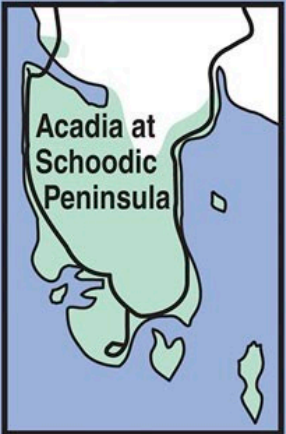


**Acadia National Park**  
 Park Land  
 Carriage Roads



# Mount Desert Island

## BAR HARBOR

## SOUTHWEST HARBOR

## NORTHEAST HARBOR

## BASS HARBOR

Atlantic Ocean

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MILE

## AIO Points of Interest

Over the years, students at AIO have visited many different ecosystems on Mount Desert Island. The accompanying map will lead to 21 of our favorites but there are many more that you may remember. Keep in mind, you will have to buy a pass to enter Acadia National Park and there is a fee and reservation system to access Cadillac Mountain.

1. **Seal Harbor** – This is your starting point and the location of AIO (9 Lower Dunbar Rd). We've spent a lot of time at the Seal Harbor beach and dock for collecting of organisms, crab surveys and just relaxing on the beach. You might remember climbing on the floating dock?
2. **Hunters Beach** – This was the site of many of our night walk adventures. Go down Cooksey Drive to the parking on the left and follow a trail down to the beach. Not to be confused with Little Hunters Beach off of the Park Loop (and another great cobble beach to visit. This is one stop on our geology lesson)
3. **Otter Cliffs, Otter Point and Otter Cove** – Follow the one-way park loop past Otter Cliffs Rd. or take Otter Cliffs Rd from Rt. 3 (to avoid the Ranger fee booth but you'll also be past Sand Beach and some other hikes). You'll see Otter Cliffs on your left (parking is across from it) and then continue to Otter Point parking. We use the tidepools here quite often. Continue on the one way to Otter Cove where we do our mudflat lesson.
4. **Thunder Hole** – Best to visit this during a mid-flood tide (incoming). Often there isn't anything special here but it can be loud during rough seas. There are rocks at the bottom of the hole that get knocked around when the tide comes, causing them "rattle" like thunder. Be very careful not to stand too close to the edge... a strong wave could come in unexpectedly.
5. **Sand Beach** – This is the only real beach on the island (the sand is trucked in for other beaches). There were some storms that really changed the profile of this beach this winter so it's interesting to compare it to the profiles we did when you visited us.
6. **Great Head Trail** – This trail is reached off of Schooner Head road or by walking to the end of Sand Beach. The trail is a figure 8, walking through a beautiful birch forest and along the shoreline with some spectacular views.
7. **Schooner Head Overlook** – The access road to this can be reached either coming out of Bar Harbor or just before the Ranger fee station on the park loop road. Go to the end and take the trail down to the rocky coast. You may remember we did our transects here.

8. **Precipice Trail** – This is one of the steepest trails in Acadia National Park and is technically considered a climb. There are places to climb over boulders and ladders so dress accordingly. It isn't open most of the summer since Peregrine Falcons now nest on one of the cliff faces but it should be open again by the middle of August when the chicks leave the nest.
9. **Bar Harbor** – What to say... it's Bar Harbor!
10. **Salisbury Cove** – This has a pretty shoreline but it is the home of MDIBL.. the Mount Desert Island Biological Lab. We used to run tours here with students and several have done internships here.
11. **Thompson Island** – This is the small island between the mainland and MDI. You cross two bridges to get onto MDI and this is located after the first one. This has a nice picnic area, and this is where we did our mud flat lessons at one time. It's quite expansive and where many locals clam.
12. **Pretty Marsh** – While we now do our saltmarsh lesson at No Name Marsh which is protected by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, we used to go over to Pretty Marsh. It's a large and beautiful marsh land that hasn't changed since we first started visiting in 1975.
13. **Echo Lake** – This is our "go to" freshwater swimming site during the summers. It has a human-made beach at south end and Ike's point is mid-way down 102 towards that beach (the spot where we do our practice snorkel sometimes).
14. **Somes Sound** – We've been testing the waters of Somes Sound since we started 50 years ago. We plan to go here during our boat trip on Sunday so join us if you'd like to see it (and several of these spots) again. It is considered the only natural fjord on the eastern seaboard.
15. **Bernard/Back Beach** – This is a spot where several of our Advanced session snorkels spent time during their ocean snorkel. It's off 102A and is tucked away but it's an easy spot to get in for a snorkel. It's a rocky beach so not good for sunbathing.
16. **Bass Harbor Headlight** – Next to Portland Headlight, this is one of the most photographed lighthouses in New England. It's located in Tremont and is easily accessible for a beautiful picture. There are wooden stairs that lead down to the rocks where you can get a perfect view. You can walk up to it from the back from the parking lot.
17. **Wonderland/Ship Harbor Trail** – Also located on Rt. 102A, Wonderland tidal pools are some of the best on the island. They are a 10-15 minute walk from the parking lot (which is quite small, by the way, so many park along the road). It's a fairly flat walk and flat rock once you reach the pools. Check the tide but it's a great place to spend lots of time exploring and reaching organisms typically found in the sublittoral zones. The Ship Harbor Trail is just a bit further down past the Wonderland Parking lot and it is an easy hike with information markers along the way. This is the site of an Irish shipwreck whose survivors were taken

in by people in Wayne, Maine. Ancestors of those Irish passengers still live there today.

18. **Little Cranberry Island/Isleford** – Only reachable by boat, this is where we take students for lunch and exploring after our fishing trips. It is home to the Little Cranberry Fisherman's Co-op which is the setting for the great book, *The Secret Life of Lobsters*.
19. **Jordan Pond/The Bubbles** – The Jordan Pond house is a popular spot to eat lunch/dinner on the grass and have a great view of the Bubbles. Stop by for some famous popovers and jam! There is a hike around Jordan Pond and, of course, you can always hike the very popular South Bubble where you can try to push off the glacial erratic at the top... every one of our students likes to try. The North Bubble is also a great hike and less crowded. Parking is very limited due to the very small lot but it's a fun and short hike with a great view.
20. **Beech Mountain** – Accessed by following Beech Hill Rd. to the end where you'll find the parking lot. This is a relative short hike with two ways up. One is a faster, more uphill hike (take the left split on the trail) and one is a gentler slope that takes longer but offers great views of Long Pond. These two trails connect to make a big loop and both lead to the summit and a fire tower. If you're adventurous, you can walk north along the summit and take a fairly easy trail down that is the longest but will walk you through some of my favorite forests and rock ledges.
21. **Cadillac Mountain** – Finally, Cadillac Mountain. Every AIO student has been to top of Cadillac where we often begin our sessions with a great overview of the entire island, it's geology and history. In the fog, you will sometimes be above it on the top of Cadillac. Again, you'll need to make a reservation online at the [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov).

Please keep in mind that the Island sustained a good deal of damage from winter storms this year and repairs are ongoing. Check ahead at [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov) for any road or trail closures before heading out.