



Louisiana Scenic Bayou Scenic  
Byway: East Florida Parishes Loop

800-LA-ROUGE

[www.VisitBatonRouge.com](http://www.VisitBatonRouge.com)

or

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or

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## Bayou Birds

America's  
Wetland  
Birding Trail  
On Louisiana's  
Great Gulf Coast



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## *EAST FLORIDA PARISHES LOOP*

This loop introduces visitors to a variety of “black water” swamp and marsh habitats normally associated with points east of Louisiana within the lower Gulf Coastal Plain of Mississippi, Alabama, and the Florida Panhandle. In such habitats, longleaf pine mixes with southern magnolia and sweetgum on the upslopes, while swamp blackgum and pond cypress mix in the bottoms. Marshes are dominated by cattail, salt-marsh mallow (summer/fall), southern blue flag (spring) and wild rice.

East Florida Parishes also represents the only chance within the entire Louisiana Great Gulf Coast Birding trail for viewing the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Visit the Big Branch National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center for specific information on finding this species, as well as extensive interpretive exhibits and other information.

In addition to Big Branch NWR, the Madisonville Marsh and Mandeville Lakefront should not be missed, particularly for hard-core birders! The former features a diverse array of herons, egrets, waterfowl (winter), and sparrows (winter), while the latter boasts various species of loons, grebes, and diving ducks (winter), along with gulls, terns, Osprey, Bald Eagle, and other raptors.



## Madisonville Marsh

Site I2-1



**Site access:** Free

**Site contact:** Madisonville Town Hall; 985-845-7311

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.39565; W 90.15712

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 12 and I 10/I 59 Exit in Slidell go west on I 12 for 25.4 miles to Exit 59. Continue west on the access road briefly to LA 21. Turn left and go south-west 3.6 miles to LA 1077/ Main St. Continue south on LA 1077 for 0.3 miles to Mabel Dr. Turn left and go east 0.2 miles to the marsh.

**Description:** This freshwater marsh complex, known as “The Ricefields” by locals, is dotted with forested patches of baldcypress-tupelo gum swamp. The narrow “shell” access road takes visitors for 1.4 miles through swamp and wild rice/ cattail/ common reed-dominated marsh and over canals before terminating at Lake Pontchartrain. The entire site is bordered by the Tchefuncte River to the east.

Common swamp-nesting bird species to keep an eye out for include White Ibis, Mississippi Kite, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Parula, and Yellow-throated and Prothonotary warblers. Within the marsh itself, look for Least Bittern, Great Blue, Tricolored, and Green herons, Great and Snowy egrets, Mottled Duck, King Rail, Greater Yellowlegs, Marsh Wren, and Common Yellowthroat. In winter, expect additional birds like Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, Osprey, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Sora, American Coot, and Wilson’s Snipe. Relative rarities such as Groove-billed Ani and Western Kingbird have also been spotted during the winter months.

Park around the boat shed/ boat launch area at the end of the road and look for waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, and terns along the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. During spring and summer you may encounter Laughing Gull, Forster’s and Least terns, Red-winged Blackbird, and Boat-tailed Grackle. During fall and winter, expect additions such as Bufflehead, Lesser Scaup, Spotted and Western sandpipers, Bonaparte’s, Herring and Ring-billed gulls, and Caspian and Royal terns.

## Fairview-Riverside State Park

Site I2-2



**Site access:** Fee

**Site contact:** Park Information; 888-677-3247

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.40842; W 90.14213

**Website:** [www.lastateparks.com](http://www.lastateparks.com)

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 12 and I 10/I 59 Exit in Slidell go west on I 12 for 22.2 miles to Exit 63A/ US 190. Go south on US 190 for 2.2 miles to the ramp for LA 22. Merge right (west) onto LA 22 and go 3.2 miles to Fairview Dr. Turn right (north) and go 0.2 miles to Fairview-Riverside State Park.

**Description:** Located on the crystal-clear waters of the Tchefuncte River, this 99-acre park sits amidst a matrix of mixed loblolly pine-live oak slopes and baldcypress-tupelo swamp. In and of themselves, the moss-draped oaks provide for some of the most picturesque imagery in all of south Louisiana. Numerous species of birds enjoy these oaks for spring/ summer nesting as well as for winter foraging substrate and shelter. Check the canopies for Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned kinglets (winter), as well as varied species of vireos and warblers, depending on time of year.

Non-camping/ day-use visitors should take their first left after entering the park, and follow to the parking area located between a picnic area and the historic Otis House (check the Otis House Museum for tour schedule). Most of this small, beautiful park can be accessed by foot from the parking area.

Wading birds, waterfowl (winter), raptors, and other birds can be observed from the banks of the Tchefuncte River, which forms the northern and western borders of the park. In the large oaks, pines, and baldcypresses within the park itself, look for Red-headed and Pileated woodpeckers, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Parula, and Yellow-throated, Pine and Prothonotary warblers, along with others such as Summer Tanager, Chipping Sparrow, and Common Grackle.





## Tammany Trace

Site 12-3



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.41786; W 90.04450

**Site contact:** Lisa Pratt, Tammany Trace Office; 800-43TRACE or 985-867-9490

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 12 and I 10/ I 59 Exit in Slidell go west on I 12 for 19.1 miles to Exit 65/ LA 59. Merge onto LA 59 and go north about 0.3 miles to Koop Dr. Turn left on Koop Dr. and follow it west briefly to Tammany Trace Trailhead and Caboose.

**Description:** The Tammany Trace is a rails-to-trails project that extends from Slidell on the southeast of the parish to Covington on the northwest. The project covers a distance of 31 miles, connecting those two cities with Lacombe, Mandeville, and Abita Springs in between. It parallels US190, LA59, and LA36, meandering through mixed pine flatwoods, beech-magnolia hardwoods, live oak groves, and swamps, and can be accessed at numerous points.

Pileated and Downy woodpeckers, as well as other year-round woodland species such as Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, Pine Warbler, White-eyed Vireo, Fish Crow, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and Eastern Towhee, are regulars along the Tammany Trace. Migration is an exciting time for this area when these woodland residents are joined by other woodland species. During migration and winter, visitors can expect other woodland species such as Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Dark-eyed Junco, and American Goldfinch.

Don't forget to check out the swampy areas for both Great and Snowy egrets, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, and Yellow-throated, Prothonotary and Hooded warblers, to name a few.

## Mandeville Lakefront

Site 12-4



**Site access:** Free

**GPS Coordinates:** N 30.34843; W 90.06126

**Site contact:** Mandeville City Hall; 985-626-3144

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 12 and I 10/ I 59 Exit in Slidell, go west on I 12 for 18.9 miles to Exit 65/ LA 59. Go left (south) onto LA 59 to Lake Pontchartrain at Lakeshore Drive. Go left (east) on Lakeshore Drive for 0.5 miles to the parking area at Jackson Avenue.

**Description:** The Mandeville Lakefront has been developed into one of the most spectacular and accessible overlooks in the entire Lake Pontchartrain basin. A spotting scope/ tripod and/ or binoculars are suggested for waterfowl (winter) and other birds which raft offshore, and for raptors which might perch on the tree line to the immediate east of the site.

On a year round basis, expect to encounter sea birds such as Laughing Gull, and Forster's Tern, along with Brown Pelican and other less common species such as Royal and Caspian terns. Larger wading birds such as Great Blue Heron and Great and Snowy egrets, along with Boat-tailed Grackles, might also stop by to hunt along the shoreline.

During winter, Common Loon, and Pied-billed, Horned and occasionally Eared grebes can be seen foraging at various distances offshore, along with ducks such as Blue-winged and Green-winged teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Duck. In the "rarer-but-somewhat-regular" category are Canvasback, Redhead, Greater Scaup, and even Long-tailed Duck.

Look also for Osprey, Southern Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, and Merlin, either as flyovers or perching on the nearby utility poles or tree line to the immediate east (along Bayou Castine). Additional sea birds might include Bonaparte's, Ring-billed and Herring gulls, and Common, Least and Black terns.



## Northlake Nature Center

Site 12-5



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.35118; W 90.03614

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 12 and I 10/ I 59 Exit in Slidell go west on I 12 for 10.7 miles to Exit 74/ LA 434. Go south on LA 434 for 2.9 miles to US 190/ LA 434. Go right (south-west) on US 190 for 6.6 miles to Northlake Nature Center, located across the highway from Fontainebleau State Park.

**Description:** Although not a traditional “nature center” with interpretive buildings, Northlake Nature Center has an extensive trail system, much of which is elevated, that winds through 400 acres of longleaf pine savannah, mixed pine-beech-magnolia forest, and swamp habitats. Archaeological research has shown that this site was occupied some 700 years ago by the Acolapissa Indians, and once hosted a mixed French-Indian colony, one of the first few documented in North America.

Grab a map/ brochure at the informational kiosk located at the trail head adjacent to the parking area. In addition to the short “introductory trail” that loops the pavilion on the shore of a swampy beaver pond, there are 3 additional trails of varying lengths, all of which at least partially traverse long-leaf pine restoration areas.

The trail system here shares similar bird species as the woodland portions of nearby Fontainebleau State Park. Occupants of the swampy areas include Great and Snowy egrets, along with Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Broad-winged Hawk, Pileated and Downy woodpeckers, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, White-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated, Prothonotary and Hooded warblers, Summer Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, and Eastern Towhee.

## Fontainebleau State Park

Site 12-6



**Site access:** Fee

**Site contact:** Park Information; 888-677-3668

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.34523; W 90.02269

**Website:** [www.lastateparks.com/](http://www.lastateparks.com/)

**Directions:** From the Causway Bridge across Lake Pontchartrain, take Hwy 190 southeast through Mandeville to the park, or exit I 12 at Mandeville on LA 59 south, and turn left on US 190 at Mandeville. From New Orleans, take I 10 east to Slidell, then left on US 190.

**Description:** Set amidst the remnants of the mid-19th century sugar plantation of Bernard de Marigny de Mandeville, Fontainebleau State Park encapsulates 2,800 acres of beach, brackish marsh, freshwater marsh, pine flatwoods, mixed pine-hardwood slopes, and meadows.

Birding from the beach during the summer months will often turn up Brown Pelican, Laughing Gull, Royal and Forster’s terns, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, and Boat-tailed Grackle. During the spring, fall, and winter months, these birds are joined by additional nearctic migrants including Double-crested Cormorant, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Osprey, Herring and Ring-billed gulls, and others.

The Nature Trail at the trailhead across from the old sugar mill ruins traverses pine and mixed pine-hardwood forests as well as freshwater marsh. Commonly encountered year round woodland species include Pileated and Downy woodpeckers, White-eyed Vireo, Fish Crow, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, Pine Warbler, Northern Cardinal, and Eastern Towhee.

During migration periods and winter check the woodlands for Yellow-shafted Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and American Goldfinch. In summer, the marsh areas host Great Blue, Little Blue, and Tricolored herons, Great and Snowy egrets, Common Moorhen, Eastern Kingbird, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Red-winged Blackbird, and Orchard Oriole.



America’s WETLAND is the habitat for 79 rare, threatened and endangered species, and more than 95% of all marine species living in the Gulf of Mexico spend all or part of their life cycle in Louisiana’s wetlands.





## Big Branch Marsh NWR Visitor's Center

Site 12-7



**Site access:** Free

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.31945; W 89.93332

**Site contact:** Refuge Manager, Southeast Louisiana Refuges; 985-882-2000

**Website:** <http://southeastlouisiana.fws.gov>

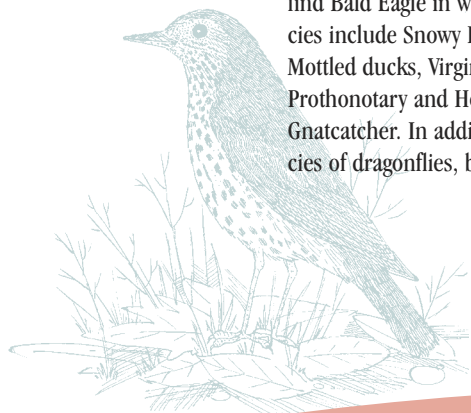
**Directions:** From the intersection of I 12 and I 10/ I 59 Exit in Slidell go west on I 12 for 10.8 miles to Exit 74/ LA 434. Turn left (south) and go 2.0 mile to the sign for Big Branch NWR on right. Turn right (west) and follow the entrance road to the headquarters and visitor's center.

**Description:** Lovely, secluded, and in itself an excellent birding locale, the Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge Visitor's Center must be visited by any birder wishing to discover current birding events taking place in each of the national wildlife refuges throughout southeastern Louisiana.

The Visitor's Center contains several interpretive exhibits, as well as informational brochures about birding locales, gardening for birds and butterflies, building bird houses, and other useful information for non-game wildlife enthusiasts. Check also for regularly-scheduled birding and canoeing tours, nature photography workshops, and many other programs.

The most visited birding site at Big Branch is Boy Scout Road Boardwalk and Nature Trail. The 660-foot boardwalk traverses carefully-managed pine flatwoods habitat and is home to the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, one of our nation's few officially endangered bird species. Other pine flatwoods bird species include Mississippi Kite, Downy and Pileated woodpeckers, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Fish Crow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Pine Warbler, and Chipping Sparrow.

The more physically challenging, 2.3-mile (one way) Boy Scout Road Trail is a great place to find Bald Eagle in winter and Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Other commonly encountered species include Snowy Egret, White Ibis, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (spring, summer), Wood and Mottled ducks, Virginia Rail (winter), Northern Bobwhite, Loggerhead Shrike, Wood Thrush, Prothonotary and Hooded warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. In addition to the diverse bird life, various turtles and snakes, as well as many species of dragonflies, butterflies, and wildflowers abound along the trail.



## Cultural/Historical Attractions

### LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN BASIN MARITIME MUSEUM

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Maritime Museum is a reinvigorated effort to document and interpret America's rich maritime heritage. The Museum's mission is to provide an education and research center to collect, interpret, and preserve the maritime and cultural history and artifacts of the Lower Mississippi River Basin for public benefit. For more information, call 985-845-9200 or visit <http://lpbmaritimemuseum.org/>.

## Eagle Walk at The Nature Conservancy White Kitchen Preserve

Site 12-8



**Site access:** Free

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.22890; W 89.67824

**Site contact:** The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana  
Northshore Field Office; 985-809-1414

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 12 and I 10/ I 59 Exit 85 in Slidell go south on I 10 for 0.7 miles to Exit 266/ US 190/ Gause Blvd. Turn left (east) on US 190 for 0.2 miles. Turn right on Yaupon Dr. and head south for 0.5 miles to Hoover Dr. Turn right (west) for 0.8 miles to US 190 Business/ US 190. Turn left and go east 5.4 miles to its junction with US 90 and Chevron Eagle Walk.

**Description:** The Chevron Eagle Walk is an interpretive site managed by The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana for the primary purpose of viewing nesting Southern Bald Eagles (late September through April). Botanically, the site is a rather curious blend of oak-pine forest grading down into baldcypress-tupelo gum-buttonbush swamp and many acres of freshwater marsh.

Within the site's patch of upland oak-pine forest near the parking area, look for Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue Jay, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Carolina Wren, Pine Warbler, Summer Tanager, and Common Grackle. Within the band of swamp at the base of the boardwalk look also for Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Northern Parula, and Prothonotary Warbler, especially during the spring and summer months. Butterfly enthusiasts will enjoy the warm months when Giant Swallowtail and Tiger Swallowtail butterflies nectar off of the spherical, white blooms of the buttonbush.

The site's short, elevated boardwalk traverses the swamp band and terminates at an observation deck at the edge of a vast freshwater marsh. In order to view Bald Eagle nesting activities it is best to have a spotting scope for the closest view, although binoculars will suffice. The eagles can be found about 0.5 miles north, straight out from the observation deck and across the marsh, along a row of tall baldcypress trees, visible with the naked eye.

## Pearl River WMA

Site 12-9



**Site access:** Free, Daily, Louisiana Wild Stamp required

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.39107; W 89.72894

**Site contact:** Pearl River WMA Headquarters;  
985-646-6440

**Website:** [www.wlf.state.la.us](http://www.wlf.state.la.us)

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 12 and I 10/ I 59 Exit in Slidell go east on I 12 for 0.2 miles to Exit 85B. Merge onto I 59 and go north 5.9 miles to Exit 5B/ Old US 11. Turn left and go north/east on Old US 11 for about 2.8 miles to the Pearl River WMA Entrance Station.

**Description:** Known to locals as "Honey Island Swamp," Pearl River Wildlife Management Area consists of over 35,000 acres of bottomland hardwood forest, cypress-tupelo swamp, and fresh to brackish marsh. The vast majority of the bird life encountered at Pearl River consists of woodland species, characteristic of the bottomland hardwood habitat that composes the majority of the driving and walking portions of the WMA. Typical year round residents include Wood Duck, Wild Turkey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Barred Owl, Red-headed, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and Pileated woodpeckers, Blue Jay, American and Fish crows, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Cardinal, Eastern Towhee, and Common Grackle.

During the summer nesting period as well as migration and winter seasons a plethora of additional woodland species are drawn to the WMA. These consist mainly of flycatchers, vireos, wrens, kinglets, thrushes, warblers, tanagers, and sparrows. The more common neotropical nesting species include Broad-winged Hawk, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian and Great-crested flycatchers, White-eyed and Red-eyed vireos, Wood Thrush, Northern Parula, American Redstart, Swainson's, Kentucky and Hooded warblers, and Summer Tanager.

Common winter residents include Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, House and Winter wrens, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Blue-headed Vireo, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers, White-throated, Song and Swamp sparrows, Rusty Blackbird, and American Goldfinch.





## Convention and Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce

Baton Rouge Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
730 North Boulevard  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

St. Francisville Tourist Commission  
PO Box 1538  
St. Francisville, LA 70775  
Phone: 225-635-6769

Tangipahoa Parish Convention & Visitors Bureau  
42271 South Morrison Boulevard  
Hammond, LA 70403  
Toll Free Consumer: 800-542-7520  
Fax: 985-542-7521  
www.tangi-cvb.org

Livingston Parish Convention & Visitors Bureau  
30340 Catholic Hall Road  
Albany, LA 70711  
Toll Free Consumer: 888-317-7899  
www.livingstonparish.com

West Baton Rouge Tourist Commission  
2855 I 10 Frontage Road  
Port Allen, LA 70767  
Phone: 225-344-2920  
Fax: 225-344-2931  
www.westbatonrouge.net

Greater Madisonville Chamber of Commerce  
PO Box 746  
Madisonville, LA 70447  
Phone: 985-845-9824

St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission  
68099 Hwy 59  
Mandeville, LA 70471  
Phone: 985-892-0520  
Toll Free Consumer: 800-634-9443  
Fax: 985-892-1441  
www.NewOrleansNorthshore.com

St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission  
1000 Caruso Blvd. Suite 197  
Slidell, LA 70461  
Phone: 985-643-1409  
Toll Free Consumer: 800-634-9443  
Fax: 985-892-1441  
www.NewOrleansNorthshore.com

Lacombe Heritage Center  
29069 Clesi St.  
Lacombe, LA 70445  
Phone: 985-882-7218



## Louisiana Scenic Bayou Scenic Byway

The Louisiana Scenic Bayou Scenic Byway, centered around Baton Rouge, leads visitors across 13 parishes through upland and bottomland hardwood forests, baldcypress-tupelo gum swamp and freshwater marsh habitats. Visit the various state parks, state historic sites, wildlife preserves, the famous Atchafalaya Swamp, magnificent plantations, and small towns bursting with culture and southern charm. Explore the many beautiful rivers along the byway via canoe or boat.

Follow the byway along stretches of River Road on both banks of the Mississippi. From here, head north to experience the heart of "English Louisiana," or take a ferry across the Mississippi and continue east into the Florida Parishes, once known as the Republic of West Florida.