

WHEN THE WIND BECOMES POLLUTION

How Securing Trash Protects
Wildlife, Beaches, and
the Outer Banks



PROTECTS
WILDLIFE



KEEPS
BEACHES CLEAN



PREVENTS
MARINE DEBRIS



PRESERVES
OUR COAST



When the Wind Becomes Pollution: How Securing Trash Protects Wildlife, Beaches, and the Outer Banks

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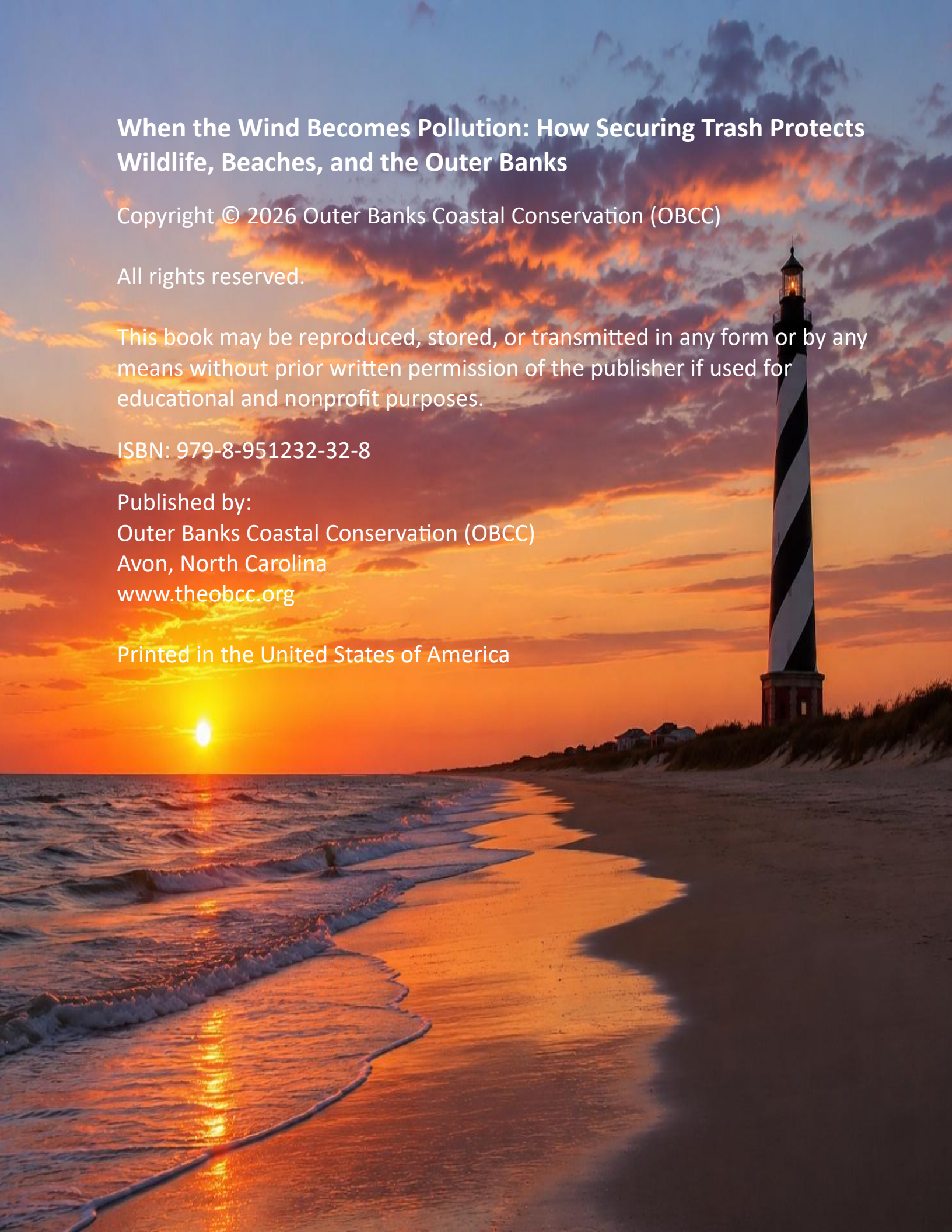
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About This Book

This book was created by the Outer Banks Coastal Conservation (OBCC), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster environmental stewardship and a deeper connection to the Outer Banks of North Carolina through outreach, education, and conservation efforts.

We believe that small stories can spark big change. That is why we have made this book available as a free resource for parents, teachers, and community members.

All materials in this book may be freely downloaded, shared, printed and used for educational or nonprofit purposes.

To learn more, access additional resources at: www.theobcc.org.

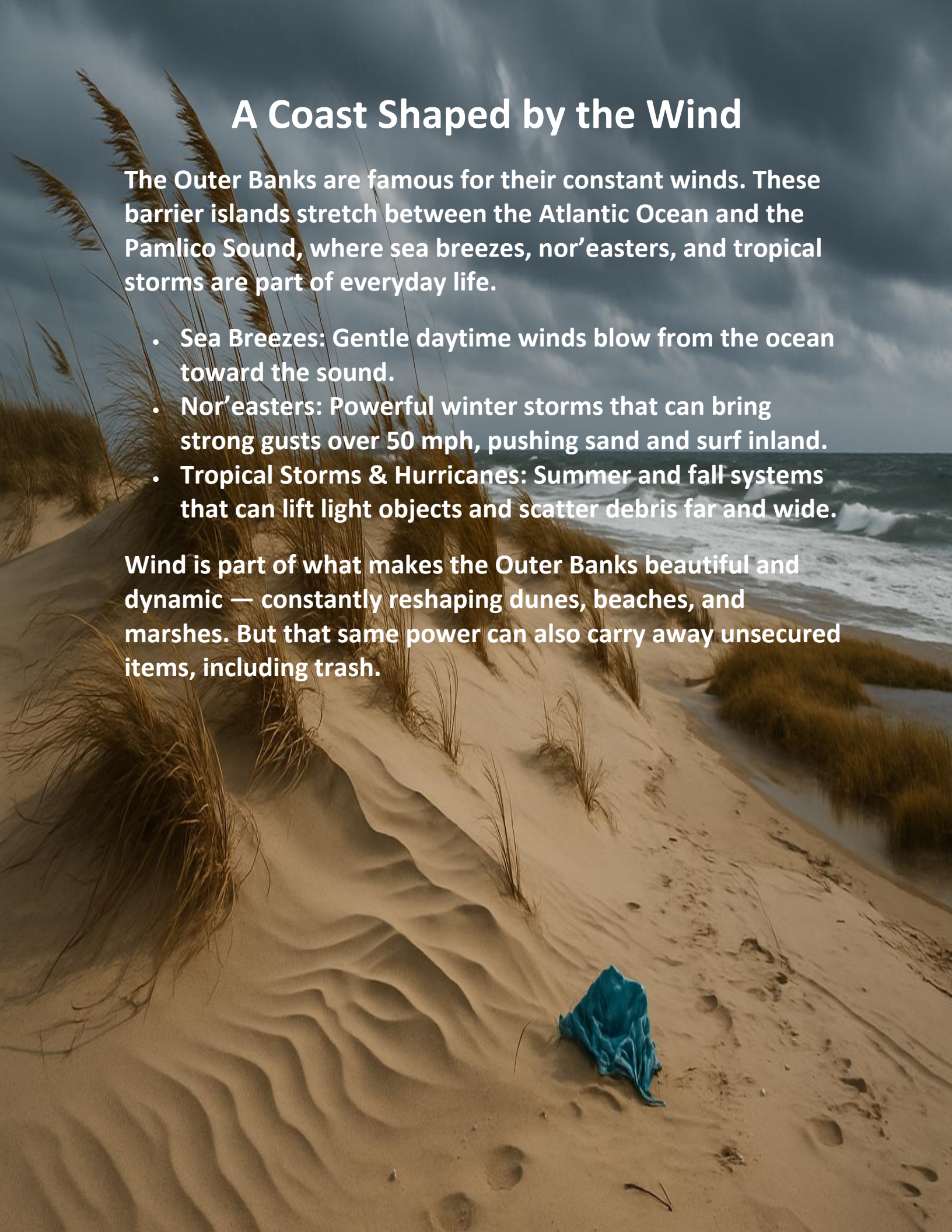


A Coast Shaped by the Wind

The Outer Banks are famous for their constant winds. These barrier islands stretch between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pamlico Sound, where sea breezes, nor'easters, and tropical storms are part of everyday life.

- **Sea Breezes:** Gentle daytime winds blow from the ocean toward the sound.
- **Nor'easters:** Powerful winter storms that can bring strong gusts over 50 mph, pushing sand and surf inland.
- **Tropical Storms & Hurricanes:** Summer and fall systems that can lift light objects and scatter debris far and wide.

Wind is part of what makes the Outer Banks beautiful and dynamic — constantly reshaping dunes, beaches, and marshes. But that same power can also carry away unsecured items, including trash.

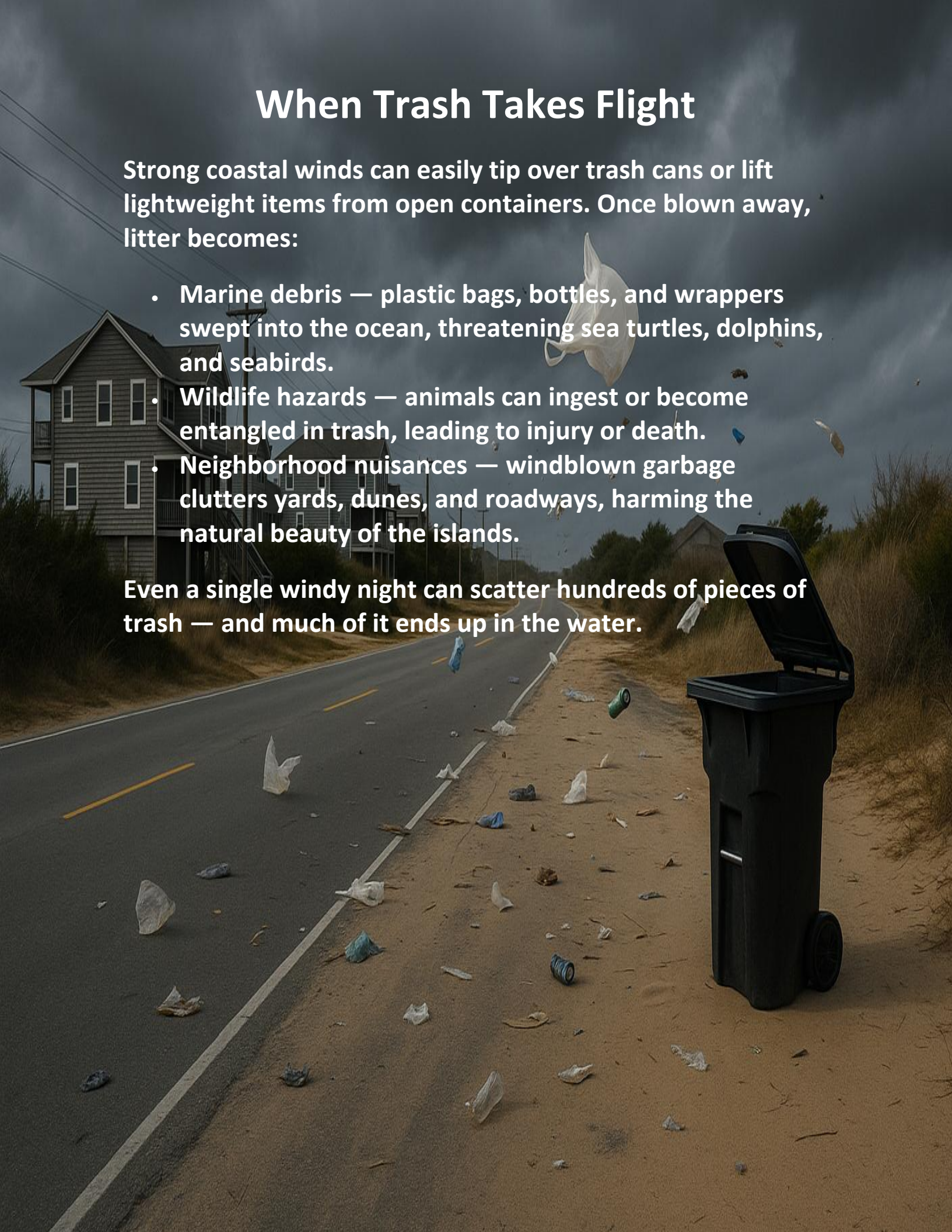


When Trash Takes Flight

Strong coastal winds can easily tip over trash cans or lift lightweight items from open containers. Once blown away, litter becomes:

- Marine debris — plastic bags, bottles, and wrappers swept into the ocean, threatening sea turtles, dolphins, and seabirds.
- Wildlife hazards — animals can ingest or become entangled in trash, leading to injury or death.
- Neighborhood nuisances — windblown garbage clutters yards, dunes, and roadways, harming the natural beauty of the islands.

Even a single windy night can scatter hundreds of pieces of trash — and much of it ends up in the water.



Properly Securing Trash in the Wind

Help protect the Outer Banks' fragile ecosystems by following these simple steps:

1. Use heavy-duty bins with tight-fitting lids. If possible, choose models with latches or locks.
2. Store cans in a sheltered spot — behind a fence, in a garage, or beside a sturdy wall.
3. Put trash out the morning of pickup, not the night before.
4. Do not overflow trash cans.
5. Avoid lightweight bags that can tear or fly away easily.
6. Pick up litter immediately if you notice items blown onto the street or into dunes.



Why It Matters

Every piece of trash that stays in the bin is one less threat to wildlife and fish. Keeping trash secure:

- Reduces pollution in the ocean and sound
- Protects nesting areas and dunes
- Prevents wildlife entanglement and ingestion
- Keeps our beaches beautiful for residents and visitors alike

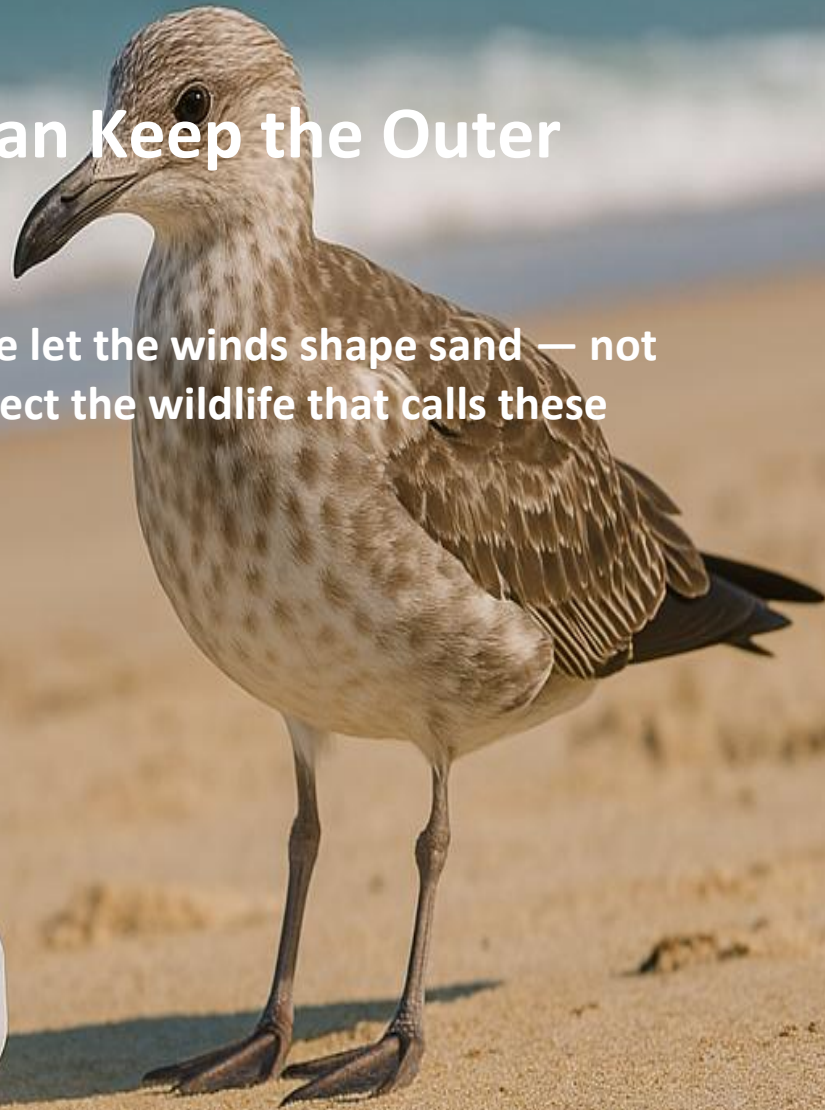


Did You Know?

- A single plastic bag can drift for miles and be mistaken by sea turtles for a jellyfish.
- Windborne trash is one of the most common forms of litter found during Outer Banks beach cleanups.
- Many Outer Banks towns have “secure-can” ordinances to reduce waste scattered by storms and winds.

Together, We Can Keep the Outer Banks Clean

- By securing our trash, we let the winds shape sand — not scatter litter — and protect the wildlife that calls these islands home.



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When the Wind Becomes Pollution: How Securing Trash Protects Wildlife, Beaches, and the Outer Banks

This book explains how the strong winds that make the Outer Banks unique can also turn unsecured trash into a serious environmental problem. The book encourages residents and visitors to secure their garbage to protect wildlife, beaches, and coastal ecosystems.

About the Publisher

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