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# ZOOM

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## U.S. Coastal States

Nearly half of the 50 U.S. states lie on the shore. The coastline of some may be very long, as in Alaska, or very short, as in New Hampshire or Alabama. This issue of *Zoom* brings you a snapshot of America's coastal states.



*Surfers in Florida (Photo © AP Images)*

### Maine (ME), Capital City: Augusta

Those living in the state of Maine are the first in the U.S. to see the sun rise every day as Maine is the easternmost state in the U.S. The state's motto, "Dirigo" (Latin, meaning "I lead") is found under a star in the state seal - a metaphor that the state is the guiding light of its citizens. It is believed that the Viking Leif Ericson first landed on Maine's shore around A.D. 1000. The first ship ever built in America, the *Virginia*, was made there. Boats and ships are still produced in Maine today.  
State Bird: chickadee, State Flower: white pine cone



## New Hampshire (NH), Capital City: Concord

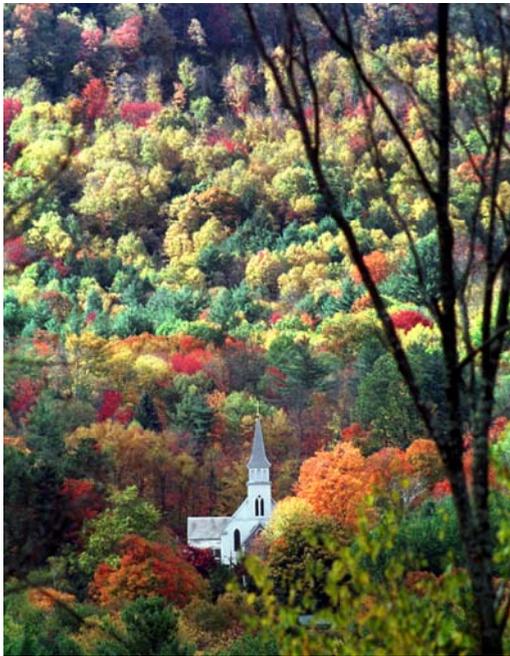
New Hampshire's 'YES' to the U.S. Constitution on June 21, 1788 settled the destiny of the United States. Ratification of the Constitution by nine of the thirteen founding U.S. states was a requirement for the document to take effect, and New Hampshire was this ninth state. Today many tourists and photographers come to New Hampshire in the fall to admire the state's beautiful fall foliage. New Hampshire's coastline is the shortest of all the states that border an ocean; it is just 29 kilometers. The state once boasted one of the most amazing natural wonders: a rock "sculpture" called the "Old Man of the Mountains". Unfortunately, the same natural forces that once assembled the rock ledges that resembled a man's profile also destroyed the formation in 2003. State Bird: purple finch, State Flower: purple lilac



*A full-scale reproduction of Mayflower II  
(Photo © AP Images)*



►  
*Rhode Island's  
rugged  
coastline  
(Photo © AP  
Images)*



◀  
*Peak foliage  
colors in  
Shelburne Fall,  
Massachusetts  
(Photo © AP  
Images)*

## Massachusetts (MA), Capital City: Boston

A ship from the Old World cast its anchor at Plymouth Rock in 1620 in what is today the state of Massachusetts. Her passengers were a group known as the Pilgrims who arrived in Plymouth Bay in search of a new life. A new life is certainly what they found. In order to survive in the New World they had to learn how to plant corn and beans and survive the hardships of the four seasons. From this humble beginning, the state of Massachusetts was born; it is a state which has produced four presidents: John Adams, his son, John Quincy Adams, John F. Kennedy and George Bush. Massachusetts is also the cradle of U.S. higher education. The country's oldest and most prestigious university, Harvard, was established there in 1636. Some popular tourist destinations in Massachusetts are: the coastal resort area of Cape Cod, Salem where a strange witch trial took place during the colonial period, and Nantucket Island. Boston, the state's capital, is also a vibrant and historic tourist destination. State Flower: mayflower, State Bird: chickadee

## Rhode Island (RI), Capital City: Providence

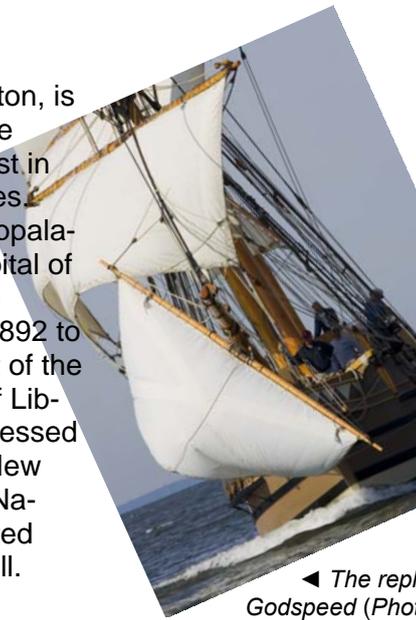
Contrary to what its name implies, Rhode Island is not one island, it is instead 36 islands plus a mainland. Still it is truly the "Ocean State." There is no place in Rhode Island from which it takes longer than half an hour to get to the ocean by car. Rhode Island is the smallest U.S. state in land area and has a population of almost one million, making it the second most densely populated state after New Jersey. Until 1780 when the slave trade was forbidden, the capital of Providence was an important port in the so-called "Triangle Trade." Ships carried wood to the West Indies and returned with molasses used in making rum. Rum was then taken to Africa in exchange for slaves. Today Rhode Island's economy rests on the production of electronics, scientific instruments and machinery. State Flower: violet, State Bird: Rhode Island red

## Connecticut (CT), Capital City: Hartford

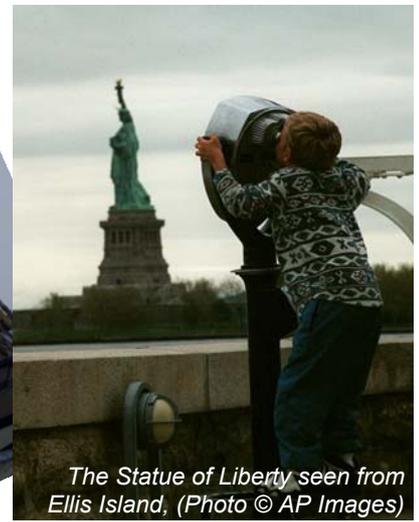
The inhabitants of Connecticut had a right to vote for their government officials more than 100 years before the U.S. War of Independence. Some people consider this as the first constitution of a democratic government on U.S. territory. Connecticut's state bird is the robin, the state tree is the white oak, and the state flower is the mountain laurel. The state is unofficially known as the "Nutmeg State", which probably relates to the sailors who returned home with this spice in the 18th and 19th centuries. Connecticut is also the home of the insurance business, which started in order to insure the safe passage of cargo ships.

## New York (NY), Capital City: Albany

The state's nickname, given by George Washington, is the "Empire State" and is meant to emphasize the state's number one status. New York is the largest in area and most populous of the northeastern states. The middle part of the state is occupied by the Appalachian Mountains. New York City was the first capital of the U.S. and the country's first president, George Washington, took his oath of office there. From 1892 to 1954 Ellis Island, an immigration port within sight of the famous New York City seafront and the Statue of Liberty, was where millions of immigrants were processed before they could legally enter their new home. New York City is now the headquarters of the United Nations. It is the main commercial center of the United States and aspires to be its cultural capital as well. State Flower: rose, State Bird: bluebird



◀ The replica of the 17th century sailing vessel Godspeed (Photo © AP Images)



The Statue of Liberty seen from Ellis Island, (Photo © AP Images)

## New Jersey (NJ), Capital City: Trenton

With over 8 million inhabitants and area of 22,588 square kilometers, New Jersey has the highest population density in the entire United States. During the Revolutionary War many battles were fought here, including the victorious ones at Trenton, Princeton and Monmouth. The large number of textile factories and other manufacturing plants which sprung up during the industrial revolution changed the character of the state and produced the unwanted side-effects of poverty and urban sprawl. However, since that time there has been a shift towards more ecologically and aesthetically friendly development. New Jersey was also the home of two great American inventors. Thomas Edison, who invented the electric light bulb and the phonograph, and Samuel Morse, who invented the telegraph, both lived in New Jersey. State Flower: purple violet, State Bird: eastern goldfinch

"Wright Flyer's" first flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C., Photo © AP Images,



## Delaware (DE), Capital City: Dover

On December 7, 1787 Delaware became the first state to accept the U.S. Constitution and is thus known as the "first state of the Union." Delaware lies only 18 meters above sea level and its beaches are popular destinations for people on the east coast during the summer months. The state's friendly business laws also make it a popular place to start a business. State Flower: peach blossom, State Bird: blue hen chicken

Re-enactment of George Washington's Christmas crossing of the Delaware River (Photo © AP Images)



## Maryland (MD), Capital City: Annapolis

The Chesapeake Bay runs deep into this state almost cutting it in two. The American national anthem "The Star-Spangled Banner" was written about the battle for Fort Mchenry which took place in this Bay during the war of 1812. The state of Maryland also claims the first U.S. railroad station which was built in the city of Baltimore in 1830, as well as the U.S. Naval Academy which is located in the state's historic capital of Annapolis. State Flower: black-eyed Susan, State Bird: Baltimore oriole

## Virginia (VA), Capital City: Richmond

The first colony in America was established in Virginia when British colonists landed in Jamestown in 1607. Additionally, the U.S Revolutionary War also ended in this historic state when the English surrendered to George Washington in Yorktown. A record number of eight U.S. presidents were born in Virginia including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. State Flower: dogwood, State Bird: cardinal

## North Carolina (NC), Capital City: Raleigh

In the 16th century when the U.S. was still some two hundred years away from independence, the territories that now make up North Carolina were the property of Queen Elizabeth I of England. She chose to give this territory to her servant Sir Walter Raleigh, and the state's capital still bears his name. North Carolina is known as the sight of the first successful airplane flight at Kitty Hawk - a feat accomplished by the Wright brothers in 1903. The state is also known for having the tallest lighthouse in the U.S. as well as beautiful dunes and interesting shipwrecks along its coasts. State Flower: dogwood, State Bird: cardinal

Daytona Beach, FL (Photo © AP Images)



▲ Charleston, South Carolina

◀ Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara are seen dancing in this scene from the movie "Gone With the Wind" (Photos © AP Images)



### Florida (FL), Capital City: Tallahassee

Florida's beautiful beaches along the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico and its warm weather make it a tourist paradise. Florida was discovered by the Spanish conquistador Juan Ponce de Leon in 1513 and became a U.S. territory in 1822. Florida's nickname is the "Sunshine State", and although the state receives its share of sun, airflows from the Gulf of Mexico often collide with airflows from the Atlantic over Florida, producing frequent thunderstorms and spectacular lightning shows. One of the largest swamps in the world - the Everglades - lies in Florida. It is a paradise for bears, panthers, alligators, crocodiles and other wild animals. Walt Disney World and Cape Canaveral, where NASA spacecraft and rockets are launched into space, are also popular attractions in Florida. State Flower: orange blossom, State Bird: mockingbird

### South Carolina (SC), Capital City: Columbia

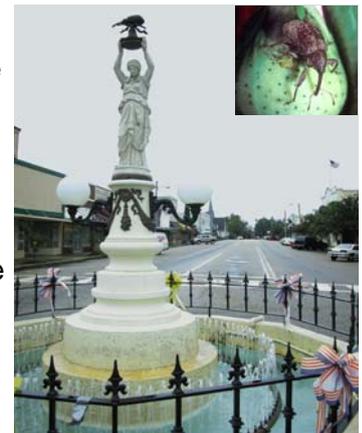
It was along South Carolina's coasts that the famous pirate Blackbeard operated inspiring fear and awe. Later on, in 1860, South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union and become part of the Confederate States of America on the eve of the U.S. Civil War. Though not the capital city, the historic town of Charleston attracts tourists with its beautiful architecture and unique atmosphere. It was the first U.S. city to have a theatre, a museum, an opera and a symphony orchestra. Pink Anderson, a blues singer and guitarist, who inspired the "Pink" in Pink Floyd also hailed from this city - one of South Carolina's great contributions to 20th century music! State Flower: yellow jessamine, State Bird: Carolina wren

### Georgia (GA), Capital City: Atlanta

Georgia, perhaps best known by its depiction during the Civil War period in the famous novel "Gone With the Wind," has a rich history. It was in this state's capital city of Atlanta where the first glass of Coca Cola was served in 1887 and where today one can find the "Coke Museum", a museum dedicated to the beverage that has become a world-wide phenomenon. Georgia was also the home of the first significant gold rush in U.S. history in 1829. Today one can learn about this period in the Gold Rush Museum in Dahlonega which displays, among other exhibits, gold coins, gold nuggets, and a hydraulic cannon and nozzle used to blast soil from the mountain sides. Georgia is also the home of some interesting wildlife, for example alligators, which can be seen in the Okefenokee Swamp close to the border with Florida. State Flower: Cherokee rose, State Bird: brown thrasher

### Alabama (AL), Capital City: Montgomery

The territory of Alabama was originally inhabited by the Native American people groups known as the Alabama, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Koasati and Mobile. The first European settlement was established here by the French in 1702. Alabama joined the U.S. as the 22nd state on December 14, 1819. In the past the state relied heavily on cotton; however, when an insect called the boll weevil infested and ruined the cotton crop throughout the state in the early 20th century the business came to a sudden halt. What first seemed like a catastrophe later came to be seen as a favorable occurrence because it allowed other economic initiatives (such as peanuts and livestock) to play a larger role in the economy, contributing to the state's prosperity and development. Grateful inhabitants erected a monument to the boll weevil in 1919. State Flower: camellia, State Bird: yellowhammer



A monument erected to honor the boll weevil; inset: the insect (© AP Images)

## Mississippi (MS), Capital City: Jackson

This state is known for the scent of magnolias in the air and for its "singing river," the Pascagoula. The "mighty" Mississippi River also flows through the state and once often flooded its banks; however, it has now been tamed by a system of levees and the former swamps have been dried and made into fertile lands. Mississippi is also important for the role it has played in the development of American music, especially in blues, country, and rock music. The rock-and-roll legend Elvis Presley was a native of Mississippi. State Flower: magnolia, State Bird: mockingbird



A Magnolia blossom (Photo © AP Images)

## Louisiana (LA), Capital City: Baton Rouge

Louisiana has a unique multicultural heritage. It was originally part of a French colony and is still home to many speakers of Cajun French. The Mississippi river also plays an important role in the life and economy of this state. In an area known as the Delta country, one can find fur trappers and fishermen who live and work in the marshes. New Orleans, a vibrant city on the banks of the Mississippi River and the cradle of jazz, is the state's largest city. State Flower: magnolia, State Bird: eastern brown pelican



Brown pelican (Photo © AP Images)

## Texas (TX), Capital City: Austin

Texas is the second largest state in land mass (after Alaska) and the second most populous state (after California). In 1836 Texas declared its independence from Mexico and in 1845 joined the United States. The state has over 450 kilometers of coastline bordering the Gulf of Mexico. Some of the most popular marine attractions include the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi and the retired warship the USS Lexington - a former World War II aircraft carrier - which now functions as a museum in Corpus Christi. The most populous city in Texas is Houston which is named after Sam Houston, a Texas general who became famous after the battle of San Jacinto (a decisive battle in the Texas Revolution of 1836). The city's pride is the NASA Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center which is open to visitors and includes a shuttle simulator.

State Flower: bluebonnet, State Bird: mockingbird



▲ Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi

◀ A sea dragon seahorse in an aquarium in Tyler, Texas (Photos © AP Images)

## California (CA), Capital City: Sacramento

"All that glitters is not gold". Although most things do glitter in the strong rays of the Californian sun, this old proverb holds true even in the "Golden State." Numerous gold diggers who left everything behind and rushed to California in the 1840s during the famous "Gold Rush" found the truth of this saying. And yet in a country of great opportunities, which the United States surely is, California ranks high as a place of great opportunity. Stars come and go in the film haven of Hollywood and businesses thrive, making the state one of the top ten economies in the world. Sandy and rocky beaches along the Pacific coast are inviting for tourists. Other great attractions include the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Yosemite Valley, famous for its glacially-carved domes, as well as Sequoia National Park, home to giant sequoia trees which are the largest living organisms on Earth. State Flower: golden poppy, State Bird: California valley quail



An elephant seal at the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge (Photo © AP Images)

## Washington (WA), Capital City: Olympia



A bust of President F. D. Roosevelt overlooks the Grand Coulee Dam and Lake Roosevelt in Washington (Photo © AP Images)

This is the only state named for a President. The state is famous for its forests, which cover almost half of its area, and for its dams, including the Grand Coulee

Dam, which is the largest concrete dam in the U.S. There are also three national parks in the mountainous area of Washington. In Ginkgo Petrified Forest various kinds of "stone" trees can be found. Washington was the 42nd state to join the U.S. and did so on November 11, 1889. State Flower: western rhododendron, State Bird: willow goldfinch

## Alaska (AK), Capital City: Juneau



Polar bear with her cubs in Alaska (Photo © AP Images)

Last in this presentation, but surely not the least, comes Alaska, the largest of all states, almost twice as large as the next on the list and with the long-

est coastline. When William Seward arranged for the purchase of this land from the Russians in 1867, some of his contemporaries called it "Seward's Ice-box". Perhaps they should have called it "Seward's Treasure Box", as thirteen years later gold was discovered in Klondike. Gold turned out to be not the only Alaskan treasure. Fishing has long been Alaska's main industry, with huge catches of salmon, herring, and halibut. In 1968 large reserves of oil were discovered. Every Alaskan is entitled by law to have a share in the oil earnings. More than a third of the state's inhabitants live in the largest city, Anchorage. Alaska is a state where children who live far from school can attend it over the Internet. Isn't that exciting? State Flower: forget-me-not, State Bird: willow ptarmigan

## Oregon (OR), Capital City: Salem

Sand dunes, dramatic cliffs, and beaches are sure to please the eyes of all who visit the Oregon coast. Magnificent as the Pacific coast is, the state has even more to offer in natural beauty further inland; it is truly a state of great ecological diversity. For example, there are lakes which fill the craters of extinct volcanoes with their crystal clear water. The most well known of these lakes, known simply as "Crater Lake," is 592 meters deep. One of North America's largest rivers, the Columbia River, flows through Oregon forming part of the state's northern border. There are also rainforests and deserts in Oregon. As one may imagine, protection of the environment is a top priority of the state. State Flower: Oregon grape, State Bird: western meadowlark



Crater Lake (Photo © AP Images)

## Hawaii (HI), Capital City: Honolulu

Hawaii is a state made up of 132 islands in the Pacific Ocean. Most people in the state live on the island of Oahu. The biggest island, the island of Hawaii, is the southernmost territory of the U.S. The first settlers were Polynesians who arrived on the islands some 1500 years ago. The islands were claimed by the British Empire in 1788 by Captain James Cook, who called them the "Sandwich Islands". In 1820, however, a native chieftain, King Kamehameha I, unified the islands. Hawaii became a U.S. territory in 1900 and in 1959 it entered the Union as the 50th state. Today, with its beautiful beaches, warm sun and powerful waves of the Pacific, Hawaii is a surfers' paradise and a favorite holiday destination. State Flower: yellow hibiscus, State bird: Hawaiian goose



Dancer at the annual Merrie Monarch Hula Festival in Hilo, Hawaii (Photo © AP Images)

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## Activity

Can you locate the coastal states on the map of the United States?

