

Press Statement from Audubon North Carolina, Defenders of Wildlife and Southern Environmental Law Center

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Statement on the Conclusion of Negotiated Rulemaking for Off Road Vehicle Use in Cape Hatteras National Seashore

CHAPEL HILL, NC--When we joined the Cape Hatteras negotiated rulemaking process, we hoped the stakeholder committee would be able to reach a reasonable solution that was based on science, complied with the law, and balanced all interests.

We're disappointed that the stakeholders could not reach a consensus on wildlife protections despite a successful 2008 summer in Cape Hatteras with gains for both wildlife and tourism. The summer of 2008 was the first summer during which more stringent rules governed beach driving on the national seashore, while still allowing miles of beaches to be open to visitor use. Under those rules, bird populations began to rebound and a record number of sea turtle nests were documented while occupancy rates in hotels also increased.

Throughout the negotiated rulemaking meetings, we consistently offered balanced proposals that made reasonable concessions based on science, were consistent with the park's legal requirements, and tried to accommodate the interests of other stakeholders. In fact, the negotiations ended with our most recent proposal still on the table.

We look forward to working with the National Park Service as it proceeds with the rulemaking process to ensure beach access in the national seashore balances the needs of wildlife, pedestrians and vacationing families, and off-road vehicle enthusiasts alike.

About Defenders of Wildlife

Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities. With more than 1 million members, supporters and subscribers, Defenders of Wildlife is a leading advocate for innovative solutions to safeguard our wildlife heritage for generations to come.

About Southern Environmental Law Center

Founded in 1986, Southern Environmental Law Center is the only non-profit regional organization dedicated to protecting the native forests, wetlands, air and water quality,

wildlife habitat and rural landscapes in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. SELC works in partnership with more than 100 diverse groups on legal advocacy, policy reform and public education to achieve lasting environmental protections. www.SouthernEnvironment.org

About Audubon North Carolina

Audubon North Carolina is the state office of the National Audubon Society representing 10,000 grassroots members and nine local chapters across the state. With a century of conservation history in North Carolina, Audubon strives to conserve and restore the habitats we share with all wildlife, focusing on the needs of birds. Audubon North Carolina achieves its mission through a blend of science-based research and conservation, education and outreach, and advocacy. www.ncaudubon.org