

## *The Wealthy Flee Coronavirus. Vacation Towns Respond: Stay Away.*

Tensions mount between New Yorkers with the means to retreat to their second homes and those who live in the towns year round.

By Tracey Tully and Stacey Stowe

March 25, 2020 Updated 5:47 p.m. ET

People with second homes in the Catskills region of New York are being warned to stay away in venom-laced Facebook posts and blunt messages from county officials.

Boardwalks and beaches in some Jersey Shore towns are barricaded and residents are urging the closure of coastal access bridges to outsiders.

In the Hamptons, the famous playground for the rich on the East End of Long Island, locals are angry that an onslaught of visitors has emptied out grocery store shelves.

A backlash has grown on the outskirts of the New York region as wealthy people flee to summer homes to avoid the densely packed city, which has become the epicenter of the coronavirus crisis.

This clash between year-round residents and those with the means to retreat to vacation homes intensified on Tuesday as White House officials advised anyone who had passed through or fled New York City to place themselves in a 14-day quarantine.

“They’re pumping gas. They’re stopping at grocery stores,” said Kim Langdon, 48, of Ashland, N.Y. “If they’re infected and they don’t know it, they’re putting everyone at risk.”

The expletive-filled commentary on a Catskills Facebook page was less subtle.

“The only cases in Greene County were brought here from downstate people so stay down there,” one man wrote. “Just because you have a second home up here doesn’t mean you have the right to put us at risk.”

Mayors, town supervisors and the governors of at least two states have warned part-time residents of tourist destinations to stay away.



Two women from Pennsylvania walked near Beach Haven, N.J. Hannah Yoon for The New York Times

“We don’t want your bugs,” said Linda Michel, 71, of Surf City, on Long Beach Island in New Jersey, about 100 miles south of Manhattan. Ms. Michel, who wore blue plastic gloves into a grocery store, said the bridge that connects Long Beach Island to the mainland should be closed to all except year-round residents who hold disaster re-entry passes.

“The problem with the island is you do not have the resources,” she said.

Across the country, similar tensions between locals and seasonal visitors are bubbling to the surface as efforts to confront the pandemic have led the nation to navigate uncharted territory.

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The governor of Florida has ordered anyone who traveled from the New York region in the last three weeks to remain under quarantine for 14 days. Officials in vacation hubs on North Carolina's Outer Banks have barred nonresidents as cases of the highly contagious virus creep south along the East Coast.

Short-term rentals have been curtailed in Truckee, Calif., about 30 miles southwest of Reno, Nev. Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard have been deemed no-go zones in Massachusetts, where Gov. Charlie Baker urged people to "stay on the mainland."

In New Jersey, Gov. Philip D. Murphy made an unequivocal plea for those with shore houses to stay away.

"We all love the summer people," said Joseph Mancini, the mayor of Long Beach Township, N.J. "They drive our economy. But when they come down here now, the services here aren't geared up for them."

He estimated that his township had tripled in size to 15,000 as part-time residents arrived, lured by last weekend's warm, sunny weather and the relative safety of the beach.

The cancellation of schools in most states and work-from-home edicts have left many families unfettered by offices or primary residences, free to work wherever they can find Wi-Fi.

The influx has drained local supermarkets, and fueled fear that a continued onslaught could cripple towns with tiny police forces and few hospitals.

"Just try to get chicken," said Pete Byron, the mayor of Wildwood, N.J. "You can't get chicken."

At Red Horse Market, a gourmet food shop in East Hampton, part of Long Island's East End, some customers are phoning in to ask for personal shoppers or for delivery to their cars, so they don't have to walk through the store, said Jeff Lange, one of the owners.

At the moment, he said his 30-person staff is too busy to accommodate such requests.

"We had people showing up to buy a lot of meat," Mr. Lange said, "and there were moments where we had to step in and say, 'That's too much.' There's no hard line on the meat, for example, but if it seems like more than what is fair, we say so."

A liquor store in Sag Harbor, another Hamptons town, is selling cases of wine and spirits through a half-opened door.

"It's like the Fourth of July out here," said Robin Farnam, a clerk at the store.

The number of known coronavirus cases in the United States continues to grow quickly.

As of Wednesday afternoon, there have been at least 59,502 cases of coronavirus confirmed by lab tests and 804 deaths, according to a New York Times database. More than half are in New York State and most of these are from New York City — an easy drive to some of the wealthiest enclaves in the nation.

New York's governor, Andrew M. Cuomo, has said that with cases doubling every three days in New York City alone, as many as 140,000 people might need urgent care in the next few weeks.

Greene County, about two hours north of the city in the heart of the Catskills, warned on its website that travel "from any area at this time is inadvisable and is highly discouraged."

"Greene County is a large rural county with NO hospital!" the message reads.

On Long Island, private plane and jet traffic increased at East Hampton Airport, with everything from single-engine Cessnas and Piper Cubs to Gulf Streams and Falcon jets landing.

"We've had helicopters, seaplanes, corporate planes," said Jim Brundige, the airport director. "A little bit of everything."

Stores there have also been stripped. Some people are even buying extra freezers, residents said.

"They want to make sure they have enough for a year," said Jonathan Amaral, the house manager and chef at a gated estate on Southampton's Main Street. "The shelves were bare. For us locals and middle class people, that hurts."

Long before the virus struck, many full-time residents of towns that flood with seasonal visitors already had a healthy distrust of their part-time neighbors and the crowds that follow in their wake.

"Some people have bitter feelings toward weekenders," said Honora Trimbell, of Bovina, N.Y., in the Catskills. "They're just taking this opportunity to elaborate."

A popular bumper on cars in southern New Jersey, where day-trippers are disparaged as "bennies," reads, "Welcome to the shore. Now go home."

Still, the rapid swell of visitors remains worrisome to elected leaders.

Officials on Fishers Island, a quaint oasis in the Long Island Sound not far from the Connecticut coastline, with an off-season population of 230, have issued "new urgent protocols" pleading with people to stay away for at least a month.

Jay Schneiderman, the supervisor of Southampton, an area comprising more than a dozen hamlets and villages on eastern Long Island, said the population had soared in the last two weeks to nearly 100,000, up from 60,000.

“I would prefer that if you are coming from New York City, a hot spot, you stay there,” said Mr. Schneiderman, chairman of the East End Supervisors and Mayors Association. “I can’t stop you, but we’d love people to heed the advice of the C.D.C. and stay home.”

Bob Sankosh, 56, splits his time between a one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan, where his office is, and a home in Beach Haven, N.J. He and his wife and his two adult children are now living at the beach as they all work or study from home.

“I get both sides,” Mr. Sankosh said. “It would be easy to overrun things.”

He said he believed the warnings from Mr. Murphy and others to stay away had been effective, noting that recently, beaches felt emptier.

Some New Yorkers, however, still seem undaunted by the warnings.

Last weekend, on Middle Lane in East Hampton, contractors bustled around a house under construction.

The home is at least two months away from completion, but the owner wants to move out of the city and into the home as soon as possible, said Michael Maycol, a carpenter and painter.

“He’s pushing us to finish the home,” Mr. Maycol said, “before something worse happens.”

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#### The Coronavirus Outbreak

### Answers to Your Frequently Asked Questions

Updated March 24, 2020

#### How does coronavirus spread?

It seems to spread very easily from person to person, especially in homes, hospitals and other confined spaces. The pathogen can be carried on tiny respiratory droplets that fall as they are coughed or sneezed out. It may also be transmitted when we touch a contaminated surface and then touch our face.

#### Is there a vaccine yet?

No. The first testing in humans of an experimental vaccine began in mid-March. Such rapid development of a potential vaccine is unprecedented, but even if it is proved safe and effective, it probably will not be available for 12 to 18 months.

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