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The Wildwoods, NJ: A Mecca for Fishing, Boating, and Water Sports

The Wildwoods, NJ – Situated on the southernmost barrier island off the Cape May County peninsula in New Jersey, the Wildwoods are a natural favorite for those who enjoy fishing, boating, and water sports.

For much of the year, the waters off the Wildwoods are bustling with commercial and sport fishing boats returning to their home ports filled with the day's catch.

Cape May County's commercial fishing port is the largest in New Jersey and one of the largest on the East Coast. There is a reason why the fishing port is so successful: The waters off the shores of the Wildwoods are ripe with flounder, weakfish, blackfish, bluefish, and striped bass.

Not only do commercial fishermen know the value of the area, but those who fish for fun are aware of the ocean's plentiful bounty, too. Throughout the warmer months of the year, visitors and locals alike enjoy taking the entire family out for a day of boating and fishing. The bayside of the island is filled with boat slips and marinas where boat owners keep their vessels, as well as where charter and party boat operators dock their boats.

Charter and party boat captains in the Wildwoods offer a variety of excursions, ranging from night fishing trips for bluefish or drum fish; full-day excursions in search of tuna, marlin, and swordfish; or a Mississippi River-style paddleboat journey for those who prefer to take in the serene sights rather than catching "the big one." Whether it's a family outing or a day out with friends, fishing in the Wildwoods' waters will grant you some of the largest catches off the coast and back bays along the Jersey Shore. Fishing boats typically offer four, six or eight-hour trips. Those who find themselves in need of fishing equipment are gladly outfitted with the necessary rigs and bait.

Although there's always a chance of returning to port empty-handed, seafood lovers need not worry. Many of the seafood markets throughout the island can provide the fresh treasured catches that got away.

In addition to fishing charters, there are several sightseeing boats and charter rentals in the Wildwoods, each with a captain well-versed in the local marine environment and all with a near-perfect record for finding schools of bottle-nosed dolphins and often whales that make the local waters their home in the summer. The Wildwoods also offer tiki boat cruises that take you and five guests along the shore of the Wildwoods for a private party, restaurant hopping, a sunset cruise, early morning, and evening tours, and more! In addition, several locations around the Wildwoods also offer pontoon kayak, and SUP rentals for a more private and/or self-touring experience.

Another maritime activity favored by those in the Wildwoods is crabbing, done in the marshy areas and back bays of the island. Crabbing is a fun, low-cost activity the entire family can enjoy from area bulkheads, fishing piers, or from a boat using nets, cages, or handlines. There are bait and tackle shops throughout the Wildwoods where personnel will help the most inexperienced crabbers choose bait and

equipment and provide suggestions and tips for bringing in a good catch that can feed an entire family a fresh blue claw crab dinner.

For thrill-seekers, the Wildwoods offer high-speed water excursions onboard large speedboats that race along the shores, giving passengers an exhilarating and often refreshing glimpse of the island and its environs from the ocean.

For the more independent thrill-seekers, personal watercraft vehicles (wave runners) can be rented by the hour or day along the beach and bay. Windsurfing is another popular activity for water lovers, especially in Wildwood Crest's vast Sunset Lake, which has ample space and wind without the wake of the ocean. Parasailing along the coastline is yet another option offering an unmatched maritime experience.

Whether you opt for a full day of fishing, a sightseeing dinner cruise or a few hours zipping over the waves, don't miss the opportunity to take advantage of the Wildwoods' prime location, surrounded by the bounty and beauty of the sea.

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