

WILMINGTON, N.C. — Summer brings a palpable surf vibe to Wilmington and the island beaches of Carolina Beach, Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach. Surfers of all skill levels are lured by warm ocean waves and paddlers are drawn to calmer waters in the sound and the river. The surf culture on these shores dates back to 1909, according to a N.C. Historic Highway marker that recognizes Wrightsville Beach as the birthplace of surfing in North Carolina. Today, surfers still fuel their stoke in Wrightsville Beach, as well as nearby Carolina Beach and Kure Beach.

On any given morning surfers paddle out past the surf, eager to catch the day's first waves as the sun rises over the Atlantic Ocean. Local residents like Jenn and Tony Butler embrace the surf culture, never taking for granted that they live (and surf) in a coastal community that non-residents travel great distances to visit. The active lifestyle of Wilmington's island beaches affords plenty of watersports and outdoor activities. Surfers and paddlers can rent or bring their own boards, or take a lesson to learn the basics. Around every bend there are surf shops, outfitters and several surf schools, as well as surf-themed restaurants like SurfBerry and Tower 7 Baja Mex in Wrightsville Beach, or Hang Ten Grill and Surf House in Carolina Beach. Coffee shops bear names like Café del Mar, SUNdays and Island Java. There's even a Waterman's Hall of Fame exhibit at the Wrightsville Beach Museum of History that interprets island history and surf culture. Surf and SUP competitions take place year-round, including late summer when a half dozen or so surf contests delight competitors, amateurs and spectators.

AUGUST 10: **"THE HERO EFFECT" PREMIERE PARTY**: 6pm-9pm. You can be among the first to preview "The Hero Effect," a show that will feature Wrightsville Beach-based IndoJax Surf Charities before it airs August 12 on the Oprah Winfrey Network. Admission charge. **Blockade Runner Resort**, Wrightsville Beach. 910-256-2251.

AUGUST 12-13: **WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH WAHINE CLASSIC**. Move over boys of summer! Surfer girls ride again August 12-13 when wahines of all ages and levels compete in an all-female surf event on the South end of Wrightsville Beach. This beloved Wrightsville Beach surfing tradition includes several divisions: Pro-Shortboard and Pro-Longboard (all ages), Amateur Shortboard and Longboard (grouped by age), Tandem, SUP Surf and the crowd favorite Teenie Wahine (ages 10 and under). Wrightsville Beach (South end). **www.wahineclassic.com**

AUGUST 18-20: 12th ANNUAL **O'NEILL/SWEETWATER PRO-AM SURF FEST**. Contest begins 8:00am each day. The O'Neill/Sweetwater Pro-Am Surf Fest is the 2nd largest surfing contest on the East Coast. Dozens of amateur surfers and an average of 96 professional surfers from around the world participate. Past professional winners include Rob Machado, Fisher Heverly and Avon Cormican. Location: Oceanic Street, Wrightsville Beach. 910-256-3821.

AUGUST 21: **SURFER'S HEALING**. Day camps that enrich the lives of people living with autism by exposing them to the unique experience of surfing with local surf volunteers. Wrightsville Beach.,

SEPTEMBER 9: **ESA-SNC CONTEST** #5: The Eastern Surfing Association (ESA) was founded in 1967 to promote, preserve, and protect the sport of surfing on the East Coast. Carolina Beach Fishing Pier

(north end), Carolina Beach.

ONGOING: **SUNSET SUP RACE**, 6pm-8pm. Alternating Thursday evenings, from August 3 through August 31. All levels welcome; races for adults and kids. Blockade Runner Resort, 275 Waynick Blvd., Wrightsville Beach. 910-256-2251.

Find your summer vibe in Wilmington, N.C. and its island beaches, one destination with four unique settings. For summer highlights and specials visit www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/things-to-do/seasonal-highlights/. For a free Official Visitors Guide for Wilmington and the island beaches of **Carolina Beach**, **Kure Beach** and **Wrightsville Beach**, please call 1-866-266-9690 or email visit@wilmingtonandbeaches.com. For online visitor information and a complete Calendar of Events, please visit the website www.WilmingtonAndBeaches.com.

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