

**Doggin'
Long Island**
***The 30 Best Places
To Hike With Your Dog
In New York's Playground***

DOUG GELBERT

illustrations by

ANDREW CHESWORTH



Cruden Bay Books



There is always a new trail to look forward to...

**DOGGIN' LONG ISLAND: THE 30 BEST PLACES TO HIKE
WITH YOUR DOG IN NEW YORK'S PLAYGROUND**

Copyright 2008 by Cruden Bay Books

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the Publisher.

Cruden Bay Books
PO Box 467
Montchanin, DE 19710
www.hikewithyourdog.com

International Standard Book Number 978-0-9815346-3-3

*“Dogs are our link to paradise...to sit with a dog on a hillside
on a glorious afternoon is to be back in Eden,
where doing nothing was not boring - it was peace.”
- Milan Kundera*

Ahead On The Trail

The Best Of The Best	18
No Dogs!	20
The 30 Best Places To Hike With Your Dog	23
Long Distance Trails	84
Your Dog At The Beach	87
Camping With Your Dog	95
Index To Parks, Trails And Open Space	107
<i>Also...</i>	
Hiking With Your Dog	7
Let's Talk Ticks	10
Outfitting Your Dog For A Hike	12
Low Impact Hiking With Your Dog	15
Suffolk County Green Key	16
DEC Permits	17
Your Dog In The Dog Park	98
How To Follow A Trail	100
Is Your Dog Overheating?	101
Your Dog And Skunks	102
Your Dog's Tough Feet	103
The Perfect Dog Bath	104

Introduction

Long Island can be a great place to hike with your dog. Within a short drive your canine adventurer can be climbing seaside dunes that leave him panting, trotting in rolling pinelands, exploring the estates of America's wealthiest families or circling lakes for miles and never lose sight of the water.

I have selected what I consider to be the 30 best places to take your dog for an outing on Long Island and ranked them according to subjective criteria including the variety of hikes available, opportunities for canine swimming and pleasure of the walks. The rankings include a mix of parks that feature long walks and parks that contain short walks. Did I miss your favorite? Let us know at www.hikewithyourdog.com.

For dog owners it is important to realize that not all parks are open to our best trail companions (see page 20 for a list of major parks that do not allow dogs). It is sometimes hard to believe but not everyone loves dogs. We are, in fact, in the minority when compared with our non-dog owning neighbors.

So when visiting a park always keep your dog under control and clean up any messes and we can all expect our great parks to remain open to our dogs. And maybe some others will see the light as well. *Remember, every time you go out with your dog you are an ambassador for all dog owners.*

Grab that leash and hit the trail!

DBG

Hiking With Your Dog

So you want to start hiking with your dog. Hiking with your dog can be a fascinating way to explore Long Island from a canine perspective. Some things to consider:

Dog's Health

Hiking can be a wonderful preventative for any number of physical and behavioral disorders. One in every three dogs is overweight and running up trails and leaping through streams is great exercise to help keep pounds off. Hiking can also relieve boredom in a dog's routine and calm dogs prone to destructive habits. And hiking with your dog strengthens the overall owner/dog bond.

Breed of Dog

All dogs enjoy the new scents and sights of a trail. But some dogs are better suited to hiking than others. If you don't as yet have a hiking companion, select a breed that matches your interests. Do you look forward to an entire afternoon's hiking? You'll need a dog bred to keep up with such a pace, such as a retriever or a spaniel. Is a half-hour enough walking for you? It may not be for an energetic dog like a border collie. If you already have a hiking friend, tailor your plans to his abilities.

Conditioning

Just like humans, dogs need to be acclimated to the task at hand. An inactive dog cannot be expected to bounce from the easy chair in the den to complete a 3-hour hike. You must also be physically able to restrain your dog if confronted with distractions on the trail (like a scampering squirrel or a pack of joggers). Have your dog checked by a veterinarian before significantly increasing his activity level.

Weather

Hot, humid Long Island summers do not do dogs any favors. With no sweat glands and only panting available to disperse body heat, dogs are more susceptible to heat stroke than we are. Unusually rapid panting and/or a bright red tongue are signs of heat exhaustion in your

pet. Always carry enough water for your hike. Even the prime hiking days of late fall through early spring that don't seem too warm can cause discomfort in dark-coated dogs if the sun is shining brightly. During cold snaps, short-coated breeds may require additional attention.

Trail Hazards

Dogs won't get poison ivy but they can transfer it to you. Some trails are littered with small pieces of broken glass that can slice a dog's paws. Nasty thorns can also blanket trails that we in shoes may never notice. At the beach beware of sand spurs that can often be present in scrubby, sandy areas.

Rattlesnakes and Cooperheads

It is at this point in these guides that we warn about the potential dangers of rattlesnakes and other copperheads. Rattlesnakes or copperheads are present in every state; New York State even had a bounty on timber rattlesnakes as late as 1971. But it has been 100 years since a rattlesnake has been seen in the wild east of New York City. In fact, there are no poisonous snakes on Long Island. Your dog may still startle a big snake on the trail, an eastern hognose that was once so common children collected them in buckets to sell to pet stores or a black racer, but nothing to elicit concern.



Black Bears and Coyotes

And even though black bear populations are expanding across the Northeast, Long Island is still not a place they live. Coyotes have also become more common, now living everywhere in New York - except Long Island.

Porcupines

The docile porcupine is slow-moving and easy to catch. Wouldn't you be too if you were covered with a coat of sharp quills? The porcupine is actually a rodent, the world's fourth largest. It is a good climber and is found in forest across temperate climates throughout America.

A balled-up porcupine is a magnet for a curious dog. And a disaster in the waiting if he catches one. If your dog gets quilled try to pull out the sharp quills with whatever tool is available (if you are near home or car, a pair of pliers is your best bet). If you cannot extricate the quill, do not cut it. When cut, the barbed portion of the quill imbedded under the skin is likely to swell, making complete removal extremely difficult.

If you cannot get the quill out, seek professional help as quickly as possible. Try and prevent your dog from rubbing the affected area as this will push the quills in deeper. Easier said than done. The veterinarian will probably anesthetize your dog to accomplish the task and treat the wound with anti-biotics. Like any trail hazard the best solution is prevention - keep your dog in sight and under control.

Water

Surface water, including fast-flowing streams, is likely to be infested with a microscopic protozoa called *Giardia*, waiting to wreak havoc on a dog's intestinal system. The most common symptom is crippling diarrhea. Algae, pollutants and contaminants can all be in streams, ponds and puddles. If possible, carry fresh water for your dog on the trail - your dog can even learn to drink happily from a squirt bottle.

At the beach, cool sea water will be tempting for your dog but try to limit any drinking as much as possible. Again, have plenty of fresh water available for your dog to drink instead.

Let's Talk Ticks

You could hike with your dog forever on Long Island and never be bothered by ticks. All you need to do is hike only on wide, well-mown and maintained trails and keep your dog squarely in the middle of the path the entire time. But that isn't realistic. So you and your dog are going to pick up ticks while hiking Long Island trails. Let's look at some myths and misconceptions concerning ticks:

TALL TICK TALE #1 - Removing Ticks From Your Dog (or yourself)

How many times have you heard that the proper method - the ONLY safe way to remove ticks - is with tweezers. Smearing vaseline on the tick first is even better. This is supposed to guarantee the tick's head will not stay embedded in your dog. Well, how many times do you have vaseline and tweezers at the ready when you find a tick on your dog? The ONLY safe way to deal with a tick is to get it off as quickly as possible. A tick (and we're talking deer ticks, not the larger and much more common dog tick) cannot infect your dog with Lyme Disease bacteria until it is embedded for some time (usually more than 24 hours). So don't be shy about removing a tick with your fingers. Get in there and get it out.

TALL TICK TALE #2 - Leave As Little Of Your Skin Exposed As Possible To Keep Ticks Off You

It doesn't take many trips into the woods to realize that wearing long sleeves and tucking long pants into socks to stave off ticks is just plain ridiculous. All you do when you load up on clothes in the summer - besides sweat - is give your tiny enemy a lifetime's worth of hiding places. Are you more likely to detect a tick crawling on your bare leg or sneaking up your shirt sleeve? So you don't need to dress like a beekeeper outdoors to detect ticks - just check your skin and your dog regularly as you walk. When a tick hitches a ride on you or your dog it doesn't settle in for a meal immediately. It checks out the new digs by wandering around for awhile, typically 4 - 6 hours. Catching a tick at this time is the easiest way to combat it.

TALL TICK TALE #3 - *The Best Way To Avoid Ticks In The First Place Is To Stay Away From Trees*

What is it with irrational fears we harbor about our hair? Bats don't fly into our hair and ticks don't lurk on tree limbs eyeing the tops of our heads like tycoons checking out oceanfront property. Leave your tick-fighting hat at home. Ticks spend most of their time clinging to wispy blades of long grass waiting for a warm-blooded passerby to hitch a ride. The best place way to avoid ticks is to keep your dog and yourself out in the middle of a trail as much as possible.

TALL TICK TALE #4 - *It Is Cold Outside; I Don't Need To Worry About Ticks*

When the summer sun fades away don't stop thinking about ticks - they remain active any time the temperature is above 30 degrees. In the winter, in fact, you may find more ticks on your dog than any other time of the year.

If you want to be outdoors, you aren't going to avoid all ticks. But if you deal with them realistically, you don't need to avoid the outdoors, either. By checking your dog - and yourself - thoroughly after each walk, you can help avoid Lyme disease. Ticks tend to congregate on your dog's ears, between the toes and around the neck and head. Also pay special attention across the center of her back.

"The greatest pleasure of a dog is that you may make a fool of yourself with him, and not only will he not scold you, but will make a fool of himself too."

- Samuel Butler

Outfitting Your Dog For A Hike

These are the basics for taking your dog on a hike:

▶ **Collar.**

A properly fitting collar should not be so loose as to come off but you should be able to slide your flat hand under the collar.

▶ **Identification Tags.**

Get one with your veterinarian's phone number as well.

▶ **Bandanna.**

Can help distinguish him from game in hunting season.

▶ **Leash.**

Leather lasts forever but if there's water in your dog's future, consider quick-drying nylon.

▶ **Water.**

Carry 8 ounces for every hour of hiking.




I want my dog to help carry water, snacks and other supplies on the trail. Where do I start?

To select an appropriate dog pack measure your dog's girth around the rib cage. A dog pack should fit securely without hindering the dog's ability to walk normally.




Will my dog wear a pack?


Wearing a dog pack is no more obtrusive than wearing a collar, although some dogs will take to a pack easier than others. Introduce the pack by draping a towel over your dog's back in the house and then having your dog wear an empty pack on short walks. Progressively add some crumpled newspaper and then bits of clothing. Fill the pack with treats and reward your dog from the stash. Soon your dog will associate the dog pack with an outdoor adventure and will eagerly look forward to wearing it.

 *How much weight can I put into a dog pack?*

Many dog packs are sold by weight recommendations. A healthy, well-conditioned dog can comfortably carry 25% to 33% of its body weight. Breeds prone to back problems or hip dysplasia should not wear dog packs. Consult your veterinarian before stuffing the pouches with gear.

 *How does a dog wear a pack?*


The pack, typically with cargo pouches on either side, should ride as close to the shoulders as possible without limiting movement. The straps that hold the dog pack in place should be situated where they will not cause chafing.

 *What are good things to put in a dog pack?*

Low density items such as food and poop bags are good choices. Ice cold bottles of water can cool your dog down on hot days. Don't put anything in a dog pack that can break. Dogs will bang the pack on rocks and trees as they wiggle through tight spots in the trail. Dogs also like to lie down in creeks and other wet spots so seal items in plastic bags. A good use for dog packs when on day hikes around Long Island is trail maintenance - your dog can pack out trash left by inconsiderate visitors before you.

“My dog can bark like a Congressman, fetch like an aide, beg like a press secretary and play dead like a receptionist.”

-Gerald Solomon

 *Are dog booties a good idea?*

Although not typically necessary, dog booties can be an asset, especially for the occasional canine hiker whose paw pads have not become toughened. Most Long Island trails are soft under paw but in some places there may be broken glass or roots. Hiking boots for dogs are designed to prevent pads from cracking while trotting across rough surfaces.

 *What should a doggie first aid kit include?*

Even when taking short hikes it is a good idea to have some basics available for emergencies:


- ▶ 4" square gauze pads
- ▶ cling type bandaging tapes
- ▶ topical wound disinfectant cream
- ▶ tweezers
- ▶ insect repellent - no reason to leave your dog unprotected against mosquitoes and biting flies
- ▶ veterinarian's phone number

"I can't think of anything that brings me closer to tears than when my old dog - completely exhausted after a hard day in the field - limps away from her nice spot in front of the fire and comes over to where I'm sitting and puts her head in my lap, a paw over my knee, and closes her eyes, and goes back to sleep. I don't know what I've done to deserve that kind of friend."

-Gene Hill

Low Impact Hiking With Your Dog

Every time you hike with your dog on the trail you are an ambassador for all dog owners. Some people you meet won't believe in your right to take a dog on the trail. Be friendly to all and make the best impression you can by practicing low impact hiking with your dog:

-  Pack out everything you pack in.
-  Do not leave dog scat on the trail; if you haven't brought plastic bags for poop removal bury it away from the trail and topical water sources.
-  Hike only where dogs are allowed.
-  Stay on the trail.
-  Do not allow your dog to chase wildlife.
-  Step off the trail and wait with your dog while horses and other hikers pass.
-  Do not allow your dog to bark - people are enjoying the trail for serenity.
-  *Have as much fun on your hike as your dog does.*

Suffolk County Green Key

With the Suffolk County Parks Green Key card residents pay reduced fees for parking and special events. Green key holders also have access to the automated campground reservation system.

Suffolk County residents can obtain a green key by providing:

- a) a driver's license,
- b) a current Suffolk County property tax receipt or deed,
- c) a Suffolk County Voter Registration Card, or
- d) an official residential lease for a minimum of nine months.

Green keys are valid for three years from the date of purchase. Discounts apply volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel. Active military and disabled veterans pay no fees for Suffolk County parks.

Tourist green keys are available for non-residents. These cards are valid for one year from the date of purchase. For more information, call (631) 854-4949 or visit the website at **www.suffolkcountyny.gov**.

"The best thing about a man is his dog."

-French Proverb

*New York State
Department of Environmental
Conservation Permits*

A seasonal access permit is required for all activities on all New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) managed lands on Long Island. The permit is free and valid for three years. For dog owners this requirement most directly affects users of Rocky Point Natural Resources Management Area.

Permits are also required for a variety of special uses. Permits can be obtained in person at:

Sporting License Office, NYSDEC - SUNY
50 Circle Road
Stony Brook, NY 11790

For more information, contact the NYSDEC regional office at (631) 444-0273 or visit the website at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7780.html.

*"No one appreciates the very special genius of your
conversation as a dog does."*

-Christopher Morley

Doggin Long Island - The Best of the Best

BEST ONE-HOUR WORKOUT FOR YOUR DOG:

Laurel Valley County Park (Noyack). A sporty loop takes your dog in and out of kettle depressions and across ridges for almost three miles.

BEST PLACE FOR YOUR DOG (any dog) TO SWIM:

Wades Beach (Shelter Island). The sandy shore on the south side of the island is almost lake-like and the sandy bottom continues out far into the water.



BEST PLACE FOR YOUR DOG (athletic dog) TO SWIM:

Napeague State Park (Promised Land). The waves come fast and furious on the Hampton beaches and this one is no exception.

PRETTIEST HIKE FOR YOUR DOG:

Prosser Pines County Park (Middle Island). The only attraction here is Long Island's oldest grove of white pines but that is enough to enthrall your dog during his adventure here.

BEST HIKE TO VIEWS WITH YOUR DOG:

Shadmoor State Park (Montauk). You won't see anything but the sky above on this hike through dense beach heather but in short time your dog will be hiking on open bluffs above the Atlantic Ocean.

BEST BEACH TO HIKE WITH YOUR DOG:

Fire Island National Seashore (Shirley). The Otis Pike Wilderness Area opens to your dog after Labor Day for seven miles of hiking on the wide, sand beach and behind the dunes.

BEST HALF-HOUR HIKE WITH YOUR DOG:

Walking Dunes, Hither Hills State Park (East Hampton). This 3/4-mile loop travels over and around 80-foot high sand dunes, moving past ghost forests buried in the shifting sands.

MOST HISTORIC HIKE WITH YOUR DOG:

Camp Hero State Park (Montauk). From the Revolutionary War, when it was used as an artillery practice range, through the Cold War Camp Hero has hosted the United States military.

BEST PLACE TO CIRCLE A LAKE WITH YOUR DOG:

Belmont Lake State Park (Babylon). The immortal racehorse Man O' War may have loped on the easy route around the park's centerpiece lake.

BEST PLACE TO LOSE YOURSELF IN THE WOODS WITH YOUR DOG:

Edgewood Oak Brush Plains Preserve (Deer Park). No need to limit yourself to a pre-determined route on a hike with your dog around the grounds of a former hospital.

BEST PLACE TO HIKE AND SEE OTHER DOGS:

Gardiner County Park (West Bay Shore). There is no reason to come to this park with a maze of short trails on the Great south Bay without a dog. Not many do.



No Dogs

These are some of the many Long Island parks that do not allow dogs so you don't waste your time:

New York State Parks

- Bayard Cutting Arboretum - Oakdale
- Bethpage State Park - Farmingdale
- Caleb Smith State Park Preserve - Smithtown
- Captree State Park - Babylon
- Caumsett State Historic Park - Huntington
- Cold Spring Harbor State Park - Cold Spring Harbor
- Connetquot River State Park - Oakdale
- Gilgo State Park - Babylon
- Jones Beach State Park - Wantaugh
- Nissequoque River State Park - Kings Park
- Orient Beach State Park - Orient
- Robert Moses State Park - Babylon
- Trail View State Park - Huntington
- Valley Stream State Park - Valley Stream
- Wildwood State Park - Wading River



Nassau County Parks

Dogs are not allowed in ANY county park
but the following do have dog runs:

Bay Park - First Avenue, East Rockaway
Christopher Morley Park - Searington Road, Rosyln-North Hills
Cedar Creek Park - Merrick Road, Seaford
Nickerson Beach Park - Lido Boulevard, Lido
Wantagh Park - Kings Road & Canal Place, Wantagh

Wildlife Refuges

Morton National Wildlife Refuge - Noyack
Target Rock National Wildlife Refuge - Lloyd Neck
Quogue Wildlife Refuge - Quogue
Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge - Shirley

Nature Conservancy Preserves

Accabonic Harbor - East Hampton
Big Woods Preserve - Southampton
Mashomack Preserve - Shelter Island
Montauk Mountain - Montauk
Uplands Farm Sanctuary - Cold Spring Harbor

Nature Centers and Preserves

Massapequa Preserve - Massapequa Park
Muttonwood Preserve - East Norwich
Sands Point Preserve - Sands Point
South Shore Nature Center - East Islip
Sweetbriar Nature Center - Smithtown

O.K. It could have been worse. Let's forget about these and move on to some of the great places where we CAN take our dogs on Long Island trails...

*The 30 Best Places
To Hike With Your Dog
In Long Island...*

I

Hither Hills State Park

The Park

In 1879, ten years before his death, Arthur W. Benson, of Brooklyn Gas & Light and Bensonhurst fame, purchased 10,000 acres of government land around Montauk for a little more than \$15 an acre. He envisioned his new holdings as a playground for the rich.

A generation later Robert Moses, the visionary New York land planner, saw a different future for Montauk. He wanted a necklace of public parks along the Montauk shores and in 1924 announced plans to condemn 1700 Benson estate acres for the fledgling New York State Parks system.

It took a three-year court battle that wound its way to the New York Supreme Court but Moses prevailed. The enduring jewel of his struggle is Hither Hills State Park that stretches from ocean to bay and is the largest state park in Montauk.

The Walks

For most visitors, Hither Hills is a mile of pristine, dune-backed Atlantic Ocean beach and top-rated campground. With such delights, the 1755-acre park's interior that stretches to Napeague Bay is often overlooked. All the better for canine hikers, who are not welcome on the beach anyway. Miles of informal sandy trails and jeep roads pick through the pitch pine, scrub oak and beach heather.

Of the marked trails, the long-distance *Paumanok Path* that crosses to Montauk is the most prominent. It can be combined with the *Serpent's Back*

Suffolk County

Phone Number
- (631) 668-2554

Website
- <http://nysparks.state.ny.us/parks/info.asp?parkID=48>

Admission Fee
- In season mid-April to mid-November, but only south of Route 27 where dogs are not allowed

Park Hours
- Sunrise to sunset

Directions
- *East Hampton*; parking is available on the north side of Montauk Point State Parkway (Route 27) at the Hither Hills Overlook, one mile east of the split with Old Montauk Highway.