

The ABA Beacon®

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Boating North Carolina's Cape Fear River

by *W. Lynn Seldon, Jr. - Boating Writer*

With the boater-friendly city of Wilmington and a wide range of boating possibilities, North Carolina's Cape Fear River is an ideal destination from spring to fall. Running due north from the Intracoastal Waterway and the Atlantic Ocean, the Cape Fear is a convenient Carolina treat.

As the state's only river to feed directly into the open ocean, the Cape Fear is quite active commercially. Huge tankers, container ships, and more ply the river, but it's wide and welcoming to powerboats of all sizes. Add to this the charming city of Wilmington and a nice variety of marinas and facilities - you have an ideal boating destination.

The Cape Fear River has played an important role in state and U.S. history. Pirates roamed the river in the 1700s and a famous battle involving the pirate Stede Bonnet took place in 1718. In 1725, the port city of Brunswick was founded and thrived for many decades. Later in the century, it was eclipsed in commercial activity by another town to the north - which would eventually be called Wilmington.

The river was a hub of activity during and after the Revolutionary War, with tar and turpentine two of the major products. The region also hosted several Civil War battles, while

Wilmington would be the last of the state's coastal city's to fall (Civil War buffs will enjoy historic Fort Fisher on Kure Beach). Today, Wilmington and the Cape Fear River are thriving, thanks to a bustling boating scene and a rejuvenated riverfront.

The area where the Cape Fear River meets the Atlantic is bordered by Bald Head Island to the east and Oak Island/Caswell Beach to the west. Approximately ten miles of the lower Cape Fear River is actually part of the Intracoastal Waterway, connecting Snows Cut in the north to the charming town of Southport, where the Intracoastal picks up its narrow passage again. This ten-mile section is highlighted by Bald Head Island, the new North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher on Kure Beach, relatively easy ocean access, and wide river passage.



Photo courtesy of NC Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development

Bald Head Island Lighthouse

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Save Money With the ABA Boat Finance and Refinance Program

You've refinanced your home mortgage, but how about your boat loan? With interest rates as low as they are, now is an excellent time to refinance that loan or to purchase a boat. And ABA's Boat Finance Program is now available to meet your boat financing needs.

ABA's Boat Finance Program is provided through a partnership with 1st Commercial Corporation of America, a leader and continuous innovator in the field of marine finance for over 36 years. Today the policies and practices they have created are standards of the industry and they offer some of the most competitive rates available. Whether you're purchasing or refinancing a small or large boat, these marine experts will take your loan transaction from application to closing and make it a quick, hassle-free experience.

Get your finance and insurance needs taken care of in one convenient place through the American Boating Association Insurance and Finance Programs at www.americanboating.org. Visit us at www.americanboating.org for details of these money saving programs offering competitive loans and insurance rates for all types of vessels, nationwide. ■

THINK BOATING SAFETY - THERE IS NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT...

by Wayne Spivak, Branch Chief - Training Department, USCG Auxiliary

There is something that every boat owner can be doing during the down time between winterizing your boat and getting ready for the upcoming season.

Think Boating Safety!

There is no time like the present to examine the past boating season, and plan for the next. Maybe you just sold your boat, or are in the process. What type of boat and boating are you now looking forward to? How does this impact the safety of you and your passengers? Are you in need of more boating education? Do you have enough piloting and operating experience in the class of boat that you are purchasing?

Maybe you're keeping your boat for next season, but found you had some difficulties maneuvering her, or confusion about buoys and how to read them. Again, additional boating education may solve this dilemma.

In either case, you are going to need to either check and see if your safety equipment is current (now is a good time to do this) or what type of equipment you may need to purchase.

Here's a list of removable or portable safety equipment (I'm taking a very broad view on the word safety). While not all inclusive, it should cover the majority of the equipment you have, whether federally or state mandated or just common sense items:

- anchor's and anchor rodes - look for corrosion and fray;
- batteries - discharge and service;
- charts, other reference and/or navigational material - check to see if need to be updated;
- coolers - clean them and look for mildew and cracks and replace, if necessary;
- emergency rafts - service;
- fire extinguishers - discharge;
- first aid kits and other personal hygiene items- take inventory and replenish;
- flares and other pyrotechnics - check for expiration;
- foul weather gear and harnesses - check for mildew and corrosion and repair as needed;
- lines - check for chafing and fraying;
- LP - look for corrosion and replenish;
- PFD's - disintegrate, discharge and corrode;
- PIW kits - corrode, disintegrate and repair;
- radio's, EPIRB's and other electronics - look for corrosion and dead batteries;
- rags, towels and other protective clothing - clean and replace as necessary;
- sound producing devices - look for corrosion and replenish;
- tool kit - look for corrosion and service;
- weather forecasting equipment - clean, repair and adjust as necessary.

That can be a lot of gear! Use your time expeditiously and it isn't an insurmountable task. Remember, the last items to replace are those that have an expiration date - such as flares, and other pyrotechnics and first aid supplies.

Service your equipment, making sure it's in the best possible shape for the next boating season and that the equipment matches the type of boat and boating habits you intend on using. Take some courses. First Aid courses, small engine repair, safe boating and navigation courses can make this great sport of ours not only more fun, but safer for you, your passengers and the other boaters that you encounter.

For more information about USCG Auxiliary safe boating courses, contact your local Flotilla via either your local Coast Guard unit or on the web at www.cgaux.org. The Coast Guard can be found in your yellow pages or on the web at www.uscg.mil.

This is an abridged version of this article. To read the full article, please visit the Boating Safety section of the ABA website at www.americanboating.org/safety.htm. ■

New ABA Member Benefit - CityPass Discounts

CityPass is the new way to visit America's most popular cities: Boston, Chicago, Hollywood, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Seattle. Tickets to each city's most famous attractions are combined in an easy booklet for one low price, with no waiting in most ticket lines. For example, the Chicago CityPass includes admission to The Art Institute of Chicago, Shedd Aquarium, The Field Museum, Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum, Museum of Science and Industry, and The Hancock Observatory. The combined regular admission price is \$72.50 for adults and \$51.00 for youth. The CityPass price is \$39.00 for adults and \$29.00 for youth. That's nearly a 50% savings!

To order your CityPass, visit www.americanboating.org/citydiscounts.htm. CityPasses to other cities will be added, so check back often. ■

New ABA Member Benefit - Ski Resort Discounts



As a member of ABA, you can save from \$4.50 - \$12.00 off lift tickets at numerous ski resorts nationwide. Participating resorts include Attitash Bear Peak, NH; Bear Valley Ski Resort, CA; Canyons Ski Resort, UT; Squaw Valley Ski Resort, CA; Sugarbush Ski Resort, VT; Summit Ski Resort, WA; Sunday River Ski Resort, ME; and Waterville Valley, NH. A list of all the participating resorts, visit www.americanboating.org/skidiscounts.htm. ■

Updated ABA Member Benefit - Movie Discounts

The ABA Movie Discount Program has been updated. Discount admission is available to many more theatre chains than previously offered! ABA members can enjoy discounts of up to 25% off adult admission to major theatre chains across the country. To see a full list of participating theatre chains, visit www.americanboating.org/moviediscounts.htm. Some of the participating chains include - AMC Theatres, Cinemark Theatres, Edwards Cinemas, Hoyts Cinemas, Regal Cinemas and United Artists Theatres. ■

ON THE HORIZON

Boat Shows

Representative boat shows are listed below. For a full boat show listing and to link to boat show websites, please visit www.americanboating.org.

March 15 - 16

Ft. Myers Shallow Water Fishing Expo, FL
772-562-5069

World Flyfishing Expo, MA

603-431-4315

March 19 - 23

Fred Hall's Fishing, Tackle & Boat Show, CA
805-389-3339

March 20 - 23

Grand Center Sport, Fishing & Travel Show, MI
616-447-2860

March 21 - 23

Anacortes Floating Boat Show, WA
360-293-4711

Fresno Boat, Sport, and RV Show, CA

775-852-7139

Maine Boatbuilders Show, ME

207-774-1067

Mt. Clemens Boat & Fishing Show, MI

586-465-6440

Pine State Boat Show, ME
207-882-9777

March 27 - 30

Palm Beach Boat Show, FL
800-940-7642

March 28 - 30

Mt. Dora Antique & Classic Boat Festival, FL
352-383-6095

March 29 - 30

Florida Sportsman Fishing Show, FL
813-839-7696

Houston Shallow Water Fishing Expo, TX
772-562-5069

April 3 - 6

Fred Hall's Fishing & Boat Show, CA
805-389-3339

April 4 - 6

Pensacola Boat Show, FL
251-478-7469

April 5 - 6

Ft. Lauderdale Shallow Water Fishing Expo, FL
772-562-5069

April 10 - 13

Canton Boat Show, MD
410-238-0484
Orange County Boat Show, CA
714-663-7581

Cape Fear River - continued from page 1

Bald Head Island is a lightly developed destination accessible only by boat (residents use their private boats or the ferry to get on and off the island, traveling the island in golf carts once there). There's limited shopping and dining, excellent beachcombing, and a nice marina (Bald Head Marina).

Made up of the townships of Carolina Beach and Kure Beach, Pleasure Island borders the Cape Fear to the east. Along with the aquarium and Fort Fisher, the marina facilities and park activities at Carolina Beach State Park and Marina make for a nice stop. Coquina Harbour at Carolina Beach, near Snows Cut, is another option.

North of Snows Cut, the river narrows and the marked channel is quite easy to follow. The commercial traffic can be a bit intimidating at first, but there's plenty of room for all boating traffic.

Daybeacon #59 marks the way to Wilmington Marine Center and Wilmington to the east, as well as the mouth of the Brunswick River to the west (a nice side trip for boaters). Wilmington Marine Center is a great Cape Fear River base, with full modern facilities, friendly staff, complimentary cruising information, and easy access (by short taxi ride) into downtown. It's also the only marina on the river offering both gasoline and diesel.

Historic Wilmington is situated right on the Cape Fear and the revitalized downtown area is a great place for boaters to enjoy sightseeing, shopping, and dining. The long list of highlights of any Wilmington visit has to include: walking along the river; taking a horse-drawn carriage tour; visiting one or more historic homes, like the Burgwin-Wright House, or simply enjoying the city's architecture; the fascinating Cape Fear Museum; the new Louise Wells Cameron Art Museum; touring the famed *Battleship North Carolina* across the river; shopping at Chandler's Wharf (and a meal at the adjacent Pilot House). Special events, including the North Carolina Azalea Festival in April

and Riverfest in October, provide special reasons for boaters to stay overnight, as does a wide variety of inns and B&Bs right downtown (the Graystone Inn is a boater favorite).

Marina facilities along Wilmington's riverfront include the public docks at the Hilton and elsewhere along the riverfront's Riverwalk and J.W. Brooks Warehouse Dock, but dockage space and facilities are limited and it's best for boaters to call in advance.

Further north, more boating opportunities abound. Just north of the public dock area, the river divides in two. The western branch (still simply called the Cape Fear) gets quiet in a hurry, with peaceful boating up to Navassa and the northern section of the

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ABA Boat Insurance Program ABA Boat Finance Program

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Cape Fear River- continued from page 3

The eastern branch is known as the Northeast Cape Fear River and this is also popular with boaters. Cape Fear Marina-Bennett Brothers Yachts provides excellent marina facilities, as well as somewhat of a mecca for fans of the company's custom boats. This section of the river is also busy commercially, but less so the further north one heads.

Thus, from excellent facilities all along the river to the charming river city of Wilmington, there's nothing to fear about visiting the Cape Fear River. In fact, the only fear would be passing it by during a trip along the Intracoastal!

Cape Fear Details

For boating and tourism information, contact the Cape Fear Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau at **800-222-4757** or visit **www.cape-fear.nc.us** (they have an excellent visitors center in the old courthouse at 24 North Third Street). Claiborne Young's book, *Cruising Guide to Coastal North Carolina*, **www.cruisingguide.com**, is also an excellent resource for boating in this area, as well as the rest of the state's coastline.

Contact Information

- Bald Head Marina: **910-457-7380**
- Carolina Beach State Park and Marina: office **910-458-8206**, marina **910-458-7770**
- Coquina Harbour at Carolina Beach: **910-458-5053**
- Wilmington Marine Center: **910-395-5055**
- Riverwalk: **910-341-7855**
- J.W. Brooks Warehouse Dock: **910-251-6635** ■

BOATER'S QUIZ

BWI: Don't Go There

No, this isn't a destination alert about the British West Indies. It's a cautionary look at Boating While Intoxicated, the leading factor in recreational boating deaths in America. For more on this (we hope) sobering issue, check the Boating Safety section of our web site at **www.americanboating.org**.

1. How many boating deaths were reported in the last data year?
 - a. 235
 - b. 701
 - c. 1,002
2. What % were alcohol related?
 - a. 10
 - b. 60
 - c. 31
3. A blood alcohol level of 0.10 equals how many beers?
 - a. 1-3
 - b. 4-6
 - c. 7 or more
4. At that level, how much more likely are you to be killed in a boating accident?
 - a. 50 percent
 - b. Twice
 - c. 10 times
5. In Florida, BWI can get you:
 - a. A fine of up to \$5,000
 - b. 5 years in prison
 - c. Both
6. BWI makes insurance:
 - a. Skyrocket in cost
 - b. Unavailable at any price
 - c. Either
7. In New York, BWI can mean:
 - a. A seat in the state legislature
 - b. Loss of boating privileges
 - c. The death penalty
8. In a crackdown in Tennessee, BWI arrests have . . .
 - a. More than tripled
 - b. Almost doubled
 - c. Increased by 47%
9. Can a BWI conviction be tied to your car driving record?
 - a. Never
 - b. Always
 - c. Often
10. Who pays the greatest costs of BWI?
 - a. The drunk boater
 - b. The uninsured boat owner
 - c. The innocent victim

1b; 2c; 3a; 4a; 5c; 6c; 7b; 8a; 9c; 10c

Key to Answers

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- **ABA Custom Boating Apparel:** 800-480-2053
- **ABA CityPass Discounts:** americanboating.org
- **Alamo Auto Rental Discounts:** 800-354-2322, ID#679044
- **Avis Auto Rental Discounts:** 800-331-1212, AWD#B853101
- **Budget Auto Rental Discounts:** 800-455-2848, ID#X483101
- **Enterprise Rent-A-Car Discounts:** 800-593-0505, ID#KC4551
- **Hertz Auto Rental Discounts:** 800-654-2200, ID#1290122
- **Comfort Inn, Comfort Suites, Clarion, Sleep Inn, Quality Inn, MainStay Suites, Rodeway Inn, and Econo Lodge Discounts:** 800-258-2847, ID#00058336
- **Cendant Hotel Discounts: #60093:**
 - Days Inn, 800-268-2195;
 - Howard Johnson, 800-769-0939;
 - Knights Inn, 800-682-1071;
 - Ramada, 800-462-8035;
 - Travelodge, 800-545-5545;
 - Wingate Inn, 877-202-8814
- **ABA Discount Calling Card:** 800-657-4711, ID#ABA
- **ABA Theme Park, Zoo, and Ski Resort Discounts:** americanboating.org
- **Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruise Line Discounts:** 888-226-2100, ID#8884567887
- **ABA Movie Discount Program:** americanboating.org

*All benefits can be accessed at: americanboating.org
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508-430-2049 (fax)
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