Roque Bluffs State Park

Overview

Roque Bluffs State Park provides visitors with a great diversity of coastal landscapes to enjoy in 274 acres (south of Machias). A beautiful, half-mile crescent of sand and pebbles along Englishman Bay is backed by the shallow waters of 60-acre Simpson Pond—allowing for bracing saltwater swims and much warmer freshwater soaks. Between the beach and the pond are several picnic areas and a children’s play area adjoining the parking area. A three-mile trail network just inland from the shore leads through old orchards, fields and woods, with paths that follow the rocky shores of Great Cove and Pond Cove.

The diverse habitats at Roque Bluffs State Park support abundant wildlife, and bird watchers enjoy interesting sightings at all seasons. Bald eagles frequent the area year-round and many migrant species stop over during spring and fall. Birders occasionally spot less common waterfowl, such as Barrow’s Goldeneye, Redhead and Gadwall ducks, and Hooded Mergansers. During summer months, pipers, plovers and interesting species of gull (like ring-billed) frequent the beach.

Both Englishman Bay and Simpson Pond can be explored by canoe or kayak (with rental kayaks available for use on Simpson Pond). The pond is stocked so anglers can fish for brook trout in the spring and brown trout through much of the summer. Bait fishermen use the pond in fall and winter.

When to Visit

The park is open from May 15 to October 1st, for day-use only, from 9 a.m. to sunset unless otherwise signed at the gate. While parking areas are gated the remainder of the year, visitors may enjoy the trails and beach at any season.

Property History

The sand/pebble beach at Roque Bluffs State Park is an unusual geologic feature along the Downeast coast, much of which is marked by bold cliffs and cobble shores. It resulted from an accumulation of sediment that eroded from a prominent glacial moraine lying to the east. There is a bedrock outcrop at the eastern end of the beach where visitors can see glacial striations (deep grooves in the bedrock left by the glacier’s movement toward the southeast). The evidence here of glacial history has made the Park Stop #29 on Maine’s Ice Age Trail (to learn more, visit http://iceagetrail.umaine.edu/).

Roque Bluffs beach is one of five State Park beaches in the 32-unit Maine Coastal Barrier System which buffer the coast from storms and provide valuable habitat for plants and wildlife.

Offshore, visitors can see Libby Lighthouse (formerly known as Machias Lighthouse because it marks the entrance to Machias Bay). This historic structure, built in 1817, is still an active beacon.

Partners & Supporters

This unusual beach has long been popular with area residents and visitors.

• The Maine State Park Commission used proceeds from a public bond to acquire and protect the land in 1969.
• AmeriCorps Maine Conservation Corps members have provided trail maintenance.
• This brochure was made possible in part by funding assistance through the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trails Program (RTP), administered by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.

Contact the Park if you would like to help with land or trail stewardship.

Consider lending a hand.
Great Cove
Town of Roque Bluff
Boat Launch

Starr Trail
Larry's Loop Trail

Boat launch, trailerable
Playground
Toilets
Picnic area
Overlook

Roque Bluffs State Park
Parking
Handicap accessible

Transportation
Secondary road, Street
Gravel Road

Hiking trail
Trails and Interest Points

Roque Bluffs State Park lies within the Downeast-Acadia Region (www.downeastacadia.com) that encompasses Hancock and Washington Counties and represents the easternmost corner of the United States. Regional destinations include:

- **Cobscook Bay State Park** offers waterfront campsites and a good base for exploring easternmost Maine.
- **Cutler Coast Public Lands** offer 10 miles of trails with 4.5 miles of frontage along the dramatic “bold coast.”
- **Fort O’Brien State Historic Site** guarded the Machias River in the American Revolution, War of 1812 and Civil War.
- **Quoddy Head State Park** has a photogenic lighthouse and scenic waterfront trails along the easternmost point of land in the United States.
- **Rocky Lake Public Lands** offers 10,000 acres of lands well suited to canoeing, fishing and backcountry camping.

For additional hiking opportunities, see the Cobscook Trail guide available at area stores or from Downeast Coastal Conservancy (207-555-4500 or www.downeastcoastalconservancy.org).

**Regional Destinations**

**Special Considerations**

- Please enjoy Roque Bluffs State Park during daylight hours: the main area is gated at night.
- Bring potable water with you as there is none on site.
- Do not leave valuables unattended in your vehicle.
- Visitors are welcome to swim in Englishman’s Bay and Simpson Pond but no lifeguard protection is offered. Those who fish off the beach on Englishman’s Bay should be careful of nearby swimmers. For more on saltwater angling, consult the online Maine Saltwater Angler’s Guide (www.maine.gov/dmr/recreational-fishing/anglers-guide/).
- Kayakers can launch their boats from the beach on Englishman’s Bay, but the State does not own any nearby islands so public access is not guaranteed. Only experienced kayakers should paddle the open waters of Englishman’s Bay, given the potential for fog and wind. Wear a life vest/PFD.

**Trash**

Carry out all trash.

**Pets**

Dogs are not permitted on the ocean beach. Pets must be leashed, attended and under control at all times. Clean up your waste.

**Beverages**

Intoxicating beverages are not permitted.

**Camping**


**Wildlife**

Observe from a distance; do not follow or feed.

**Leave No Trace**

No pick or remove anything.

**Fires**

Kindle fires only at picnic sites with fire pits or grills. Do not cut live vegetation.

**Fishing**

Anglers & hunters must follow all State hunting & fishing laws; visit www.maine.gov/ifw/.

**Firearms**

Discharge weapons within 500 feet of any picnic area, camping area, parking area, marked hiking trail or other developed area. Loaded firearms are not permitted at campites or on hiking trails.

**Regional Destinations**

- **Cobscook Bay State Park** offers waterfront campsites and a good base for exploring easternmost Maine.
- **Cutler Coast Public Lands** offer 10 miles of trails with 4.5 miles of frontage along the dramatic “bold coast.”
- **Fort O’Brien State Historic Site** guarded the Machias River in the American Revolution, War of 1812 and Civil War.
- **Quoddy Head State Park** has a photogenic lighthouse and scenic waterfront trails along the easternmost point of land in the United States.
- **Rocky Lake Public Lands** offers 10,000 acres of lands well suited to canoeing, fishing and backcountry camping.

For additional hiking opportunities, see the Cobscook Trail guide available at area stores or from Downeast Coastal Conservancy (207-555-4500 or www.downeastcoastalconservancy.org).

**Visitor Rules**

- **Trash**
- **Pets**
- **Beverages**
- **Camping**
- **Wildlife**
- **Leave No Trace**
- **Fires**
- **Fishing**
- **Firearms**

**Regional Destinations**

Roque Bluffs State Park lies within the Downeast-Acadia Region (www.downeastacadia.com) that encompasses Hancock and Washington Counties and represents the easternmost corner of the United States. Regional destinations include:

- **Cobscook Bay State Park** offers waterfront campsites and a good base for exploring easternmost Maine.
- **Cutler Coast Public Lands** offer 10 miles of trails with 4.5 miles of frontage along the dramatic “bold coast.”
- **Fort O’Brien State Historic Site** guarded the Machias River in the American Revolution, War of 1812 and Civil War.
- **Quoddy Head State Park** has a photogenic lighthouse and scenic waterfront trails along the easternmost point of land in the United States.
- **Rocky Lake Public Lands** offers 10,000 acres of lands well suited to canoeing, fishing and backcountry camping.

For additional hiking opportunities, see the Cobscook Trail guide available at area stores or from Downeast Coastal Conservancy (207-555-4500 or www.downeastcoastalconservancy.org).

**Regional Destinations**

Roque Bluffs State Park lies within the Downeast-Acadia Region (www.downeastacadia.com) that encompasses Hancock and Washington Counties and represents the easternmost corner of the United States. Regional destinations include:

- **Cobscook Bay State Park** offers waterfront campsites and a good base for exploring easternmost Maine.
- **Cutler Coast Public Lands** offer 10 miles of trails with 4.5 miles of frontage along the dramatic “bold coast.”
- **Fort O’Brien State Historic Site** guarded the Machias River in the American Revolution, War of 1812 and Civil War.
- **Quoddy Head State Park** has a photogenic lighthouse and scenic waterfront trails along the easternmost point of land in the United States.
- **Rocky Lake Public Lands** offers 10,000 acres of lands well suited to canoeing, fishing and backcountry camping.

For additional hiking opportunities, see the Cobscook Trail guide available at area stores or from Downeast Coastal Conservancy (207-555-4500 or www.downeastcoastalconservancy.org).

TRAILS

The main trailhead parking lot is a quarter-mile east of the beach parking lots (up the hill toward Roque Bluffs village). The trail network can also be accessed from the beach parking area via Starr Trail. Three main hiking trails (Houghton’s Hill Trail, Mihill Trail and Pond Cove Trail) and several smaller connector trails (Blueberry Camp Trail and Larry’s Loop) allow visitors to create a variety of hikes meandering through fields and woodlands bordering Pond and Great coves. Trails are color coded and clearly marked on the ground.

- **Houghton’s Hill Trail** (0.8 mile, red blazes) provides a woods walk from the main trailhead to Pond Cove. A picnic table located halfway along the trail offers a place to rest or snack.
- **Mihill Trail** (1 mile, yellow blazes) is accessed via Houghton’s Hill Trail or the Starr Trail to Houghton’s Hill Trail. Mihill Trail ascends a small hill and skirts the shore of Great Cove to the north end of the Pond Cove Trail. Look for two turnoffs providing shortcuts back to Houghton’s Hill (these create Larry’s Loop).
- **Pond Cove Trail** (0.8 mile, green blazes) leads through meadows and woods over largely flat terrain and offers scenic vistas over Pond Cove.
- **Blueberry Camp Trail** (0.2 mile, blue blazes) provides an alternative route to the Houghton’s Hill Trail and climbs a small hill.
- **Starr Trail** (0.3 mile) skirts a wetland and provides a connection from the beach area to the trail network.

**Special Considerations**

- Please enjoy Roque Bluffs State Park during daylight hours: the main area is gated at night.
- Bring potable water with you as there is none on site.
- Do not leave valuables unattended in your vehicle.
- Visitors are welcome to swim in Englishman’s Bay and Simpson Pond but no lifeguard protection is offered. Those who fish off the beach on Englishman’s Bay should be careful of nearby swimmers. For more on saltwater angling, consult the online Maine Saltwater Angler’s Guide (www.maine.gov/dmr/recreational-fishing/anglers-guide/).
- Kayakers can launch their boats from the beach on Englishman’s Bay, but the State does not own any nearby islands so public access is not guaranteed. Only experienced kayakers should paddle the open waters of Englishman’s Bay, given the potential for fog and wind. Wear a life vest/PFD.

**Visitor Rules**

- **Trash**
- **Pets**
- **Beverages**
- **Camping**
- **Wildlife**
- **Leave No Trace**
- **Fires**
- **Fishing**
- **Firearms**

**Regional Destinations**

Roque Bluffs State Park lies within the Downeast-Acadia Region (www.downeastacadia.com) that encompasses Hancock and Washington Counties and represents the easternmost corner of the United States. Regional destinations include:

- **Cobscook Bay State Park** offers waterfront campsites and a good base for exploring easternmost Maine.
- **Cutler Coast Public Lands** offer 10 miles of trails with 4.5 miles of frontage along the dramatic “bold coast.”
- **Fort O’Brien State Historic Site** guarded the Machias River in the American Revolution, War of 1812 and Civil War.
- **Quoddy Head State Park** has a photogenic lighthouse and scenic waterfront trails along the easternmost point of land in the United States.
- **Rocky Lake Public Lands** offers 10,000 acres of lands well suited to canoeing, fishing and backcountry camping.

For additional hiking opportunities, see the Cobscook Trail guide available at area stores or from Downeast Coastal Conservancy (207-555-4500 or www.downeastcoastalconservancy.org).