

FREE
PRINTABLE
FIELD GUIDE

NEW JERSEY BEACHES SHELL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Common Shells & Where to Find Them

Tidal Keepsakes

Timeless Coastal Keepsakes, Gathered by the Tide

A coastal field guide for beachcombers of all ages

INCLUDED BEACH GUIDES

- Brigantine Beach, NJ
- Cape May Point
State Park, NJ
- Island Beach
State Park, NJ

Part of the Tidal Keepsakes
Regional Shell Guide Collection

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

Created by Tidal Keepsakes
www.TidalKeepsakes.com

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Shell Discovery
Journal

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Shell Guides





BRIGANTINE BEACH SHELL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Common Shells & Where to Find Them

A guide for beachcombers of all ages

COMMON SHELLS YOU CAN FIND

JACKKNIFE CLAMS (RAZOR CLAMS)



Long, narrow clams with both ends tapered; often found in pairs; highly sought after.

WHELK EGG CASINGS



Spiral, beaded capsules laid by Whelks; often called "mermaid's necklaces".

MOON SNAIL (SHARK'S EYE)



Smooth, rounded snails with a spiral "eye" pattern; fossilized and beautiful.

ATLANTIC SURF CLAM



Large, heavy clams with thick shells; smooth and rounded.

KNOBBED WHELK (STATE SHELL)



Spiral shell with knobs or bumps along the whorls; New Jersey's official state shell.

RARE FINDS

FOSSILIZED SHARK TEETH



Fossilized teeth from various sharks; commonly found after storms in all sizes.

SAND DOLLARS



Flat, round echinoderms with a petal pattern on top; often found whole in the surf.

TOP FINDING SPOTS IN BRIGANTINE



THE NORTH END (NORTH SHORE RD ACCESS)

This is the premier shelling area. The beach here is wide and wild. Walk toward the Brigantine Inlet, the area where the ocean meets the inlet is a "catch all" for Whelks and Large Clams.



THE "SEAWALL" (FRONT ST)

The rocks and piers here act as a trap for smaller shells like Jingle, Skipper Shells, and Blue Mussels.



BRIGANTINE COVE (BAYSIDE)

Located at the west end of the island, this area is calmer and overfished for finding Moon Snails and Hermit Crabs (remember to leave the live ones!).

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CAPE MAY POINT STATE PARK & SUNSET BEACH SHELL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Common Shells & Where to Find Them

A guide for beachcombers of all ages

CAPE MAY POINT STATE PARK – COMMON SHELLS YOU CAN FIND

MOON SNAILS (SHARK'S EYE)



Smooth, rounded snails with a spiral "eye" pattern, fun-sized and beautiful.

ATLANTIC SURF CLAMS



Large, heavy clams with thick shells; smooth and rounded.

BAY SCALLOPS



Ribbed fan-shaped shells in shades of pink, orange, tan, and cream.

COCKLE SHELLS



Thick, heart-shaped shells with strong ribs, commonly found along the tide line.

BEST LOCATIONS & STRATEGIES



THE POINT (CMP STATE PARK)

Walk from the Cape May Lighthouse toward the point where the bay meets the ocean. This dynamic area is a "conchwall" for diverse species.



THE "BEACH TUNNEL" (PEARL AVENUE)

A favorite local access point at Cape May Point that opens onto a wide sweep of coast perfect for mid-morning shelling.



TIMING

The best beaches are best searched at low tide when wide sand flats are exposed.

SHELLING STRATEGY & TIP



EARLY MORNING ADVANTAGE

Go early for the best picks before others arrive.



AFTER STORMS

Sea creatures churn up the ocean floor and bring the best shells to the shore.



LOW TIDE IS KEY

The absolute best time to search is during low tide when so much is exposed.



SHELLING TIP

Bring a mesh or cloth bag, and a sifter or sieve to sort through shell bags and small pebbles.



RESPECT THE BEACH

Take only shells that are empty and leave live creatures and habitats undisturbed.

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ISLAND BEACH STATE PARK SHELL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Common Shells & Where to Find Them



COMMON SHELLS YOU CAN FIND

ATLANTIC SURF CLAMS



Large, heavy clams
with thick shells;
smooth and rounded.

WHOLKS (POURED & CHANNELLED)



Spiral shells with knobs or
deep channels along the
whorls; often found
whole after storms.

MOON SNAILS (SHARK'S EYE)



Smooth, rounded snails
with a spiral "eye"
pattern; beautiful.

BAY SCALLOPS



Ribbed fan-shaped shells
in shades of pink, orange,
tan, and cream.

BLUE MUSSELS



Common bivalves
found in clusters
or beds; deep
blue to purple.

WHERE TO FIND THEM



THE BEACHES IN THE PARK

The beaches are
excellent for
sea glass
and shells.



FISHING PIER

Located where
salt and ocean
currents meet,
pleasant.



NORTH END

Walk the north
end of the park
at low tide for
the best
treasures.



BEYOND INLET

Easy to reach
entry of state
especially after—



BARNEGAT INLET

TO GO
Low tide is best,
especially in the
morning.

BEACHCOMBING TIPS



Timing

Low tide or up to
one hour before
low tide.



Seasonal Advantage

Spring and fall are
great times to find
treasures along the
wash line.



Look for Gems

Keep an eye out for
green sea and
sea glass,
and glass.



Respect the Park

Collect only
empty shells and
leave live creatures
behind.

Explore More
Shell Guides



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