

Cape Ann (Thacher Island) Light Station

Thacher Island National Wildlife Refuge, Massachusetts

In 1771 a wooden light station was built on Thacher Island, becoming the last lighthouse constructed under British rule. In 1861, the old structures were replaced with two identical 124-foot granite towers (Figure 10). This is the Northeast Region's sole National Historic Landmark and also the only operating twin light in the United States. These granite sentinels overlook a 50-acre island just offshore from the town of Rockport. Clustered beneath the towers are keepers' houses, oil houses, granite storage buildings, and trails.



Figure 10. View of the Thatcher Island Lighthouse

The island is crisscrossed by railroad tracks and trestles once used to carry supplies across the island. Portions of the old railway are still visible and the foghorn, once operated by steam, has been automated and is still in use. The town of Rockport owns most of the island; however the Service owns the North Tower and the foundation of the north keeper's house. The Service partners with the Thacher Island Association and the Rockport Town Committee to manage the historical buildings. Together, these partners have restored and relighted the North Tower.