

# THE TATTOO

THETATTOO@GMAIL.COM

MAKING A PERMANENT IMPRESSION SINCE 1994

VOLUME 11 No. 19

## National Seashore offers the best of the beach

By **TEAGUE NEAL**  
The Tattoo

If you're going to Cape Cod, make sure to pay a visit anywhere along the National Seashore.

The Cape Cod National Seashore – encapsulating a large portion of the arm-shaped peninsula off the east coast of Massachusetts – runs for thousands of acres.

A visit can include spending time on one of the beaches that dot this special area, having a hike or perhaps packing a picnic.

Nauset Light Beach, which includes the classic Nauset Lighthouse, is a fine example of what the park offers.

Reddish, soaring cliffs provide a dramatic backdrop to Nauset Light Beach, the widest beach my eyes and feet have come across.

Vacationers swim and sunbathe on a relatively crowd-free stretch of sand, making it a perfect place to pluck just the right seashell as a souvenir of the Cape.

On two nearby trails you can take a leisurely walk or a brisk run on the quarter-mile Buttonbush Trail and the one

and a half mile Nauset Marsh Trail.

Before heading down the trails or off to the beach, visit the National Park Service's visitor's center in Eastham. The center includes displays and dioramas that explain the history and highlights of the National Seashore.

Friendly park rangers are there to answer questions and will provide informative packages of maps and reading material.

A second visitor's center is located in Provincetown, between the Beach Forest Trail and Race Point Beach, though this center is only open seasonally.

The sprawling National Seashore is the ticket for those who want more than simply relaxing on the beach.

Though visitors can still recline with a good book or just listen to the surf, the National Seashore offers a chance to learn much more about Cape Cod, its rich history and all the action it has to offer today.

For more information on the National Park Service, check out the website at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

**Soaring cliffs provide a dramatic backdrop.**



Zach Brokenrope / The Tattoo

A view from the cliffs above Nauset Light Beach.

## Finbacks, humpbacks and sharks, oh my!

By **ZACH BROKENROPE**  
The Tattoo

There are two kinds of whaling in this world. The kind where you watch whales, and the kind where you kill them.

Naturally, I did the former.

On my recent trip to Cape Cod, I was given the opportunity to go into the ocean on a ship and wait for whales to show up for three hours. Doesn't sound very exciting, does it? Well guess what? It actually WAS.

From movies and pictures you can never truly get an accurate depiction of the size of these mammals, but as you stand on the deck in the middle of the ocean you can start to comprehend their mammoth proportions.

From the bow, I saw the whales in epic size, their expansive backs appearing wide enough to easily allow mini-vans to drive across.

A blast of water from its spout demonstrates the size and power of the animal's strong and gigantic lungs.

As sprays of salty sea water cling to my face and the unrelenting sun pounded on my neck, I began to understand why medieval cartographers drew whales as monsters.

Perhaps they did not fear them as animals, but as possibly intelligent forms of life, that given the opportuni-

ty, could manage to control the empire that man had built.



Teague Neal / The Tattoo

Marine biologist Beth Swineford of the Center for Coastal Studies aboard the Dolphin Fleet whale boat off the shores of Cape Cod.

"I love watching whales in their natural environment," said 25-year-old Beth Swineford, a marine biologist on the ship. "We're not obstructing them, and we don't get too close. By us coming out, more people are aware of the need for the conservation of these species and the waters."

Among the animals seen on our trip were a finback whale, which came "unusually close" to the boat, according to Swineford. We also saw a minke whale, two basking sharks and a humpback whale, all off the tip of Cape Cod.

The Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies and Dolphin Fleet run a whale watching tour out of Provincetown, Mass., and this year celebrated their 30th year of oceanic studies.

The Center for Coastal Studies is a non-profit organization that currently boasts the largest catalog of identified whales in North America and also aids in the disentanglement of the species when the huge mammals get caught up in ropes or nets.

Since 1983, the center has helped untangle over 80 whales, according to information provided by the organization.

The Dolphin Fleet, which works with the Center For Coastal Studies, offers several daily whale watch cruises.

Often the boats head for Stellawagen Bank, an area off the coast of Cape Cod where whales are known to migrate, but sometimes they're found much closer to shore.

**Out on the water in search of a whale**

The Dolphin Fleet allows young marine biologists from the Center for Coastal Studies to collect data while teaching passengers about the different types of whales in the ocean, and especially those seen on their trip.

For some, like Swineford, these trips turn into a lifelong passion.

"It's my dream job," said Swineford, a graduate student studying marine biology at East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania.

Swineford spends her summers on Cape Cod, teaching tourists about whales, but during the school year, she

teaches high school biology in East Stroudsburg, Penn.

"I've wanted to be a marine biologist since seventh grade," she said. "In fact, I spent all of my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday money on adopting a whale named Colt. I saw the whale for the first time two weeks ago. I was so excited."

Conservation is something the whales badly need.

More than 50 percent of all humpback whales show scars and signs of entanglement, according to the Center For Coastal Studies. This is especially startling, especially when their population is already on a swift decline.

Swineford said it's important to teach the public about whales.

"We want people to take notice of their actions, and how it affects the environment," she said.

Swineford, whose job aboard the ship is as a naturalist and guide, will continue on the ship for the remainder of the summer.

Whale watching – the pure excitement of seeing the world's largest creatures in their natural environment – proved to be surprisingly exciting and interesting.

Standing aboard the ship's deck, I began to understand the size and scale of some of the world's most amazing animals, a species that is dying too fast.



Zach Brokenrope / The Tattoo

A Cape Cod tidal marsh walk offers a quiet look at native marine life.

## Don't miss Scargo Tower

By **TEAGUE NEAL**  
The Tattoo

When in Cape Cod, scale the swirling staircase through the center of Scargo Tower to truly experience the shape of the Cape and its scenic beauty.

This stone tower, constructed in 1902, stands over 160 feet above the sea atop Scargo Hill.

From the summit, behind historic chest-high walls, you can clearly see the geography of Cape Cod.

Glancing to the west, you see the bulk of Massachusetts. It's said that on a clear day, you can see Boston in the distance.

Look to the east and you can see how the Cape flares out into the Atlantic and curves up into a circular piece of land that contains funky and famed Provincetown at the tip of the 70-mile peninsula that is Cape Cod.

Aside from the coves, nooks and crannies on the water edges of the Cape, it's challenging to get a true sense of the lay of the land from driving its crowded highways.

Forget the photos and postcards displaying the scope of Cape Cod, and instead climb Scargo Tower and see and sense for yourself how it comes together with your own eyes.

From this location you can enjoy the sight and sounds of the small boats along the shores of Scargo Lake below and take in the pastel-colored shingled houses.

You can find this magnificent tower in the 302-year-old town of East Dennis, Massachusetts. The tower is at the top of Scargo Hill Road, off Old Bass River Road.

This little detour is sure to become a treasured memory of your time in Cape Cod.

During your stay, be sure to also trek out to a marsh on the Cape. Here you will be able to enjoy some true New England wildlife, both plant and animal.

Long, lush grass grows throughout large marshes and stretches of beach in various locations along the National Seashore.

Some marshes have long wooden boardwalks stretching out over the water. Take a peek down into the crystal clear waters surrounding you, and you will find small crabs darting in and out.

You may be lucky enough to see the sight of a crab climbing a boardwalk post, giving you a closer look at this intriguing creature.

A trip to the Cape gives you a chance to wade in the temperate waters, collect small seashells that wash ashore and live your life at a slower pace.

## It's all possible in P-town

By **ZACH BROKENROPE**  
The Tattoo

Growing up in the landlocked state of Nebraska did not allow me to see the ocean much as a small child.

Now, at 15, I finally got the chance to visit the Atlantic's salty waters – mostly by visiting the quaint (a word I am told annoyingly describes much of New England in general) village of Provincetown, Mass., which lays nestled at the tip of Cape Cod.

I guess you could say I grew up in a sheltered existence, at least by Provincetown standards, that is.

The city I was born in has graciously welcomed two Super Wal-Marts and is courting a Target, but when an adult boutique purchased space next to a gas station on the outskirts of town, angry members of the religious right protested like it was Satan himself moving in.

This is not the case in Provincetown.

Walking down Commercial Street, the hub of the city's tourism industry, you can find charming little bed and breakfasts quietly sitting next to stores with names like "Spank The Monkey." (One guess what they sell.)

Naturally, I fell in love with the city at first sight.

I had never seen such a diverse group of people packed into one area in my entire life than I did in my short time in Provincetown.

It is a place of numerous ethnic backgrounds (Was that Portuguese I just heard?), lifestyle choices (I just saw two guys holding hands! In public!), and ages (teenagers share the crowded street with 80-year-old men and women).

America is the great "melting pot" and in Provincetown, it proves especially true.

I'm not trying to give the city sainthood or anything – I'm sure its people clash just like any other community.

But here, they seemed to be able to coexist without the threat of immediate violence.

Provincetown is also packed with rich American history.

It was in Provincetown, not Plymouth, where the Pilgrims first stepped off the Mayflower. Though tricky tides sent the Pilgrims away from Cape Cod and on to Plymouth Rock, this piece of history is not forgotten.



Zach Brokenrope / The Tattoo

Commercial Street, Provincetown, Mass.

The Pilgrim Monument stands as a landmark in the center of the city, towering above it and easily visible from miles offshore.

The city scenery also stands as a testament to the picturesque ideas of New England.

It seems nice and refreshing to take a break from the concrete and metal buildings of larger cities and enjoy small wooden houses with white trim and roses clinging to white picket fences.

City crews do a remarkable job of keeping Provincetown clean.

Considering the large number of people in such a small area, there was not an excessive amount of graffiti or trash covering the streets. This made it even more pleasant to wander blissfully, just as I did.

Another nice feature of Provincetown is that, surprisingly, some of the tourist shops aren't out to rob you.

You can find small and interesting trinkets at low prices, which is almost unheard of in bigger cities.

These small, independent stores often hold some of the more interesting merchandise available to tourists, from Army surplus to seashells.

With its relaxed, open atmosphere and ocean-side view, you can bet I'll be back to Provincetown – as soon as I'm of legal age.

[WWW.READTHETATTOO.COM](http://WWW.READTHETATTOO.COM)

The best teen journalism in the world. For questions, comments or to join, contact advisors Steve Collins and Jackie Majerus at (860)523-9632.