

STAMP SCOOP



New England Coastal Lighthouses

Majestic, proud, and symbolic, the lighthouse, erected to guide ships into dark or treacherous ports, represent both isolation and safety. With modern technology and mapping systems, lighthouses are quickly becoming relics of our past. Yet they still serve as romantic reminders of our history. Since 1990, the US Postal Service has honored American lighthouses through a series of artful stamp sheets. This year, it issues the latest in the collection – New England Coastal Lighthouses, which commemorate some of the nation’s oldest lighthouses.

Boston Harbor Light, a National Landmark, was built in 1716 and was the country’s last lighthouse to be automated in 1998. It is considered America’s first “true” lighthouse, and it is the only one to have a residential keeper employed by the federal government.

New London Harbor was built in 1801 to replace the original lighthouse established in 1761 (which suffered a crack). It was one of the first lighthouses with a flashing beacon, and it is Connecticut’s oldest and tallest lighthouse.

Point Judith sits at the entrance of the Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island, guarding a particularly dangerous stretch of the Atlantic coast. Its current brownstone tower (built in 1857, renovated in 2000) replaced an 1810 original.

Portland Head, built in 1791, is Maine’s oldest lighthouse and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its majestic tower, coupled with the Victorian keeper’s house that now hosts a museum, is one of the most beautiful and most photographed light stations in America.

Portsmouth Harbor sits at New Hampshire’s only deep-water port. The current 48-foot tower, comprised of bolted cast-iron plates, was constructed in 1878 inside its predecessor – a wooden tower that eventually deteriorated.

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