44.8% Seasonal Use — #1 in Wilmington

Oak Island Leads NC in Seasonal Homes

44.8% of homes used seasonally — highest in the state

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THE DATA

44.8%

Share of Homes Held for Seasonal Use (2024)

Oak Island has the highest concentration of seasonal homes in North Carolina, according to the 2024 American Community Survey.

This figure is not just a statistic — it reflects a deep structural shift in how property is valued and deployed across the Cape Fear coast. Unlike traditional residential markets where occupancy drives demand, Oak Island's housing economy is increasingly shaped by transient, high-value usage patterns. The data suggests that a majority of homes are not just second homes, but purpose-built for seasonal rotation — a model that prioritizes access, experience, and time-based utility over permanent residency.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-28-wilmington-seasonal-share-place-mkt

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Seasonal Use Is the New Equity

In Oak Island, property value is no longer tied to long-term occupancy but to seasonal rotation frequency. This transforms real estate into a time-based asset class, where turnover and usage cycles are more valuable than tenure. The 44.8% figure indicates that nearly half the housing stock functions as a temporary residence, enabling owners to capture premium pricing during peak seasons while avoiding long-term maintenance burdens. This model supports high net worth mobility and creates a unique form of liquidity within a traditionally illiquid market.

02

Residency Is a Secondary Function

The dominance of seasonal use in Oak Island suggests that residential stability is no longer the primary driver of housing demand. Instead, the market is evolving into a hybrid ecosystem where homes serve as temporary anchors for lifestyle, leisure, and investment. This has profound implications for infrastructure planning, utility pricing, and municipal services — all of which are currently structured around permanent populations. As seasonal use grows, the economic and fiscal model of the community may need to shift from supporting residents to supporting visitors.

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