

OUTER BANKS GEOGRAPHY

Barrier islands are unstable and are shaped by the winds, daily tides and wave action. When you find a black shell, or see the uncovered stumps and roots of trees on the beach, it is evidence of these forces.

Inlets are formed when entrapped storm tides escape over low places in the barrier islands. Normal tides keep the inlets open but the channels shift as currents move the unstable sands.

Shallow waters and offshore bars are associated with the barrier islands and are hazards for ships that pass by. Lighthouses on the islands enabled the navigators of ships to determine their positions and to steer clear of danger. Even so, hundreds of shipwrecks along the North Carolina shores are evidence of this grave hazard.

Geography, more than any other factor has contributed to the isolated lifestyles of Banks dwellers.

