

Seven kid-friendly Cape Cod destinations

By Necee Regis | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JUNE 10, 2012



WELLFLEET BAY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary offers camps and hands-on educational programs for children.



The two most dreaded words children can utter on vacation are: "I'm bored!" When the typical answer, "How can you be bored? We're on vacation!" results in only more whining and moping, you may wish you had planned your trip with

some kid-friendly activities in mind. The following local arts organizations, nature centers, and hotels offer programs to keep young ones and even teens entertained.

The **Chatham Bars Inn** in Chatham, a luxury resort located on a private quarter-mile stretch of beach, offers fun and educational children's programs from late June through early September. Morning sessions (8:30-noon) and evening sessions (5-9, including dinner) are organized by age group, and creatively named: Beach Buddies



(ages 4-6), Clam Diggers (ages 7-9), and Wash-A-Shores (ages 10-12). In culinary classes for budding chefs, younger participants focus on fun desserts like cookies and fruit creations while older ones prepare anything from sushi to soup. The hotel offers sailing instruction and tennis clinics for all ages, as well as programs that teach about rain forest reptiles, sustainable agriculture, ship-to-shore Morse code-wireless communication, and snorkeling. Field trips feature local destinations such as the fire station, a wildlife refuge, the fish pier, a National Seashore beach, Cape Cod Baseball League games, the Chatham Bars Inn Farm, and local art fairs, parades, and special events. *Kids' programs: morning \$45; evening \$65, includes dinner; additional siblings discounted \$10; 800-527-4884, www.chathambarsinn.com*

For families visiting Provincetown, there is fun on land and sea. Whale watches are terrific but sometimes a three- to four-hour cruise is too long for younger visitors. The **Viking Princess**, a 40-foot-long passenger excursion vessel, offers a solution: a 75-minute, hands-on educational tour they dubbed the "Critter Cruise." A naturalist leads each excursion into the bay where kids can help pull up a lobster pot or a bottom dredge to see what they will find. The catch is displayed in the Tide Pool Touch Tank, a miniature marine habitat that allows kids to see the "critters" in a natural setting. Don't worry: The catch is later

released, unharmed, to the areas they were collected from. Critter Cruises are offered two or three times daily during July and August, and at select times in the spring and fall. *Critter Cruises, adults \$25; ages 1-12 \$20; 508-487-7323, www.capecodcotours.com/cruises.htm*

On land, the **Provincetown Art Association and Museum** is offering two-hour Art Adventures on Wednesdays and Thursdays July 5-Aug. 23. Led by artist and educator Cathy Skowron, children 6-12 are encouraged to unleash their inner Picasso in drawing, painting, collage, and mixed media.



Programs change from week to week. The inspired art making takes place inside the Museum School studios, the association's galleries, and outside. All materials are supplied. *\$25 a day, \$45 a week, \$325 all 9 weeks, 508-487-1750; www.paam.org*

The natural beauty of Cape Cod is a big part of its allure, so why not sign the kids up for nature walks, field study, and habitat exploration programs with local organizations?

With 5 miles of scenic trails that wind through woodlands, salt marsh, barrier beach, and heath, **Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary** is a popular destination. Educational programs are offered year round, though they are especially active in summer months. The easy-to-use website provides a way to navigate the many offerings for families, teens, and camp activities for children 13 and under. Staying for a week? Natural History Day Camp sessions are variable by age, including half- and full-day programs. All campers enjoy exploring the property's varied landscape, and older campers travel off-site for activities such as kayaking, whale watching, and snorkeling. *South Wellfleet, camp (ages 4-13) weekly rates: half-/full-day \$185/\$245-\$320 members; \$250/\$310-\$385 nonmembers; 508-349-2615, www.massaudubon.org/wellfleetcamp*

In Brewster, the **Museum of Natural**



History offers KidSummer, a series of indoor and outdoor programs focused on learning and appreciating the environment for ages 3-12. Educators and naturalists lead weekly (three- to five-day), half- or full-day nature-themed activities on the 400-acre “campus” of marsh, dunes, barrier beach, woodlands, alewife stream, and wildflower gardens. Only have one day to play? Adults and children together can enjoy the popular Mudflat Mania! Bring a pail, wear water shoes, and head out (at low tide) to learn about the creatures living on, in, and under the Cape’s mudflats. *KidSummer weekly rates: members \$140-\$290, nonmembers \$160-\$315; Mudflat Mania! adults \$6, children \$4; 508-896-3867, www.ccmnh.org*



MAUREEN DWYER

The **Red Jacket Beach Resort** is one of five related properties in South Yarmouth and West Yarmouth, (including Blue Water Resort, Riviera Beach Resort, Blue Rock Golf Resort, and the Green Harbor Resort) offering free summer recreation events for children ages 5 to 12. Called Kids Klub, the fun happens Mondays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with extensive programs of age-appropriate games such as capture the flag, Whiffleball, soccer, sack races, bocce, croquet, and Hoops-Abound on the basketball court. Indoor pool activities include water polo volleyball, relay races, basic swimming lessons, and more. Creative youngsters will enjoy the arts and crafts, origami, spin art, jewelry design, and art play. The Black Rock Golf Course encourages children to tee off with adults, and families can participate in beach yoga, kayaks and jet ski rentals, Wii tournaments, and hermit crab races. In the evening, activities include poolside movies, live music, and bonfires. *Kids Klub free; 800-672-0500, www.redjacketresorts.com/red-jacket-beach-resort.php*

In Hyannis, the **Cape Codder Resort and Spa** offers free programs for kids seven days a week in the summer and, since they are open year round, during school vacation weeks. The resort is designed to be a place



where guests come and never want to leave, and that means something is always going on. Activities change from day to day but each week includes arts and crafts, face painting, balloon animals, juggling, bingo, volleyball, field games like capture the flag, tug-of-war, and tag, ice cream socials, Peek A Zoo, a show with live animals from the Zooquarium, and more. Toast marshmallows every night at a bonfire and, weather permitting, watch a variety of child-appropriate movies outside on a giant screen. Two swimming pools add to the fun: an indoor wave pool and a recently opened heated outdoor pool. The salty waves of Cape Cod Bay and the shops of Main Street are a short drive away. *Kids' summer activity program free; 888-297-2200, www.capecodderresort.com*

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