

Tree-rific Trees

Learn about the various trees found on the refuge and their role in wildlife habitat; explore the trees on Plum Orchard Pond Trail and engage in various activities from Project Learning Tree.

*Whooping Cranes

Learn about St. Marks new winter resident, and be a part of bringing a species from the brink of extinction.

About the Refuge

St. Marks NWR, located along the Gulf Coast of Florida, is a well-known oasis of natural Florida habitats for wildlife, especially birds. Natural salt marshes, freshwater swamps, pine forests and lakes provide a haven for wildlife and people.

Fishing, hiking, bird watching, butterfly-watching, hunting, and viewing the historic St. Marks lighthouse on beautiful Apalachee Bay attract visitors from around the world. Special events highlighting the refuge's coastal resources, monarch butterflies, wildflowers and migratory birds enhance visitors' opportunities to learn more about this special place.

Established in 1931 for wintering migratory birds, St. Marks NWR has a long tradition of excellent bird-watching. There are over 300 species of birds recorded on the refuge, with 98 species nesting on-site. There are 19 species of ducks and many hawks, falcons, and shorebirds migrating through the refuge in the fall and winter. There are at least 14 active bald eagle nests and the endangered least tern and red-cockaded woodpecker also nest on the refuge.

In the spring, the refuge is a showcase of colors as songbirds migrate north through coastal oaks and shrubs. Wildlife abounds on St. Marks NWR due to the wide diversity of habitats, ranging from wilderness saltmarshes, ribboned with tidal creeks, to rolling longleaf pine forests, with swamps, sinkholes, and palm/oak hammocks in between. Located in Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor counties, the refuge spans over 43 miles of coastline and supports 52 species of mammals such as the Florida black bear and bobcat; 40 species of amphibians such as the endangered flatwoods salamander, and 65 species of reptiles.

Visitors may glimpse endangered loggerhead sea turtles and West Indian manatees offshore by the lighthouse. State-listed threatened and endangered plants are also found on the refuge. St. Marks NWR's location also makes it an ideal host for the natural marvel of the migrating monarch butterflies in October on their way to Mexico!

Getting There

St. Marks NWR is located 25 miles south of Tallahassee, Florida. Take State Hwy. 363 through Woodville to the intersection of State Hwy. 363 and State Hwy. 267 (traffic light at this intersection). Turn left onto 267 and drive 4 miles to dead end into U.S. Hwy. 98 (Coastal Hwy). Turn left onto Coastal Hwy. and drive about 1/2 mile, cross over the St. Marks River, and take your first right on Co. Rd. 59 (Lighthouse Rd.).

The Visitor Center and Education Cabin are three miles down Lighthouse Rd. A 6.8-mile wildlife drive runs from the Visitor Center to the old historic St. Marks lighthouse on Apalachee Bay.



Sponsored by
USFWS and St. Marks
Refuge Association



Reservations and Questions

For more information contact
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St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Programs



About Our Programs

FREE for groups that have educational curriculum requirements that can be met by our outdoor classrooms. Programs are designed to accommodate **up to 60 students**. Students will be divided into smaller groups so they can get the most from their experiences at St. Marks NWR.

Each program may include a game, lesson and hands-on-activity. To obtain a list of the Florida Sunshine State Standard correlations, and pre-visit and post-visit activities, please go to our website at

<http://www.fws.gov/saintmarks>

Unless otherwise noted schools are expected to provide one adult chaperone for each 15 students attending. Chaperones will actively participate in the presentation of the programs under the supervision of the Refuge educational staff.

Programs denoted with * can be taken off site to your school. However, field components may not apply.

Special Programs- Groups with unique requirements or requests will be accommodated based on the availability of refuge facilitators. If a teacher needs a program that is not listed we will do our best to provide an appropriate program.



What to Bring on a Field Trip

All programs maximize outdoor activities so students should dress appropriately and wear closed toed shoes. The following items are recommended:

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Drinking water
- Insect repellent
- Camera
- Sun screen

Butterfly Encounter

Grades K-3 *Fall*
Experience the Butterfly Lifecycle Game, and observe butterflies along the Levee Trail.

*Adaptable Animals

Grades K-3 *All year*
Learn how animals are adapted to survive - teeth, claws, camouflage, eyes, etc.

*Insect Safari

Grades K-3 *Spring and Fall*
Go on an insect scavenger hunt and learn about various insects.

*Eco-Links

Grades 4-6 *All year*
Play the Web of Life game, and hike a nature trail to observe how wildlife are connected to a variety of eco-systems and habitats.

Coastal Explorer

Grades 4-6 *Spring and Fall*
Explore Apalachee Bay and its coastline and marshes. Students use nets, seines and binoculars. (SAFETY NOTE: closed toed shoes are required, no bare feet will be allowed. Bring dry clothes, spare shoes and towels when participating in this activity.) *This program may require more time.

Freshwater Ecosystems

Grades 4-6 *All year*
Explore freshwater ecosystems on the refuge. Students will use thermometers, nets, ID sheets, etc. Conditions are often muddy.

Earth Scientist

Grades 4-6 *All year*
Students measure temperature, wind and humidity using scientific instruments to learn about and compare various habitats on the refuge. For this program, schools should provide one adult chaperone for each 5-7 students. *Earth Scientist requires 2 hours.*

*Orienteering

Grades 5-12 *All year*
Students will learn mapping skills, by using compasses, and GPS units in field exercises.

Coastal Habitats/Tower Pond Trail

Students will be introduced to various coastal habitats and their inhabitants, and human history of the area. Students will utilize binoculars to view birds and plants in the area.

*Digital Photography

Come learn the basics of digital nature photography!

Programs for All Grades -All Year

Introduction to the Refuge

Students will be introduced to the refuge and its various habitats while taking a narrated bus ride to the Lighthouse.

*Feathered Friends

Students will learn what makes birds unique - characteristics, adaptations, and behavior. Binoculars will be used to identify birds in the field.

*Reptiles and Amphibians

Students will learn what makes reptiles and amphibians unique - characteristics, adaptations, and behavior. Field exercise will follow.

*Magnificent Mammals

Students will learn what makes mammals unique - characteristics, adaptations, and behavior. Students will be introduced to specific species of mammals that can be found on the refuge. Field exercise will follow.

*Endangered Species

Students will be introduced to various endangered species found on the refuge and what they can do to help protect those species. A field experience will accompany this program.

Living with Fire

Learn about prescribed burning, and how to use some of the instruments used in planning a prescribed burn. Students will explore fire plots and do a field exercise as a "burn crew" to determine if a prescribed fire could be ignited.