



Brazoria

National Wildlife Refuge

Introduction

Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge has a terrain that's more water than land, a place never far from the restless lapping and stirring of salt and fresh water. Dense interlocking marshes rise almost imperceptibly to low prairies, while vast flocks of waterfowl make this Gulf Coast refuge home for the winter. Established in 1966, this 43,000 acre refuge protects critical coastal wetlands for migratory birds and other wildlife. Brazoria NWR is open every day from sunrise to sunset.

Things To Do

Discovery Center

An accessible Discovery Center contains a lab, visitor center, and offices. The visitor center provides an information station and contains interactive displays. Contact refuge office for current hours. Maps, brochures, and interpretive displays are available at the information pavilion. Beside the pavilion are accessible restrooms and drinking fountains.

Field Investigation

Refuge staff and volunteers host hands-on environmental education programs for school groups. Schools and organizations should call the refuge office for information on scheduling trips.

Big Slough Boardwalk & Trail (0.6 miles)

The boardwalk over the slough provides a close encounter with a lovely marsh crowned with spiky cattail and bulrush which offer renowned wildlife viewing and photography. The trail winds through low forests of yaupon and small clearings to an observation platform.

Big Slough Auto Tour (7.5 miles)

The auto tour runs through the Big Slough Recreation Area, the heart of the Brazoria NWR. Visit a salt marsh observation deck at crossroads. Teal and Rogers Pond observation platforms offer panoramic views of waterfowl congregations, wading and shore birds. A self-guided audio tour CD and brochure is available at the information pavilion. Bicycling is permitted on the gravel road.

Middle Bayou Trail (2 miles)

Refuge visitors can hike or bike an elevated trail that follows an abandoned railway line. The trail starts at the Bastrop Bayou Fishing Area with visitors enjoying views across the rare bluestem coastal prairie.

Wildlife Observation

This refuge reflects the ebbs and peaks of life in one of the richest environments on earth. More than 400 species of wildlife including at least 320 bird species make the coastal wetlands and prairies their home. The refuge is part of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. The refuge lies in the Central Flyway that includes both coastal and trans-oceanic bird migration paths which make for great birding year round.

Birding is most interesting during the winter months; geese along with 24 species of ducks and sandhill cranes fill the plentiful ponds and sloughs to capacity. Thirteen species of sparrows winter here.

The diversity of the refuge goes far beyond birds and alligators. Frogs, toads, salamanders, and turtles hop, slither, and plop into the waters. Mice and rats form a terrific prey base for snakes, coyotes, bobcats, and hawks.

Fishing

Brazoria has three public fishing areas that allow land access to salt water fishing. Bastrop Bayou Public Fishing Area is universally accessible and offers a 200-foot pier, five paved bank fishing pull-offs, and toilet. Excellent crabbing is available from the pier. The Clay Banks Public Fishing Area offers bank fishing along a one-mile segment of Bastrop Bayou. The Salt Lake Fishing Area offers bank fishing and a non-motorized boat ramp. Both areas are open daily from sunrise to sunset.

Hunting

The refuge has public waterfowl hunting areas located in the tidal marsh with boat and walk-in access.

Volunteer Opportunities

The refuge relies on volunteers to assist with visitor services, education, wildlife surveys, trail maintenance, and construction. Eight RV sites with hook-ups are available for volunteers. Call the refuge office for more information.

Friends

Since its formation in 1994, the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges have helped develop facilities, interpret the natural history of the refuge, and sponsor the Migration Celebration festival. For more information on volunteering, or making donations, contact:

Friends of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuges
P.O. Box 505
Lake Jackson, TX 77566
www.refugefriends.org



Management

Management activities focus on protecting and enhancing wetlands, restoring former wetlands, and creating new ones. Removing exotic plants helps maintain natural diversity and renews native plants. Prescribed or controlled burns reduce plant litter, retard brushy plant intrusion, and reduce the threat of wildfire.

For your Comfort

Bring insect repellent in every season. Be prepared for the heat and sun. Carry drinking water and sunscreen.

For your Safety

Do not feed the alligators or any other wildlife. When walking the trails, watch out for venomous snakes, and fire ants.

Help us protect the Refuge

- No camping, fires, or fireworks are allowed.
- Keep pets on leashes.
- No firearms are permitted except for waterfowl hunting.
- Off-road travel and all-terrain vehicles use is not permitted.

For more information

Texas Mid-Coast National
Wildlife Refuge Complex
2547 CR 316
Brazoria, TX 77422
979/964-4011
979/964-4021 Fax
<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>

Directions

From the intersection of SH 288 and FM 523 in Angleton, take FM 523 to SH 2004 intersection, continue on FM 523 for 5.5 miles to CR227, turn left, go 1.7 miles to Brazoria NWR gate at your right.

The Brazoria NWR is located 10 miles east of Lake Jackson. From the intersection of 288 and FM 2004, take FM 2004 east to FM 523, go south 5 miles on FM 523 to CR 227, turn left 2 miles to the refuge entrance gate.

July 2008

American Alligators on front

Photograph by Thomas Sanders

Pelican on rear

Photograph by Keith Ramos

