

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE OCEANOGRAPHY SOCIETY

Oceanography

CITATION

Lozier, M.S. 2016. Oceanographers at the beach. *Oceanography* 29(2):8–9,
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5670/oceanog.2016.26>.

DOI

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5670/oceanog.2016.26>

COPYRIGHT

This article has been published in *Oceanography*, Volume 29, Number 2, a quarterly journal of The Oceanography Society. Copyright 2016 by The Oceanography Society. All rights reserved.

USAGE

Permission is granted to copy this article for use in teaching and research. Republication, systematic reproduction, or collective redistribution of any portion of this article by photocopy machine, reposting, or other means is permitted only with the approval of The Oceanography Society. Send all correspondence to: info@tos.org or The Oceanography Society, PO Box 1931, Rockville, MD 20849-1931, USA.

Oceanographers at the Beach

It's June, when my brain starts thinking of ocean temperatures in degrees Fahrenheit rather than degrees Celsius. Clearly, I am readying for ocean swims. In anticipation of your summer vacation and mine, I have asked a handful of my (favorite) fellow oceanographers to name their favorite beaches and beach reads. Essentially, I have compiled a top-ten list of beaches and books for oceanographers. You will see that some oceanographers can't get enough of science, even at the beach; some are looking for total escape, some for culture, others for adventure; and at least one oceanographer reads papers that will give him a good beach sleep! Who knew?

Enjoy the selections below and your next beach vacation!

Rick Murray, Boston University

My favorite beach is East Beach on Chappaquiddick Island, Martha's Vineyard. I've been to hundreds of beaches all around the world, but this one is tops, perhaps because I've had the privilege of going there since I was a wee laddie.

As for my favorite beach read, I bounce around between forget-as-soon-as-finished spy novel silly readings or long books about, well, the ocean, such as *Voyage* by Sterling Hayden or Melville's *Moby Dick*. I like good yarns that in essence offer a commentary on the human condition. In that vein, I'm also partial to the history of aspects of science or medicine (including biographies) or the development of a particular component of civilization (e.g., of maritime commerce).

Kim Martini, JISAO, University of Washington, and Deep Sea News science blogger

While some may go to the beach for the sun and sand, I say, go for the physics. Turnagain Arm is just an hour's drive south of Anchorage, Alaska, and boasts some of the largest tides in the world. When the tide floods, vast quantities of water are squeezed into this narrow inlet, forming a tidal bore surfed for miles by humans and followed by opportunistic beluga whales searching for food. When the tide ebbs, vast mud flats painted with ripples and etched with miniature canyons are revealed. The dynamical beauty of this beach is best matched with a blanket and the captivating "The origin and growth of ripple-mark" by Hertha Marks Ayrton, a pioneering scientist, engineer, and fluid dynamicist. Written with an irrepressible sense of wonder and accompanied by delightful hand-drawn illustrations, this century-old text is both an ode to science and to the beach.

Stefanie Mack, Old Dominion University, graduate student, TOS Council student representative

My favorite beach is probably North Carolina's Emerald Isle. I have fond memories of vacationing there with my grandparents as a child, and steaming our own fresh caught crabs!

I love using books to temporarily disconnect from reality. I'm currently enjoying Brandon Sanderson's fantasy writing, specifically his logical and almost scientific treatment of magic.

Fiamma Straneo, WHOI, 2016 Sverdrup Lecturer

Black Beach on Buzzards Bay is my favorite beach. It owes its name to the outcropping peat layers formed by salt marshes retreating inland as sea level rose and glaciers retreated. Even when distracted by the turquoise waters, the glacial boulder sitting in the water reminds you of its origins. Getting to Black Beach is part of its charm: it is only accessible by boat, a long walk from Chapoquoit Beach, or by bike. Biking is my favorite because you pass through the teeming Great Sippewissett Marsh—where you can see striped bass, quahogs, blue crabs, and more kinds of herons that I can name. Any visit to this beach is incomplete if you don't hop over the sand dunes and explore its multitude of colors and sounds, before settling back down in the warm, peat-rich sand.

My kids' seemingly endless energy at the beach (and elsewhere really) leaves little room for captivating novels or thought-provoking nonfiction. Poetry collections work best because I can get from start to end of a poem in a few stolen breaks. Mary Oliver's collection *What Do We Know*, inspired by many of the same surroundings, gives me the same sense of awe as the nature around me.

Mark Cane, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University, 2016 TOS Fellow

I can't decide on one favorite beach, so here are contenders:

1. Nostalgic choice: Riis Park in New York City, because I went there a lot as a child and teenager. So did Arnold Gordon.
2. Current use: Miami Beach, where I spend the winters now. Interesting crowd.
3. Best I've seen: Canoa Quebrada, in Ceara, Brazil. Tudo biem.

My favorite beach read is M.S. Lozier, 2010 *Science*, "Deconstructing the conveyor belt." A great read, and short, so I can lie on the beach and think deep thoughts.

Rana Fine, University of Miami, 2016 TOS Fellow

Like most oceanographers, I love all to do with the sea and especially beaches. My favorites are the thousand islands in Florida Bay south of the peninsula. These islands are tiny, uninhabited by humans, and only accessible by boat. There is a small amount of sand beach surrounding each island. Most of the islands have only mangroves, some have upland vegetation.

My favorite beach reads are books that give a glimpse into other cultures. Some of these include: Nadine Gordimer's *The Burger's Daughter*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Abraham Verghese's *Cutting for Stone*, Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*, Anchee Min's *Red Azalea*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*.

Chawalit "Net" Charoenpong, MIT/WHOI Joint Program student, 2016 Outstanding Student Paper Award from the American Geophysical Union

My favorite beaches are the ones on Lanta Island situated off the Andaman coast of southern Thailand. Those white sandy beaches are stunningly scenic and also they were where my whole oceanography career started. I was in my sophomore year as a marine biology student when I visited this island to help out a team of scientists who were conducting aerial surveys of the endangered dugong population.

The Beach by Alex Garland is my favorite beach read. It is a tale about a British backpacker who was in search of a beautiful beach unbeknownst to tourists on a secret island located in the Gulf of Thailand. The book is packed with excitement and adventure. It is not only the appropriate choice because its story is set in Thailand but also because I think we, as oceanographers, should be able to find many things about the protagonist to relate to in this book.

Emily Newsom, University of Washington graduate student, 2016 Outstanding Student Paper Award from the American Geophysical Union

McWay Falls Beach in Big Sur, California, is my favorite beach in my favorite place—there's really no place quite like it! Also, the phone service is terrible in this whole area, which is a major plus.

Favorite beach reads: *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr and *Tuesday Nights in 1980* by Molly Prentiss. Neither of these are very light, but they are "beach" reads for me because each was recently mailed to me by a friend (so I exerted no effort in getting them), and each is beautifully written and has nothing to do with science!

Claudia Benitez-Nelson, University of South Carolina

Having visited beaches all over the world, my favorite is in my own backyard, on South Carolina's Folly Island. The beach is absolutely beautiful—white sand in every direction, minimal crowds, and the only place that I've actually had the pleasure of swimming with wild dolphins. The water is warm and it is a great spot to body surf.

I love to escape into my books—so science fiction and mysteries are my favorite "for pleasure" reads. I have two that I recommend: *The Martian* by Andy Weir (better than the movie!) and *Wool* by Hugh Howey. They keep my brain engaged without making me work too hard.

Mel Briscoe, Retired, Founding TOS Secretary

My all-time favorite beach is the San Souci in front of the New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel in Waikiki, Honolulu, Hawaii. It has the view, the history (including Robert Louis Stevenson—*Home is the Sailor, Home from Sea*), the Hau Tree Restaurant nearby for breakfast, and humuhumunukunukuapua'a (reef triggerfish) swimming in the waters. My second favorite beach is whatever one I am on, or scuba diving in front of. My first favorite book was *Kon-Tiki*, on which I gave a book review in the fifth grade, and then I got to see the raft itself in Oslo. My most recent favorite book was the *Sea of Cortez*, and reading it last year while sitting on the beach in La Paz.

Enjoy your summer!



M. Susan Lozier, TOS President