

## Weekly News Summary for Sunday, March 23, 2025.

**Today's program starts with some business news.** And this month focuses on the performance of the Hatteras Island real estate market through February of this year. A summary for February would be that there is not much change since last month's report, writes Radio Hatteras Business Correspondent Tom Hranicka. The number of homes for sale continued to be strong with the inventory up 107% over the February 2024 supply of properties. This result may not be as strong as it appears. You may recall that it was not until April of last year that the number of properties available for buyers to purchase started to increase.

Residential sales increased almost 41% above the first two months of last year. However, looking at long-term trends, sales continued to show a downward pattern with an average of 19 per month having been sold since January 2023.

Selling prices remained strong with the median residential sale price reported as \$644,000.

Here is where somewhat of a mystery comes into play. Traditional economic theory says that when supply exceeds demand, price can be expected to fall. This has not happened in our local market.

The number of properties under contract to be sold reported a decrease, also following a downward long-term trend. Except for an increase in the number of properties for sale and the median sale price, the performance in all major categories in the undeveloped lot market was either flat or negative.

The winter months are historically not a strong time of the year for lot sales.

In other measures of the Hatteras Island economy, meal tax receipts for January were basically flat from the level reported in January 2024. Occupancy tax receipts for January increased 24% over the previous year. January is a historically strong month for reservations as renters seek to lock in the dates for their vacations.

Looking back on 2024, visitations to the Cape Hatteras National Seashore were down slightly by 2.3%. Vehicle traffic on the Hatteras to Ocracoke ferry was down over 8%, probably influenced by periods of bad weather when ferry operations were suspended.

**As of Noon, Friday, March 21, 2025,** a Burn Ban has been issued for all unincorporated areas of Dare County including Hatteras Island. The North Carolina Fire Code Section 307.1.1 states "open burning shall be prohibited when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make such fires hazardous."

Dare County Fire Marshal Steve Kovacs reminds citizens that all burning within 100' of any structure is banned within the unincorporated areas of Dare County. The burn ban does not apply to charcoal or gas grills, provided fire safety precautions are taken.

This ban is in coordination with the Statewide Burn Ban implemented Friday morning by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and the North Carolina Forest Service. The current and future weather forecast models indicate conditions that are not favorable to open burning.

The burn ban will remain in place until further notice. People with questions about the burn ban, can contact the Dare County Fire Marshal's office at 252-475-5750.

**Scammers are active.** On March 21, 2025, the Dare County Sheriff's Office issued the following public service announcement: The Clerk of Court Office has been spoofed. The office's telephone number is being used to request money for documents, to purge documents and/or other services. If you receive this call do NOT give out your financial information. The Clerk's Office and the Dare County Sheriff's Office will never call and request money from you over the telephone.

If you are concerned, call the Clerk's Office 252-475-5200.

Additionally, a scammer is using the number 252-302-3891 claiming they are Lt. Martin Paige of the Dare County Sheriff's Office. The Dare County Sheriff's Office does not have an employee by that name. Remember, never give your financial information over the phone for the Sheriff's Office or Clerk of Court.

**North Carolina Governor** Stein launched a new website to welcome talented and dedicated people to apply to work for the State of North Carolina. This website encourages people who were displaced due to Hurricane Helene or recent federal job cuts to consider coming to work with the state of North Carolina. The site also provides resources for service members, their spouses, and veterans to apply for positions in North Carolina state government.

“North Carolina is a great place to live, play, and work,” said Stein. “Public servants help make our state everything that it is. The State of North Carolina is proud to welcome smart and dedicated public-spirited people to join our team.” “If you have recently been displaced from your career of service, North Carolina encourages you to apply,” said Office of State Human Resources Director Staci Meyer.

Interested public servants can apply on [nc.gov/joinNC](https://nc.gov/joinNC) where applicants will be connected with an employment recruiter to help match their skills to a job in state government.

**On Thursday, March 27**, a research team from East Carolina University will host two open houses on Hatteras Island. The topic is housing. The first event is from 11-1 at the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Community Building, 23646 Hwy 12, Rodanthe. The second open house is from 4 to 6 at the Fessenden Center Annex, 47017 Buxton Back Road.

### **Fisheries announcements from NOAA and state Marine Fisheries**

#### **Length of the 2025 Recreational Fishing Season set for Gag in the South Atlantic Region**

The 2025 recreational fishing season for gag in federal waters of the South Atlantic will start at 12:01 a.m., May 1, 2025, and end at 12:01 a.m., June 26.

NOAA Fisheries estimates that recreational landings during the 2025 fishing season will reach the 2025 recreational annual catch limit of 176,665 pounds gutted weight by June 26, 2025.

Recreational harvest for the 2026 fishing year in South Atlantic federal waters will open at 12:01 a.m., May 1, 2026, unless otherwise specified.

NOAA Fisheries must reduce the length of the 2025 season because recreational landings in 2024 exceeded the 2024 recreational annual catch limit.

#### **2025-2026 Recreational Fishing Season set for Black Sea Bass in the South Atlantic Region**

The 2025-2026 recreational fishing season for black sea bass in federal waters of the South Atlantic, **south of Cape Hatteras, will open at 12:01 a.m., April 1, 2025, and remain open through March 31, 2026.**

Estimates indicate recreational landings for the 2025-2026 fishing year will be below the 2025-2026 recreational catch limit. Therefore, black sea bass will be open for the entire 2025-2026 recreational fishing year.

NOAA Fisheries projects that the 2025-2026 recreational catch limit of 366,510 pounds whole weight will not be met.

#### **Recreational Snowy Grouper Season in South Atlantic Federal Waters opening set**

NOAA Fisheries must reduce the length of the 2025 recreational fishing season for snowy grouper as recreational landings in 2024 exceeded the recreational catch limit. The recreational harvest of snowy grouper in federal waters of the South Atlantic will open at 12:01 a.m., May 1, and close at 12:01 a.m., June 9, 2025.

The snowy grouper recreational catch limit is set at 1,691 fish for 2024 and 1,713 fish for 2025. Preliminary 2024 South Atlantic snowy grouper recreational landings for the entire year (January 1 through December 31) were 5,778 fish. Recreational landings are projected to reach the 2025 recreational catch limit by June 9, 2025.

When the recreational sector for snowy grouper is closed, the bag and possession limits for snowy grouper harvested in or from the South Atlantic federal waters are zero.

The 2026 recreational fishing season for snowy grouper in the South Atlantic will open on May 1, 2026.

**North Carolina Marine Fisheries Proclamation FF-14-2025 closed the recreational harvest of Golden Tilefish on March 22, 2025.** The closure is due to the 2025 annual catch limit being met. The golden tilefish recreational season will re-open January 1, 2026

NOAA Fisheries closed the recreational fishing season for golden tilefish in federal waters of the South Atlantic March 21. NOAA Fisheries predicts that recreational golden tilefish landings will reach the recreational annual catch limit of 2,694 fish for the 2025 fishing year by March 21, 2025.

**A New district court judge has been appointed.** Jennifer Wells of Kitty Hawk, an assistant public defense attorney in northeastern North Carolina, has been appointed by Governor Josh Stein to serve as District Court judge through next year.

Wells will fill the vacancy left when Judge Edgar Barnes retired last month after 28 years as District Court Judge. Wells has worked since 2014 as a public defender in the First Judicial District, which includes Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Pasquotank, and Perquimans counties, and was assigned to Dare County.

**The last Outer Edge** installment is now live. So far, the series has racked up 138,000 views. Go to [outerbanks.org/edge](http://outerbanks.org/edge) to view all six episodes.

**Nearly 200,000 cans of Good & Gather Cut Green Beans have been recalled.** The recalled product was sold at Target locations in 21 states, including North Carolina. On March 13, the FDA labeled the recall a Class II threat. On February 12, California-based Del Monte Foods, Inc. voluntarily recalled its Good & Gather Cut Green Beans. The product was sold in 14.5-ounce cans and has a UPC of 085239-11628 9, best-if-used-by date of October 28, 2026, and lot code of 7AA418507.

**March is 'Music in the Schools' Month,** and Cape Hatteras Secondary Bands have had an outstanding month! Congratulations to both the 7th/8th Grade Middle School band and the High School band. Over two days both groups traveled to Williamston to participate in the North Carolina Bandmasters Association Eastern District Music Performance Assessment. Both groups earned the highest rating of 'Superior' from all four judges. This is a historic first time a middle school band from Cape Hatteras Secondary School has participated, and earned the highest rating. This is the second year in a row the High School Band has earned 'Straight Superiors.'

**Here's a Special birthday.** On February 4 at the basketball game in Ocracoke, Gene Stoel, one of the referees, asked to make a special announcement. It was Gene's 80th birthday. He had asked Amanda Gaskins to bake five sheet cakes, which the school boosters cut and distributed free in the commons next to the court. Go to the Island Free Press to see the amazing history of Gene's refereeing. And, thanks Gene for many years of service on the courts and fields on Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands.

**There's a Dare County EMS Dare MedFlight Open House** On Saturday, March 29, from 10 to 1 at the Dare County EMS Station 7, the Duvall/Willoughby Hangar, 1078 Driftwood Drive in Manteo. The hangar doors will be open for a free, family friendly event to let the Outer Banks community tour the Dare MedFlight helicopter, the new hangar and an ambulance and to meet crew members.

Visitors will learn about the essential role played in rapidly responding to situation that require a patient to be transferred to medical facilities outside Dare County.

In addition to providing tours of the helicopter, hangar and an ambulance, the open house will also feature various activities for children and adults and allow attendees to participate in Q&A sessions with Dare County EMS staff members to learn about life-saving treatments they can perform. Light refreshments will also be served during the event.

Dare MedFlight first began operating in Dare County in 1975 in an effort to ensure that all levels of medical care are accessible to residents and visitors of the Outer Banks, including rapid critical care services for patients experiencing trauma, heart attacks, burns and strokes. For 50 years, Dare County has been recognized as a pioneer in providing innovative aeromedical transport services through the use of Dare MedFlight, which is one of only three county-owned primary mission aeromedical operations that exist in the entire nation.

**Now be safe out there. This is Radio Hatteras.**