lunch, snacks and extra beverages in destination
- Transportation not indicated in itinerary
- Cost of visas, full or collective passports
- Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
- Additional sightseeing & entertainment options
- Hotel incidental bills – meals, mini-bar items, recreation charges, purchases billed to room, etc.
- Personal expenditures
- Any gratuities – drivers, hotel services, tour ambassador
- Additional taxes, fuel surcharges or service charges levied by the governments or our suppliers
- Luggage handling

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As always, our staff are always available to you to answer any questions you may have regarding programming.  
If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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