

Harvest Moon Lights the Way for Masonboro Island Reserve Paddlers

Visitors to the [Masonboro Island Reserve](#) enjoyed near-perfect weather, a beautiful sunset, and spectacular moonrise on the October 9th Harvest Moon Paddle. Led by North Carolina Coastal Reserve staff and Robert Smith from Watersmith Kayaking, paddlers launched from Trail's End Park in Wilmington and kayaked to the Big Bay area of the Reserve. As they paddled through the smooth waters of the estuary, visitors were treated to the sights and sounds of shorebirds feeding as the evening light faded. After reaching the beach, the group watched the sunset before turning back to paddle in the moonlight.

A "harvest moon" is the full moon closest to the autumn equinox. Harvest moons rise earlier in the evening, shedding abundant moonlight that historically allowed farmers to work late to harvest their crops. This harvest moon lit the way for the group's return to Trail's End.

Fall is a great time to kayak the Masonboro Island Reserve, as summer traffic along the Intracoastal Waterway has subsided but warm weather remains. Plants like purple muhly and glasswort display their autumn colors, and birdwatchers have the chance to spot fall migrants stopping to rest at the Reserve on their journey south. With the right wind speed and tides, the 3.2-mile round trip to Big Bay is an enjoyable paddle for new and experienced kayakers alike.



Kayakers watch the sunset at Masonboro Island Reserve