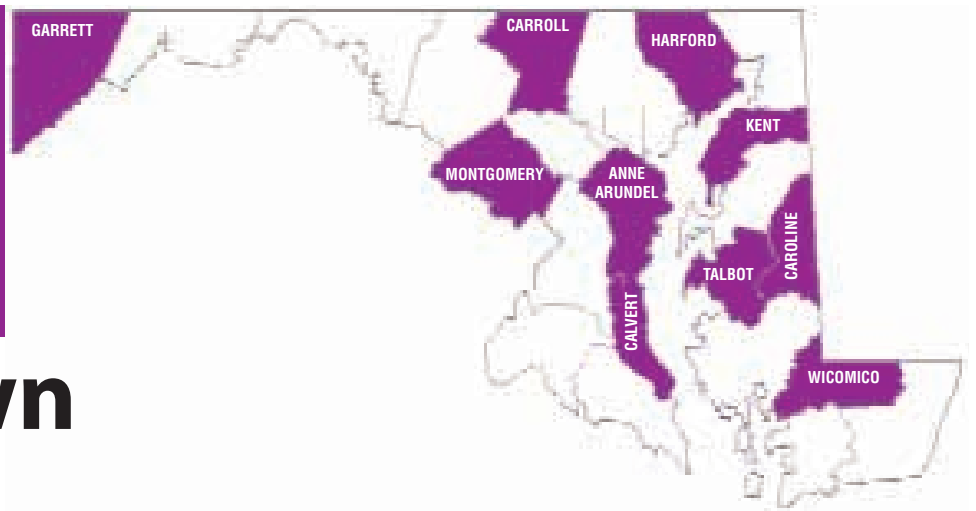


# Destination Maryland



## Assateague Cools Down

### Autumn Is a Great Time to Visit

Autumn is a special time at Assateague Island National Seashore and Assateague State Park in Maryland. The attractions that draw summertime visitors are still there — the broad sandy beaches, the nature trails, surf fishing, kayaking, wind-surfing, stand-up paddling, and — of course — the wild ponies. But gone are the crowds and the swarms of bugs.

Assateague has other perks for off-season visitors as well. Birdwatchers flock to the island to see the thousands of avian ‘tourists’ that stop to rest during their annual southward migration. More than 350 different species of birds have been spotted winging their way over the water or feeding in the marshes on the island. Offshore, dolphins are heading south for their Key West winter sojourn. Keep your camera handy, because patient and lucky dolphin-watchers can spot pods with 20 to 30 members jumping and frolicking in an impromptu water ballet.

After the summer season, the wild ponies share the beach with domestic equines. From early October through mid-May, riders can bring their own horses to the National Seashore and share the Over Sand Vehicle area with motorized vehicles. There is even a campsite designated for horse camping. Call the National Seashore office for details.

With warm days, cool nights, and no biting flies or sand critters, late summer and early fall is the perfect time for tent or RV camping on the beach, too. The campground at the National Seashore is open all year, although the State Park closes its sites at the end of October. Pets have always been allowed in the National Seashore. This year, the State Park revised its regulations to allow dogs in the park, including one camping area.



Horses share the beach with humans beginning in early October.

Without the summer haze and with less light from Ocean City to the north, the night sky at Assateague is completely clear. Stargazers have an exceptional view of the constellations and of meteor showers. (Astronomia.org has a detailed calendar

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