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Letters to the Editor for Oct. 26

Hatteras rules anything but 'beachy'

The Oct. 7 editorial about beach access on Hatteras Island ("Beachy: Species recover, thanks to new Hatteras rules") contained inaccurate and misleading information.

The assertion that birds have been recovering in the past two years under the court's consent decree is fundamentally wrong. The 2008 nesting and breeding season was well under way and nesting pairs of birds were already in place prior to the implementation of the consent decree in May 2008. Any improvements for 2008 were the result of the National Park Service's interim management plan in place at the time and not the consent decree. The number of birds decreased for 2009, the first year the consent decree was in place for a full season.

Beach access advocates genuinely care about wildlife and support resource protection for birds and turtles, including the science-based buffers that were provided in the previous interim plan.

The visitation figures cited from the National Park Service are vulnerable to close examination. On Hatteras Island, they only estimate the visitation based upon an elaborate mathematical formula. There is no actual counting of people. They should not be used to pronounce a region economically healthy.

Sens. Richard Burr and Kay Hagan are sensible in supporting legislation to reinstate the previous interim plan that had approval of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the benefit of an ESA Section 7 Consultation and opportunity for public comment. The consent decree was never subject to these reviews. Learn more at www.PreserveBeachAccess.org.

Warren Judge, chairman, Dare County Board of Commissioners