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Nags Head Woods Ecological Preserve is one of North Carolina's most significant natural areas and one of the Outer Banks' most important community resources.

Small changes in elevation create subtle changes in the type of species found here. Natural communities—groupings of plants and animals that depend on each other to survive—include:

MARITIME DECIDUOUS FOREST—found on the higher and generally drier dune slopes and ridges; dominant plants include oak, hickory, beech, holly and loblolly pine.

MARITIME SWAMP FOREST—found in lower and generally wetter valleys (or swales) between the dunes; tree species include sweet gum, black gum, red bay and black willow.

MARITIME SHRUB FOREST—also found in low, wet swales; these areas are dominated by wild shrubs and grasses.

INTERDUNAL PONDS—found in especially low swales; the water is so deep that plants cannot survive.

BRACKISH MARSH—tidally influenced by a mix of fresh and salt water; typically dominated by black needle rush (*Juncus roemerianus*).

SEASONAL SIGHTS & SOUNDS

WINTER

Wood duck (*Aix sponsa*)*
 Marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*)
 Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)
 Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)
 Great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*)*
 American holly (*Ilex opaca*)
 Longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*)
 Live oak (*Quercus virginiana*)
 Yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*)
 Red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
 Loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*)

SPRING

Cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus*)
 Bull frog (*Rana catesbeiana*)
 Carolina chickadee (*Parus carolinensis*)
 Green treefrog (*Hyla cinerea*)
 Henry's elfin (*Calliphrys henrici*)
 Southern toad (*Bufo terrestris*)
 Prothonotary warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)
 Prairie warbler (*Dendroica fusca*)
 Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
 Southern twayblade (*Listera australis*)
 Hearts a'bustin (*Euonymus americanus*)
 Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*)
 Sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*)
 Sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)
 Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)

* = nests locally

SUMMER

Southern leopard frog (*Rana utricularia*)
 Great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*)
 Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)*
 Redbelly watersnake (*Nerodia erythrogaster*)
 Northern parula warbler (*Parula americana*)*
 Palamedes swallowtail (*Pterourus palamedes*)
 Prothonotary warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)*
 Green-backed heron (*Butorides striatus*)*
 Trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*)
 Spotted wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*)
 Butterfly pea (*Clitorea mariana*)
 Woolly beach heather (*Hudsonia tomentosa*)
 Water violet (*Hottonia inflata*)
 St. Andrew's cross (*Hypericum hypericoides*)

AUTUMN

Yellow-rumped warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)
 Carolina anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)
 Pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)*
 Eastern screech owl (*Otus asio*)*
 Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)
 Indian pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*)
 Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*)
 American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)
 Duney aster (*Heterotheca gossypina*)
 Northern false foxglove (*Aureolaria flava*)
 Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*)
 Live oak (*Quercus virginiana*)
 Pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*)



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Nags Head Woods Preserve

- This property is jointly owned by the Town of Nags Head and The Nature Conservancy. It is managed by The Nature Conservancy as part of Nags Head Woods Ecological Preserve.

The Nature Conservancy

Nags Head Woods Preserve

- 📍 Main office and visitor center at 701 West Ocean Acres Drive in Kill Devil Hills, NC
- 🌐 www.nature.org/nhw
- 📞 (252) 441.2525
- 📘 facebook.com/nagsheadwoods
- 📷 #nagsheadwoods

North Carolina Chapter

- 📘 facebook.com/TNCNC
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PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Shielded from the ocean winds by a ridge of ancient sand dunes, this 1,200-acre maritime forest features an amazing diversity of life.

PLANTS—More than 550 species of plants, including several that are rare in North Carolina, are found here. Woolly beach heather grows in open, sandy areas along the Sweetgum Swamp Trail. In spring, rare water violets bloom on the ponds along the Discovery Trail, and a tiny orchid called the southern tway-blade blooms along the Roanoke Trail in early summer.

(Reference: *Manual of the Vascular Flora of Nags Head Woods, Outer Banks, North Carolina* by Alexander Krings)

BIRDS—More than 50 species of birds breed in the forest here. Many spend their winters in South America, returning to the Preserve in May to raise their young.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS—Look closely on the edges of ponds and swamps for snakes, lizards, turtles, salamanders, frogs and toads. Two venomous snakes are found here: the cottonmouth and the timber rattlesnake. Like most snakes, these would rather avoid people than confront them.

- 1 Southern leopard frog © Mark Daniels/TNC
- 2 Marbled salamander © Joe Hamilton/TNC
- 3 Red fox © Charlie Ott
- 4 Great blue heron © Mark Daniels/TNC
- 5 Trumpet creeper © Aaron McCall/TNC
- 6 Osprey © Bill Birkemeier
- 7 Persimmon © TNC
- 8 Tiger swallowtail © Mark Daniels/TNC

TRAIL SAFETY

Trails are open for self-guided hikes during daylight hours

Always stay on designated hiking trails

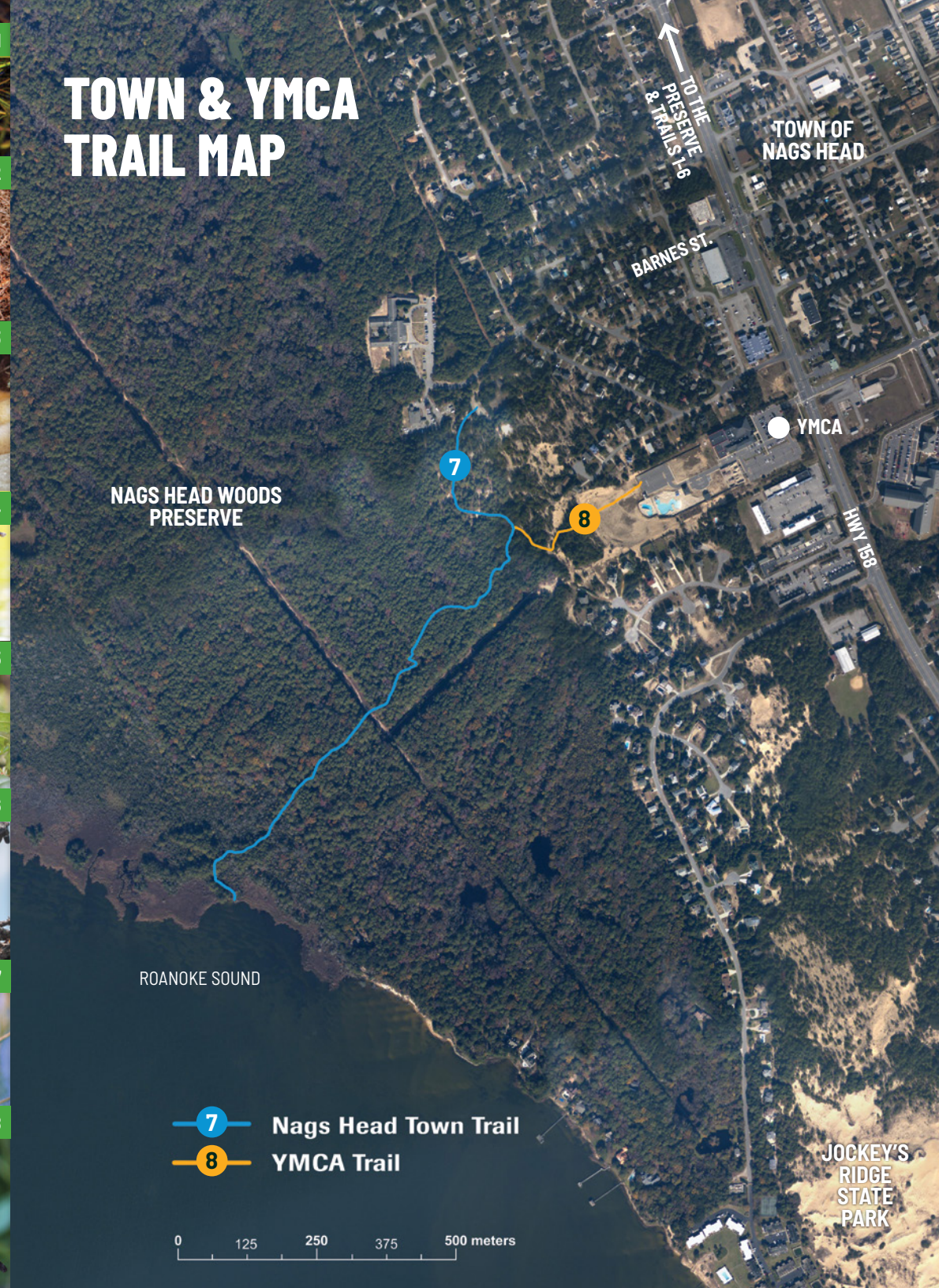
Bicycles, horses and off-road vehicles are not allowed

Leashed pets are allowed on this trail and trails 4-8; please clean up after your pet

Take only pictures, leave only footprints



TOWN & YMCA TRAIL MAP



- 7 Nags Head Town Trail
- 8 YMCA Trail

0 125 250 375 500 meters