



By **Sandy Noyes**

**Napeague Harbor**, near Montauk, NY –  
April 24, 2008

After a superb afternoon and evening today paddling at this site, which I think features one of LI's most beautiful pristine habitats--about as good as it gets--I am posting these remarks:

Air temperature about 70, water temperature about 58, wind: North 5 knots, cloudless sky. Put in at 2-pm, took out at 7-pm. High tide, about 4-pm.

Note: tides at Napeague are about 1.5 hours later than tides predicted for Sag Harbor and Shelter Island Sound.

Napeague is a round-oval shaped water body, almost a lagoon, about one mile in diameter, with two outlets to LI Sound at the north end around both sides of Hicks Island. The east inlet is 25 yards wide and 100 yards long, and developed about 2kt of current today during maximum outflow, with six inch standing waves. I didn't investigate the west outlet, but it is much larger than the east outlet. The east and north shores including Hicks Is. are State Park managed. The nearest Coast Guard station is at Montauk, 631 668 2992.

Paddling south along the east shore, water depth was never more than 4 feet in the two hours after high tide. Water at the north shore is exceptionally clear and is virtually ocean water, warmed up by the sun. After approx. a mile going north, the shore becomes a white sand crescent beach extending west to the inlet at Goff Point, perfect for stopping for lunch and a hike over to the Sound side, about 100 yards, where you face Gardiners Island on the horizon. The scene has a wilderness feeling to it. Piping Plover breeding grounds are fenced off in two areas. An active town shellfish hatchery is moored 200 yards offshore in the harbor; other than that, you are alone in nature in a peaceful

undisturbed setting. No powerboats. Visible buildings are limited to a section of the southeast shore near the railroad tracks--about 10 small houses.



*Napeague Shoreline*

Napeague would be ideal for beginners, unless west or southwest winds kick up, in which case the mile fetch can rapidly create 1-2 foot waves at the put-in. The east shore of the harbor is well protected by dunes in east and northeast winds. North winds of 10-12 kt can cause 1 to 2-foot waves to build up at the put-in but as you proceed north they will diminish to wavelets.

### **Sightings:**

Saw 4 swans, one piping plover, 20 cormorants, and one osprey. This date is too early for seeing much wildlife; in summer I have seen hundreds of shorebirds feeding on the sandbar south off Goff Point at low tide.

### **Directions:**

From the tall white flagpole at east end of the town of Amagansett, proceed 5.5 miles on Rt. 27 to Napeague Harbor Road on the left. Go 0.6 miles on this to the end at the "Walking Dunes" trailhead sign. Parking is unrestricted on either side of the road. Carry kayaks 25 feet to shore.

For further reading, see Mike Bottini's book, *Exploring East End Waters, A Natural History and Paddling Guide*, 2005, pp. 171-176.

Sandy