

Apostle Islands

National Lakeshore
Wisconsin

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Scot Stewart

Wisconsin's northernmost landscape juts out into Lake Superior as the scenic archipelago of 22 Apostle Islands. Long a vacation mecca, the area realized new recreational value in 1970 when Congress named 20 of the islands and 2,500 acres of the peninsula as a national lakeshore managed by the National Park Service. In 1986, Long Island was also included. The region has long been a home to the Ojibwe (Chippewa) people. Early French fur traders called this region the Chequamegon (pronounced She-wah'-me-gon), an Ojibwe word meaning "soft beaver dam." The fur trade, mainly in beaver pelts, was one of the region's longest lasting commercial enterprises. Among these forested, sheltered islands on the world's most expansive freshwater lake, traders built posts for shipping furs bound for Europe via Montreal and, later, down the Mississippi River. Shipping itself, symbolized by the

lakeshore's light stations, became an economic mainstay making eastern and midwestern markets accessible to local fishing, quarrying, logging, mining, and tourism enterprises. Today's national lakeshore offers myriad water and wilderness recreation pursuits amid occasional glimpses of past human activity on the islands. The beaver, superbly adapted to a woodland waterways environment, symbolizes the region's ecological makeup and its early exploitation. Loggers cut conifers and deciduous trees extensively in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The sandstone cliffs on the lake's edge were quarried as building materials for the Midwest's growing cities. As industries following the fur trade rose and fell, an ebb and flow of tourists pilgrimaged here for the beauty and lakeshore recreation of the Apostle Islands and Bayfield Peninsula. That tradition continues today.

The Lake

Lake Superior defines the Apostle Islands—it shapes their ecosystems and sustains life in the region. At 350 miles long, 160 miles wide, and 1,332 feet deep, Lake Superior is the world's largest expanse of fresh water, containing nearly 10 percent of the world's fresh surface water. This mass affects weather patterns and serves as a barrier that helps determine the composition and distribution of island species.

The Land

About one billion years ago, streams carried sand into the region that eventually solidified into sandstone. In the past two million years, glaciers scoured the sandstone, enlarged channels and valleys, and deposited thick layers of gravel, sand, and clay. Lake Superior continues to sculpt these landmasses by carving sandstone cliffs, eroding earthen bluffs, and creating one of the most diverse collections of sandy shorelines in the Great Lakes.

The Edge

The stories of the Apostle Islands are revealed along their "edges"—where water meets land, field meets forest, culture meets culture, and the past meets the future. Shorelines produce the islands' most spectacular scenery. Abundant resources have attracted many cultures to the region. The national lakeshore protects evidence of the past while preserving processes that sustain the region's plant and animal life for the future.

Fur Trade

From about 1660 to 1840 this was a major fur trading center. European demand for robes and felt hats made from beaver pelts

fostered a lucrative trade. At first traders exchanged knives, needles, cookpots, and other goods for furs trapped by Native people. Later, fur companies

hired trappers and voyageurs who hauled the goods in 25- and 36-foot birchbark canoes on the 2,500-mile "voyageurs' highway." The painting below is by Frances Hop-

kins (shown at center). For a decade in the mid-1800s she traveled the traditional canoe routes of Canada with her husband, painting pictures of voyageurs.

Ojibwe People

According to their stories, Ojibwe people have lived in this area since the 1400s. They hunted and gathered food on many islands but regard Madeline Island as their ancestral home. At right is a sample of traditional Ojibwe beadwork.

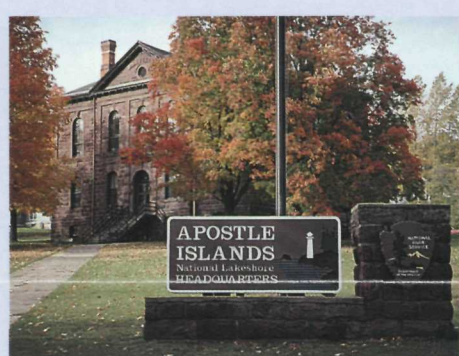


Public Archive of Canada

Quarrying

Shoreline sandstone supplied brownstone for urban Midwest buildings for about 30 years, beginning in 1869. Quarry pits remain on the islands of Stockton, Hermit, and Basswood. Easy access to boat transport made quarrying economical

until extraction costs increased and architectural styles changed. The old Bayfield County courthouse, built of brownstone in 1883, houses the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Visitor Center and park headquarters.



Light Stations and Old-Growth Forest

Between 1857 and 1891 six light stations were built on the Apostle Islands to safely guide ships to Lake Superior ports. The lights saved lives, but they protected more than ships and crews. The islands lie on the edge where northern hardwood forests of sugar maple, yellow birch, oak, and hemlock

meet boreal forests of balsam fir, spruce, and paper birch. Reserves established near light-houses on Devils, Outer, Raspberry, and Sand Islands to provide firewood for keepers resulted in the protection of some of the best examples of old-growth forests in the region.

Tourism

The Apostle Islands have long attracted people to Lake Superior's shore to enjoy recreational experiences. Excursion steamboats, then railroads, brought tourists to Bayfield and the islands

beginning in the mid-1850s. Tourism and recreation were important elements leading to the establishment of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.



Logging

The forested islands attracted lumbermen in the mid-1800s, when population gains spurred a demand for timber construction. Pine logs were rafted across the lake to sawmills at Bayfield,

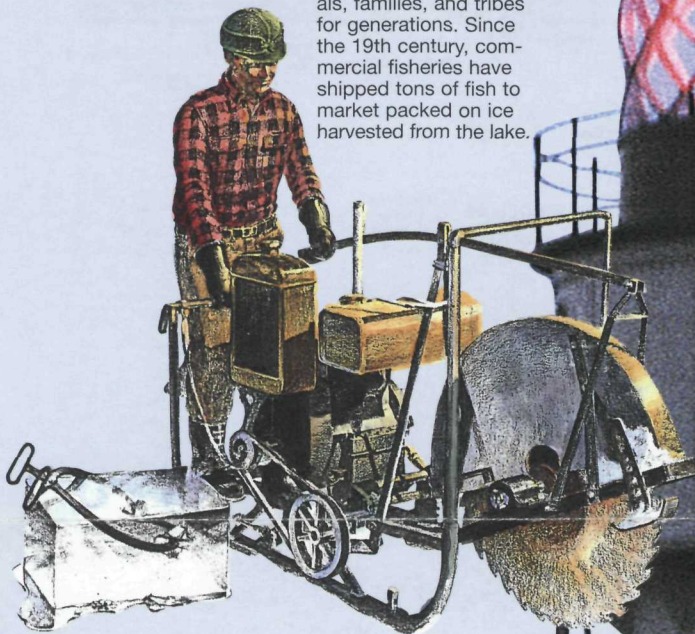
Washburn, and Ashland. After exhausting white pine and hemlock, loggers cut hardwoods, an industry that lasted into the 1950s. Today, maturing forests are again covering the islands.



The Fishery

No one can say when someone pulled the first silvery fish from Lake

Superior, but lake trout, whitefish, and herring have sustained individuals, families, and tribes for generations. Since the 19th century, commercial fisheries have shipped tons of fish to market packed on ice harvested from the lake.



Modern Fishing



Nets began to come up empty in the 1950s, as the parasitic sea lamprey sucked the life out of lake trout and the fishery. Decades of work by biologists and limited takes by anglers have allowed fish populations to recover. The boats of commercial fishermen and recreational anglers are once again common sights among the islands.



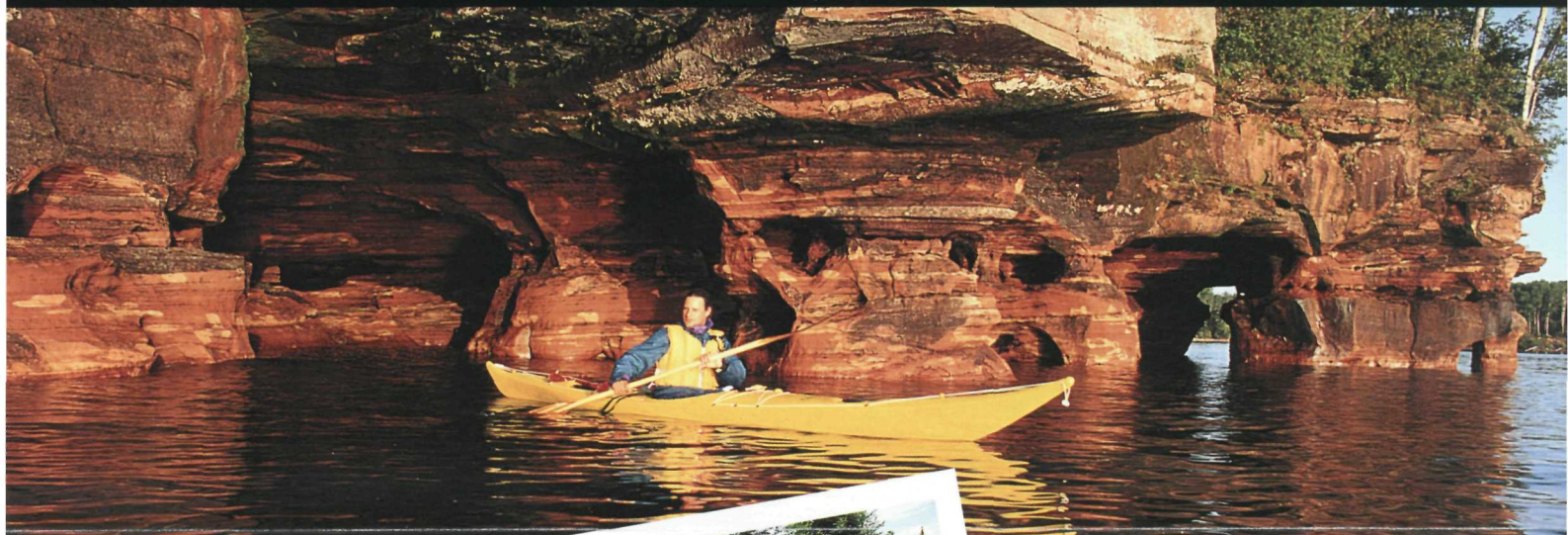
Bird Habitat

The Apostle Islands provide crucial breeding habitat for a diversity of birds. More than 150 bird species nest here, including bald eagles (see chicks below). Most

of these species are migratory; nearly two thirds of them winter in Central or South America. The islands also serve as rest stops for birds crossing the lake in spring and fall.



Exploring Apostle Islands



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Lakeshore Map and Guide

Visitor Center In Bayfield the old county courthouse houses the **Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Visitor Center** (see map below). Here visitors can view audiovisual programs and exhibits portraying the park's history, natural history, and recreation opportunities. Books, maps, nautical charts, and other publications are offered for sale by a nonprofit group that supports the park's information and visitor services programs.

Little Sand Bay Visitor Center is open from June to September with exhibits, sales items, and an information desk. **Stockton Island Visitor Center** is open daily in summer as a self-service facility with intermittent staffing. **Park rangers and volunteers have radio contact with the mainland. Rangers on park patrol boats and the U.S. Coast Guard monitor marine channel 16 to answer questions or respond to emergencies.**

Programs and Activities Schedules for ranger-led activities are available at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore visitor centers or from any ranger. Events include fish camp and lighthouse tours, nature walks, and the junior ranger and campfire programs.

Cultural and Natural Features All natural, historic, and archeological features are protected. Native berries and nuts may be gathered by hand for personal consumption. Dead wood on the ground in forested areas or unvegetated beach areas may be collected for firewood. Chainsaws may not be operated in the park. Rock collecting is not permitted. Leave any historic or archeological artifacts where you find them.

Accommodations and Services Island campsites are the only overnight facilities within the lakeshore. Nearby communities have motels, restaurants, and stores. Campgrounds with a range of facilities are run by private, tribal, city, county, state, and national forest entities.

Respect Property Rights Some cabins and docks within national lakeshore boundaries are privately occupied. Respect the rights of the occupants; do not trespass.



For More Information
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore
Route 1, Box 4
Bayfield, WI 54814
715-779-3397
www.nps.gov/apis

Pets All pets must be on a leash—no longer than six feet—and under control at all times. They must not be left unattended. Pets are prohibited on excursion boats.

Hiking Hiking trails are available on the mainland and many islands. Trails range from South Twin's ¼-mile trail to Stockton's 14.5 miles. Oak Island's interesting topography, overlook, and backcountry camping opportunities make its 11.5 miles of trails popular with hikers. If you get lost, stay near the water's edge and signal for help. **Hiking near cliffs can be dangerous** because of slippery rock. **Backcountry hikers**—tell a ranger of your plans and report in when you return.

Camping Camping permits are required for all camping in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. A camping permit fee is charged. Permits allow campers to reserve campsites in advance. For information on permits, campsite location, facilities, areas closed to camping, and fees, check the "Camping" brochure. Practice "Leave No Trace" outdoor skills. Pack out all trash. Build fires in fire receptacles where provided. Bears may be found throughout the islands. **Food must be secured in**

bear-resistant storage lockers, in galley areas of boats, or hung out of reach.

Wintertime Winter activities are increasing in popularity. Park hiking trails may be used for skiing and snowshoeing. Over-ice travel is permitted, but extreme caution is recommended because conditions can be unpredictable and hazardous. Snowmobiles may be operated only on approved routes in the park. Winter campers should register at the park headquarters visitor center in Bayfield. Winter's beauty masks harsh conditions that pose extreme dangers to the unwary and unprepared. Temperatures of -10°F and wind chill factors of -30°F are not uncommon. Up to 100 inches of snow fall each year.

Hunting Hunting and trapping are allowed in designated areas of the national lakeshore. Special regulations apply that may differ from published state regulations. Wisconsin state licenses or certain tribal identification cards are required. Contact park rangers for information regarding authorized dates, times, and locations.

Red Cliff Indian Reservation Lands owned by the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewas are adjacent to the mainland portion of the national lakeshore. The Red Cliff community is three miles north of Bayfield. Facilities and services include a casino, marina, boat launch ramp, and campground (fees).

Madeline Island Not part of the national lakeshore, Madeline Island attractions include Big Bay State Park and the Madeline Island Historical Museum. Car ferries—printed schedules available—run from spring breakup to winter freeze.

Fees A camping permit fee is charged. Additional user fees may be charged for overnight camping and boating and for guided lighthouse tours. Please see a ranger or www.nps.gov/apis for details. Eighty percent of all fees collected stay at Apostle Islands and are used to improve interpretation, resource protection, and facilities.

Boat Trips A variety of excursion trips (fee) to and through the islands depart from Bayfield daily in summer. Water taxis (fee) can be contracted to provide service from Bayfield to island points for one to six passengers. Obtain information on schedules and rates for boat trips and services from the visitor center in Bayfield.

Boating Boat launch facilities are available at Little Sand Bay and at several locations outside

the national lakeshore boundary. Marinas in the area offer equipment, gear, fuel, mooring, and storage for boats up to 60 feet long. See map for locations of public docks. Obey posted regulations and information signs. Rent sailboats and arrange day-long and half-day trolling trips for trout and salmon at area marinas. **Floatplanes and personal watercraft (jet skis) may not be operated in park waters.**

Scuba Diving Shipwrecks and sea caves are among the diving opportunities here. A free permit is required to scuba dive in park waters. The permit can be obtained at the park's mainland visitor centers. Do not disturb or remove artifacts; all are protected by law. Divers must display a dive flag.

Sea Kayaking Sea kayaking is a popular way to explore islands close to the mainland. Good launch sites are found

at Little Sand Bay and Meyers Beach. Equipment rentals and lessons are available in Bayfield.

Fishing Islands offer no inland fishing, but Lake Superior provides good sport fishing for lake, brown, and rainbow trout and other salmon species. Peninsula streams harbor brook, rainbow, and brown trout and spawning salmon. A Wisconsin fishing license and a trout stamp are required; state regulations apply. Refuge areas are closed to fishing.

Swimming Lake Superior waters seldom are warm enough for comfortable swimming except in shallow, protected bays. Swimming within 100 feet of public docks is prohibited within the national lakeshore. Underwater hazards make diving from rocky shorelines dangerous. No life-guards are on duty.

Drinking Water Warning Filter or boil lake water for at least two minutes before drinking. Do not pollute the

lake with soap, fish entrails, human waste, or other contaminants.

Holding Tanks and Bilges Pumping of holding tanks and oily bilges into the lake violates state and federal regulations, which are strictly enforced here.

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WARNING, Dangerous Waters. Lake Superior waters are dangerously cold, and sudden storms arise. The lake's history is replete with

shipwrecks and violent storms. Small boats, canoes, and kayaks should be used with extreme caution on Lake Superior. Just off-

shore, 50°F waters can cause even strong swimmers to suffer hypothermia in 15 minutes. Swimming is not recommended in

Lake Superior. Keep an eye on the weather even on calm days. Before you set out, get the current weather forecast from the U.S.

Coast Guard Station at Bayfield or at an island ranger station. The marine weather frequency on your marine radio is 162.55

MHz (Duluth). For safe navigation you should refer to NOAA nautical charts #14973 or #14966.

