

FREE
PRINTABLE
FIELD GUIDE



Tidal Keepsakes

Timeless Coastal Keepsakes, Gathered by the Tide



NORTH CAROLINA BEACHES SHELL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Common Shells & Where to Find Them

INCLUDED BEACH GUIDES

- Hatteras Beach State Park
(Bear Island)
- Cape Lookout, NC
- Coquina Beach, NC

Part of the Tidal Keepsakes
Regional Shell Guide Collection



Pair this guide
with the
Tidal Keepsakes
Shell Discovery
Journal

Explore. Respect. Preserve.
Our beaches are treasures for future generations.

Created by Tidal Keepsakes
www.TidalKeepsakes.com

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Shell Guides





Tidal Keepsakes

Teaches Coastal Keepsakes, Colored by the Tide

HAMMOCKS BEACH STATE PARK (BEAR ISLAND), NC

SHELL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Common Shells & Where to Find Them

A guide for beachcombers of all ages

COMMON SHELLS YOU CAN FIND

KEYHOLE SAND DOLLAR



Flat, round, umbonoid with a keyhole-shaped opening on one side.

SCOTCH BONNET



Smooth, glossy cone shell with a flared base and beautiful patterns.

WHELKS (KNOBBED)



Spiral shell with rounded knobs or bumps on the whorls.

WHELKS (CHANNELED)



Spiral shell with deep channels or grooves along the whorls.

WHELKS (LIGHTNING)



Spiral shell with a tall spire and lightning-like markings inside the opening.

WHERE TO FIND THEM



THE BEACH VIA RED TRAIL

Collecting is restricted to the small beach area at the end of the 1.5-mile Red Trail.



THE SURF & TIDE LINE

Walk along the shoreline slowly at low tide. The best finds are often mixed in with pebbles and shell fragments in the surf.



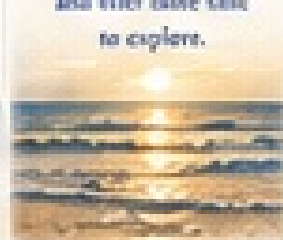
AFTER STORMS

Heavy rains and high tides replenish the supply of fossils by washing them out of the duff here and onto the accessible beach area.



BEST TIME TO GO

Low tide is best, especially in the morning. Weekdays are less crowded and offer more time to explore.



BEACHCOMBING TIPS



For the guide visit tidalkeepsakes.com



Walk the usual water or strainer where a line of obelisks.



Take out mail you read & leave living creatures behind.



Take only what a story—enjoy the history of the shore!

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Tidal Keepers

Timeless Coastal Experiences, Collected by the Tide

CAPE LOOKOUT, NC SHELLING GUIDE

Common Shells & Where to Find Them

A guide for beachcombers of all ages

COMMON SHELLS YOU CAN FIND



CALICO SCALLOPS

Broadly patterned with squared ridges; often found whole or in large pieces.



BAY SCALLOPS

Ribbed fan shape with straight edges; colors range from cream and tan to pink, orange, and purple.



MOON SNAILS

Smooth, rounded spiral shells with a moon-like swirl on top; often found whole.



SLIPPER SNAILS (BOAT SHELLS)

Smooth, glossy shells with a low spiral; often with beautiful patterns.



JUMPER SNAILS (TRANSLUCENT GOLD/ORANGE)

Tiny, delicate shells that "jingle" when shaken; translucent and golden.

WHERE TO LOOK ON THE BAYSIDE



HORSESHOE COVE

This is the premier spot for bayside shelling. The gentle waves trap shells, and the tide is just what you need.



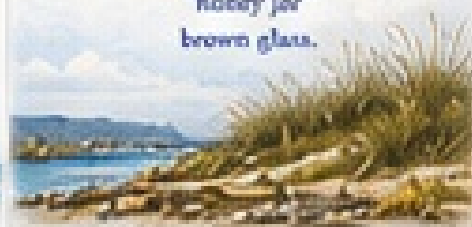
OFFICER'S ROW

The shoreline behind the historic military housing is excellent for spotting Seals during winter, but the rocky and sandy patches there also yield many Slipper Shells and Blue Mussels.



NORTH BEACH

Many visit the bayside specifically for sea glass. This area yields weathered shards of white, green, and "honey jar" brown glass.



SHELLING STRATEGY & TIP



Put this guide with the Tidal Keepers Shell Discovery Journal



BEST WORKING HOURS

The bayside is particularly shallow and calm, while sand flies are a hassle.



SHELLING TIP?

Using a small sifter or scoop to search through sand, shell any treasures.

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[KeepersCoastal.com](https://www.KeepersCoastal.com)



Tide! Keepers

Timeless Coastal Knowledge, Unleashed by the Tide



COQUINA BEACH, NORTH CAROLINA Shelling Guide

Common Shells & Where to Find Them

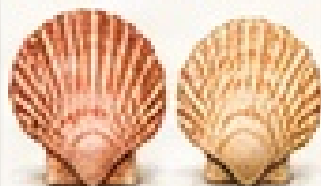


A guide for beachcombers of all ages

Coquina Beach, located just south of Nags Head within the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, is famously named after the tiny, rainbow-colored Coquina Clams that flourish there.

COMMON SHELLS YOU CAN FIND

CALICO SCALLOPS



Broadly patterned with
squared ridges, often
found whole
or in large pieces.

MOON SNAILS (SHARK'S EYES)



Smooth, rounded spiral
shells with a moon-like
swirl on top, often
found whole.

MOON SNAILS (SHARK'S EYES)



Smooth, glossy shells
with a low spiral,
often with beautiful
patterns.

CLAMS: LARGE QUATROG & ATLANTIC SURF CLAMS



Large, sturdy clams with
beautiful bands usually
found whole or in halves.

WHERE TO FIND THEM



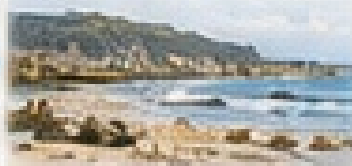
THE HIGH TIDE LINE

Most treasures are found
along the wrack line (the
line of debris and seaweed
left by the high tide).



NEAR THE FISHING PIER

The currents around the
491-foot pier stir up trap
shells, making the
surrounding sand
very productive.



BEACH FLATS

Because it's a bay beach,
low tide exposes wide,
gentle sand flats where
you can easily spot
Whells and Moon Snails
before they are buried.



SHELLING TIP



For the best results at Coquina Beach, aim for low tide or explore
the "wrack line" where the highest waves deposit debris. While
many people find lots of shells here, others find mostly broken pieces,
so digging slightly into the shell pile can help you find intact treasures.



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