



Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge

Directions

Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge

GPS Coordinates

29°39'30.22"N
94°32'48.86"W

From Headquarters

Continue South approximately 0.5 mile to 2041 and take a left towards Hwy 61. At the stop sign (Hwy 61) take a right (south) and go approximately 2 miles to a 4-way stop. Go straight thru the 4 way stop (The road is now Hwy 562), and continue for 8 miles to a fork in the road. Bear left onto FM 1985 and continue for 4 miles to the main Refuge Entrance on your right. Turn right and proceed 3 miles to the Visitor Information Station.



American Alligator photo by Norman Welsh

Introduction

The meandering bayous of Anahuac NWR cut through ancient floodplains, creating vast expanses of coastal marsh and prairie, bordering East Galveston Bay. These habitats are host or home to an abundance of wild-life. Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the 34,000 acres of Anahuac NWR are an important link in the chain of national wildlife refuges.

Refuge staff use a variety of tools to create and maintain a diversity of habitats for wildlife. Prescribed burning, grazing, water and salinity management, exotic plant control and wetland and upland restoration are just a few of the tools that are used to manage for healthy, productive and diverse ecosystems.

Things to Do at the Refuge

Wildlife Watching

Between October and March, visitors to Anahuac NWR are likely to see as many as 27 species of ducks, including green-winged teal, gadwall, and mottled ducks. Huge flocks of snow geese, sometimes in excess of 80,000, feed in marshes, rice fields and moist soil units. During spring and fall, warblers and other songbirds can be found in small wooded areas, while shorebirds take advantage of mudflats and shallow water in moist soil units.

Shoveler Pond Auto-Tour Loop

A 2.5-mile paved road encircles this 220-acre freshwater impoundment, offering unique opportunities to view and photograph alligators, birds and other marsh wildlife. While on the tour-

loop, make sure to stop and visit the 750 foot wildlife overlook and accessible boardwalk. You will get an opportunity to see wildlife close-up.

The Willows

This area incurred severe damage from the tidal surge produced by Hurricane Ike, but you will see that there is some great habitat restoration taking place. These trees provide important habitat for neotropical migrants that make the 600 mile journey across the Gulf of Mexico.

Moist Soil Units

These wetland units provide excellent habitat for a variety of species. During winter months, large concentrations of waterfowl can be found feeding on native plants. In the spring and summer, the units may be flooded to provide habitat for nesting waterfowl, as well as for migrating shorebirds. Wading birds make use of these wetlands year-round. Wildlife in these moist soil units can be viewed from adjacent roads and overlooks.

Skillern Tract

This 300-acre tract can support large numbers of shorebirds, wading birds and waterfowl. Located adjacent to East Bay Bayou, this tract is located seven miles east of the main Refuge entrance on FM 1985.

Auto Tour

Driving the 14 miles of roads can offer excellent opportunities to observe marsh wild-life. During wet weather, however, travel may be restricted to prevent damage to Refuge roads. Visitors should

be aware there are no fuel stations on or near the Refuge. Off-road travel is prohibited.

Walking Trails

Visitors are encouraged to walk the 3.5 miles of trails located throughout the Refuge. In order to protect wildlife and their habitats, visitors must stay on designated trails and roads.

Butterfly and Hummingbird Habitat Landscape (1,000 feet)

This accessible trail meanders through this 1.5 acre landscape, designed to attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

Willows Trail (0.6 mile)

Connecting the Butterfly and Hummingbird Habitat Landscape to the Willows, this accessible trail is an excellent area to view migrant songbirds in spring and fall.



Mottled Duck photo by Joe Blackburn

Hackberry Trail (0.5 mile)

Songbirds are attracted to the hackberries along this trail during spring and fall migration. Look for waterfowl and wading birds in the moist soil units from the overlook.

Yellow Rail Trail (10 acres)

Although not a trail, per se, the secretive yellow rail can be found here throughout the winter and during spring migration. Naturalist-led walks in the spring offer visitors the best chance to find yellow rails.

Live Oak Trail (2 miles)

Paralleling East Bay Bayou along a narrow corridor of riparian woodlands, this trail outlets to moist soil units and rice fields. Migrant songbirds, shorebirds, wintering waterfowl, and wading birds are all possibilities here.

Visitor Information Station

The Visitor Information Station (VIS) offers refuge information and a nature store managed by the Friends of Anahuac Refuge and staffed by refuge volunteers.

Contact the refuge headquarters for current VIS hours.

Fishing and Boating

Some of the best wade fishing in Texas for speckled trout, redfish and southern flounder can be found on the refuge shorelines along East Bay. Three fishing platforms and a bridge on the Skillern Tract (on East Bay Bayou) offer fishing opportunities for freshwater species like crappie, largemouth bass, gar, bowfin, channel catfish, and blue catfish.

Fishing and crabbing is in accordance with State regulations and subject to several conditions. Fishing is allowed in East Bay, bayous, along West Line Road, and other locations designated by refuge signs using pole and line, rod and reel, or hand-held line only. Cast-netting for bait for personal use is allowed in waterways along public roads. Spotlighting on the refuge is illegal except for bay fishing on the shoreline along East Bay. Fishing from water control structures, and the harvesting of frogs and turtles is prohibited on the refuge.

Boating is not permitted in inland waters of the refuge except for the boat canal. Two boat ramps are located on the refuge providing access to Oyster Bayou and East Bay. Boat ramps facilitate launching of small, shallow-draft boats only. Small, non-motorized boats may also be launched along East Bay Bayou at the canoe launch. It is unlawful to launch airboats or personal watercraft from the refuge.



Hunting

Waterfowl hunting is permitted in designated areas on the refuge, including the Pace Tract and parts of the East Unit and Middleton Tract. Hunters must contact refuge headquarters to obtain current hunting regulations and permits.

A Few Simple Rules

Public use areas are open from one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset daily. Access to East Bay and the two Refuge boat ramps is provided 24 hours a day along designated roads.

Visitors must stay on designated roads and trails.

Pets must be leashed at all times.

Observe speed limits and watch for wildlife crossing roadways.

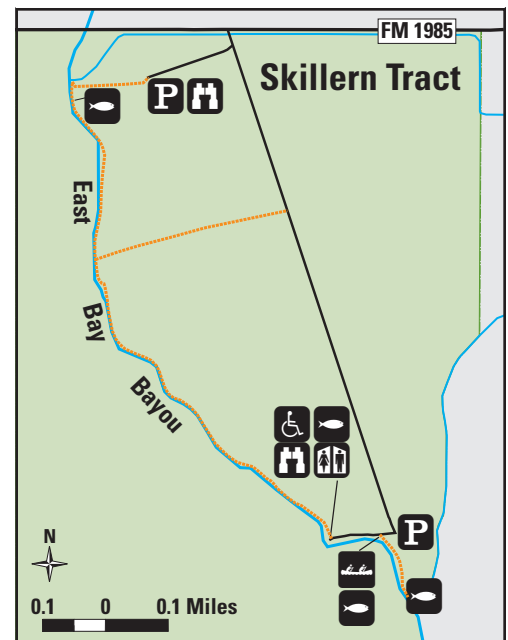
Collection of plants or animals, or feeding or disturbing wildlife, is prohibited.

Campfires, fireworks, and recordings to attract wildlife are prohibited.

Overnight stays to facilitate night-time fishing are permitted along bayshore pulloffs on Frozen Point Road and the East Bay Boat Ramp parking area only. No facilities or hook-ups are available.

Bicycles are permitted on roads only.

All-terrain vehicles, airboats and personal watercraft are prohibited.



For additional information, contact
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Purple Gallinule photo by Norman Welsh