



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Aransas

National Wildlife Refuge

Visitor Information and Map

Welcome to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

We invite you to drive our 16-mile auto tour, fish from our pier, walk up our observation towers, and relax and enjoy a picnic overlooking San Antonio Bay. Take time to stretch your legs along several miles of walking trails. You'll find observation platforms, wooden bridges and boardwalks, diverse plants and wildlife, and stunning views of the bay and wildlife habitat.

Trails

Rail Trail (.5 mile)

Waterbirds, from rails to bitterns, lurk in the reeds lining Tomas Slough. This grassy trail parallels the long, narrow pond that is home to alligators as well.

Alligator Viewing Area (<0.1 mile)

Take a short walk up the ramp and look for alligators in Tomas Slough, one of the few freshwater resources on the refuge. On sunny days, you may see an alligator basking on the bank. Listen for frogs calling and look for fish swimming in the water.

Heron Flats Trail (1.4 miles)

Freshwater sloughs, shell ridges, oak forests, and tidal flats make this trail quite diverse. If you're lucky, you might see a whooping crane family feeding in the marshy salt flats. Watch, too, for egrets, roseate spoonbills, pelicans, and other wildlife. *Please note that this trail does not make a loop.

Songbird Loop (0.1 mile)

Listen to a spring songbird serenade as you wander this short woodland loop.

Oak Sanctuary (0.1 mile)

Walk this short trail towards San Antonio Bay and experience the mystery of a 500-year old oak tree. What might you find hiding in its branches, or seeking its shade? The oak is covered in mustang grapevine.



A whooping crane catches a blue crab. © Kevin Sims

Jones Lake (<0.1 mile)

A very short, paved walkway leads to a platform overlooking the lake, another potential alligator hangout, and a great place to see dragonflies, birds, and other wildlife seeking water. The water level in this wetland depends entirely on rainfall.

Big Tree Trail (.7 mile)

Encounter some of the refuge's largest live oak trees along this woodland loop. Listen for songbirds and the scampering of fox squirrels, as well as armadillos rusting under the trees.

Observation Towers and Boardwalk

In addition to crane watching, the two observation towers (20' and 40') offer a panoramic view of San Antonio Bay and Mustang Lake. Both towers are fully accessible with gently sloping ramps. Follow the boardwalk across the tidal flat to the Big Tree Observation Deck. Look for animal tracks in the mud.

One-way Loop (driving only)

This 9-mile loop takes you through diverse habitat. Please note that it is one-way, and will take at least 45 minutes.

Rules and Regulations

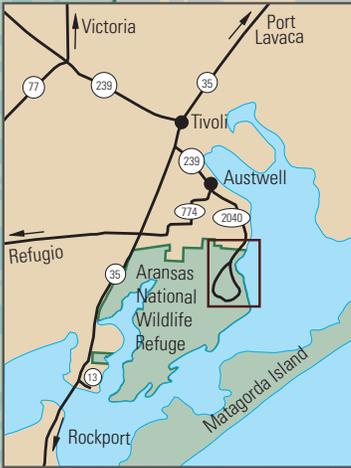
- Observe speed limit of 25 mph and watch for wildlife crossing roadways.
- All vehicles must be street legal and remain on designated roadways.
- Feeding animals is prohibited.
- Drone use is prohibited.
- No littering. Please take your trash with you when you leave.
- Bicycles are permitted on the paved tour loop only (no trail riding).
- There is no camping on the refuge.
- Pets must be kept on a standard (4-6 foot) leash at all times.

Keep in mind that the refuge is wild, and you may encounter venomous snakes, alligators, and biting insects. Please stay on marked trails and use caution.

For More Information

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 100
Austwell, TX 77950
361/286-3559
fws.gov/refuge/aransas

Map of Refuge and Vicinity



- Visitor Center
- Restrooms
- Viewing Area
- Picnic Area
- Trailhead
- Kayak Launch
- Fishing Access
- Pollinator Garden
- Wetlands
- Refuge Land

Auto Tour Loop
One way traffic

Two way traffic

One way traffic

Auto Tour Loop

Rail Trail

Heron Flats Trail

Songbird Loop Trail

Oak Sanctuary Trail

Youth Environmental Training Area (permit required)

Dagger Point Trail (access closed)

Big Tree Trail

San Antonio Bay



Fishing Access Apr 15-Oct 14

Observation Towers

Mustang Lake

Jonas Lake