

# SAY “AHOY”

TO A HIGH SEAS ADVENTURE By Diana LaChance

If you think the Caribbean is the place for pirates, then you haven't been to the **Crystal Coast**—North Carolina's Southern Outer Banks. Home to Blackbeard, the most notorious pirate of them all, Crystal Coast is the perfect destination for a true pirate adventure.

Start with a dive down to the wreckage of Blackbeard's flagship, the **Queen Anne's Revenge**, which was discovered in 1996 after being lost to historians for nearly 300 years. This opportunity, available to recreational divers, offers shipwreck enthusiasts the chance to explore one of the nation's most important underwater archeological discoveries.

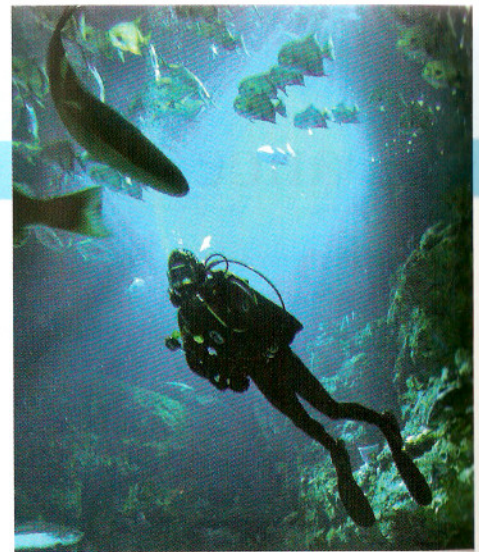
And why not check out some of the other shipwrecks in the area while you're there? The Crystal Coast is the site of nearly 2,000 underwater vessels, earning it the nickname, “Graveyard of the Atlantic.” Once you're topside, you'll want to examine



the extensive collection of buccaneer booty at the North Carolina Maritime Museum, the official repository of artifacts found on the *Queen Anne's Revenge*.

For those who prefer to stay above the water's surface, an unparalleled kayaking experience can be found along the coast's intricate inlets and waterways, the former haunt of villainous buccaneers. Make sure to stop off at the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, where a climb to the top is rewarded with a breathtaking view of the Crystal Coast's sparkling waters and sandy shores, relatively unchanged since Blackbeard's day.

Your pirate adventure won't be complete without a trip to historic Beaufort. Start with a guided tour of the town's well-preserved collection of period buildings dating back to the turn of the 19th century, including Blackbeard's own home of Hammock House. You may also



want to pay a visit to one of the oldest cemeteries in the state, the nearby Old Burying Grounds. Then enjoy a bite to eat at a waterfront café, where you can take in the view of wild horses on Carrot Island. Complete your day with a ferry ride to Shackleford Banks, a protected island known for its pristine beaches.

In short, whether you're a sea dog or a landlubber, the Crystal Coast has something for everyone. Its colorful pirate past only adds to its appeal, making it a unique vacation destination that's both educational and interactive. *For more information call (800) 786-6962 or visit [www.crystalcoastnc.org](http://www.crystalcoastnc.org).*