

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Brazoria

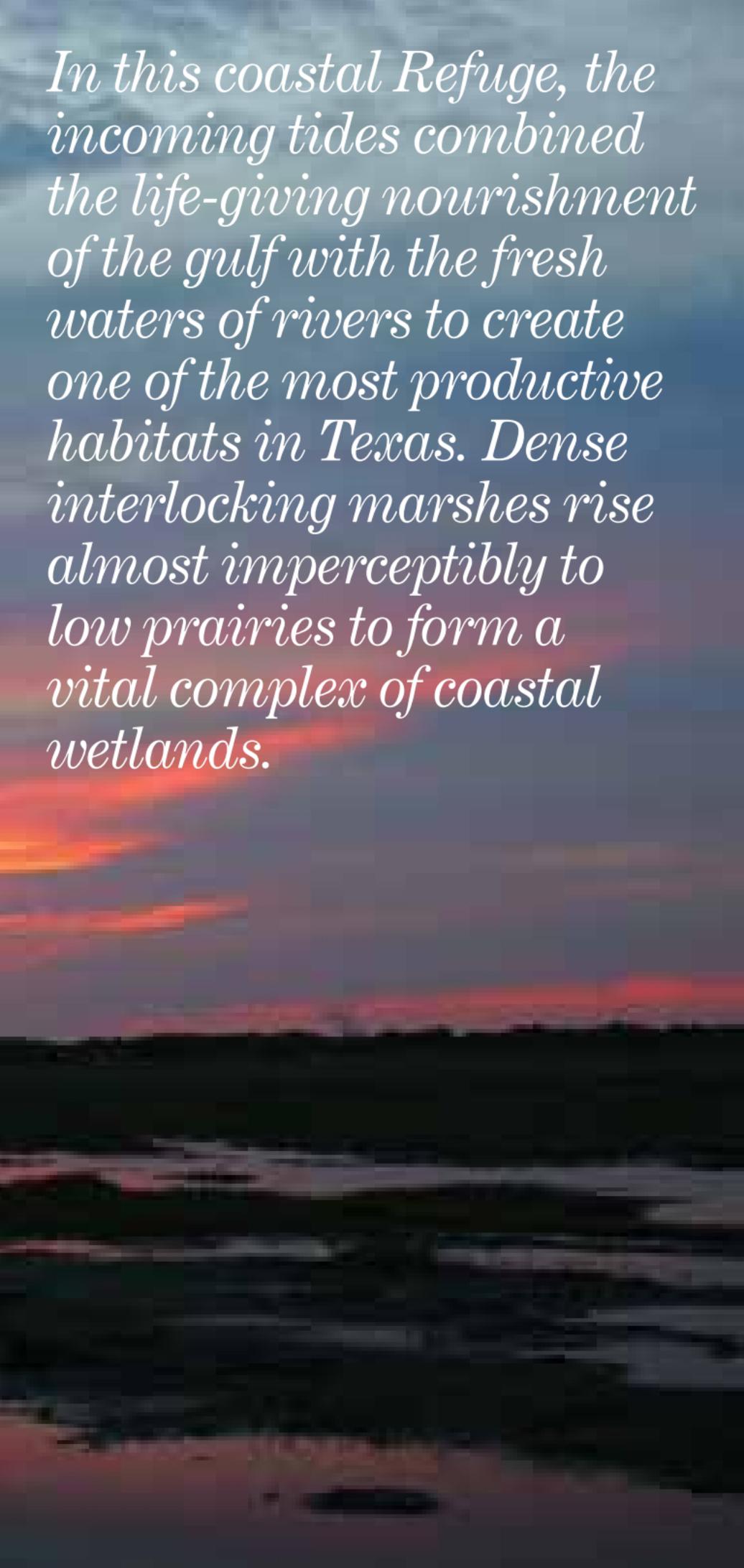
*National Wildlife  
Refuge*



*The thunder of 20,000 snow geese taking flight, the salty breeze off the Gulf, or the sight of a 12 foot alligator sunning on a bank make a trip to Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge a sensory banquet in any season.*



*In this coastal Refuge, the incoming tides combined the life-giving nourishment of the gulf with the fresh waters of rivers to create one of the most productive habitats in Texas. Dense interlocking marshes rise almost imperceptibly to low prairies to form a vital complex of coastal wetlands.*

A vertical image showing a sunset or sunrise over a body of water. The sky is a gradient of colors from dark blue at the top to bright orange and red near the horizon. The water in the foreground is dark and reflects the colors of the sky. The horizon line is a thin, dark strip separating the water from the sky.



*Sunset at Brazoria*

**Welcome to  
Brazoria NWR**

The Refuge offers haven for both wildlife and people. For wildlife, the expanse of marshes, sloughs, ponds, prairies, and forests represent feasting and lodging for more than 400 species of wildlife including 320 species of birds. For people, these vestiges of wild Texas offer exceptional wildlife watching. Established in 1966, this 44,000 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 at  
Brazoria NWR**  
*Information  
Pavilion*

Maps, brochures, and interpretive displays are available at the Information Pavilion. Near the pavilion are accessible restrooms and drinking fountains.



### *Discovery Center*

The Discovery Center contains a visitor center, and environmental education lab. The visitor center provides an information station, and contains interactive displays. Contact the Refuge office for current hours.

### *Classroom and field investigation*



Refuge staff and volunteers host hands-on environmental education programs for school groups. You may encounter these groups of youngsters enjoying the wonders of the natural world during the fall and spring. Schools and organizations should call the Refuge office for information on scheduling trips.

### *Discovery Pavilion*

The Discovery Pavilion, an open structure elevated above Big Slough, provides a wonderful view of an important freshwater habitat and serves as a sheltered lunch area for students.

### *Big Slough Boardwalk & Trail (0.6 miles)*

The boardwalk over the slough provides a close encounter with a marsh crowned with cattail and bulrush which offer renowned wildlife viewing and photography opportunities.

Above photograph by  
Denis James



*Sanderlings*

Benches provide opportunities to rest and quietly observe wildlife.

You can take the full 5/8-mile loop that passes by an observation platform over Big Slough, or one of the three shorter loops through the shady thickets.

*Big Slough Auto  
Tour (7.5 miles)*

For the best birding and nature observation, follow the 7.5-mile auto tour on a well-maintained, gravel road. A self-guided auto tour CD and brochure is available at the Information Pavilion and Discovery Center. Cars make good observation blinds. Drive slowly; stopping to scan places wildlife might hide. Use binoculars or a long lens for a closer look. The auto tour is also open to biking

Visit a salt marsh observation deck at Cross Trails to investigate both birds and tiny aquatic creatures. Teal and Rogers Pond observation platforms offer panoramic views of waterfowl congregations, especially for huge flocks of snow geese in December and January.

*Middle Bayou  
Trail: Bluestem  
Prairie View  
(2 miles)*

Northeast of the refuge entrance road on CR 227, you can hike or bike along a 2-mile trail following the abandoned Missouri Pacific Railway line. The elevated trail starts at the Bastrop Bayou Public Fishing Area and offers views across the rare bluestem coastal prairie. White-tailed kites and white-tailed hawks hunt the prairies for mice.

**Wildlife  
Observation**



This Refuge reflects the ebbs and flows of life in one of the richest environments on earth. The Refuge is part of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail and lies

*Summer Tanager*



in the Central Flyway which includes both coastal and trans-oceanic bird migration paths. This makes the year-round birding great!



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 in prairie habitats.

In summer, birds that nest on or near the Refuge include 10 species of herons and egrets, white ibis, roseate spoonbill, mottled duck, white-tailed kite, clapper rail, horned lark, seaside sparrow, black skimmer, and scissor-tailed flycatcher.

Look for alligators year-round on Big Slough and in Refuge ponds. In dry seasons, their trails through the mud and excavated gator holes are easy to spot. Roseate spoonbills capture the pink glow of sunrise in their wings in flight.

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. If you're lucky you might spot an otter swimming in a slough. Nutria—a muskrat-like animal—are not natives and can disrupt the native ecology, although alligators find them a tasty meal.



*Trumpet Creeper*

Butterflies pollinate flowers. Dragonflies prey on smaller insects, including mosquitoes. Even the mosquito forms a strand of an elaborate food web.

As larvae in the water,

they serve as fish food, and when they fly they're a delectable treat for songbirds by day and bats by night.

### *Fishing*

Several places offer saltwater fishing for speckled trout, red drum, southern flounder, Atlantic croaker, and other gulf coast specialties, the Bastrop Bayou Public Fishing Area features a universally accessible lighted fishing pier, bank fishing pull-offs, and a restroom. Access is permitted 24-hours a day for fishing and crabbing. Clay Banks Public Fishing Area provides a mile of all-weather access to the banks of Bastrop Bayou. Both the Clay Banks and Salt Lake Fishing Areas are daylight use only. Boaters can fish on Nick's, Salt, and Lost Lakes.

*Little  
Blue  
Heron*



### *Hunting*

Christmas Bay and Middle Bayou Public Hunting Areas are open during waterfowl hunting season. Contact Refuge headquarters for hunt regulations and maps.

### **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 Brazoria Wildlife Refuges  
P.O. Box 505  
Lake Jackson, TX 77566  
[www.refugefriends.org](http://www.refugefriends.org)

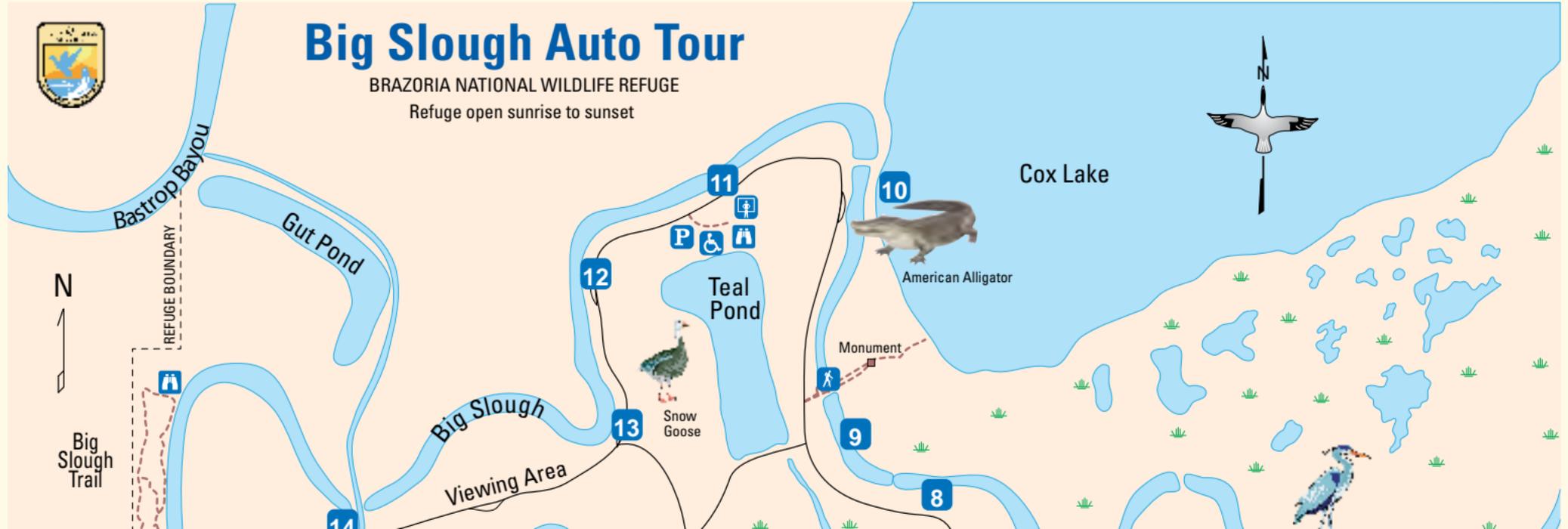


*Dickcissel*



# Big Slough Auto Tour

BRAZORIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
Refuge open sunrise to sunset



Big Slough Trail

REFUGE BOUNDARY

Bastrop Bayou

Gut Pond

Teal Pond

Cox Lake

American Alligator

Snow Goose

Monument

Big Slough  
Viewing Area

14

12

13

11

9

10

8







*Great Horned Owl*

**A Home For Wildlife**

The needs of wildlife are similar to your own: food water, and shelter, called habitat. It is the job of wildlife managers to know the habitat needs of animals and to provide and maintain a variety of quality habitats.

**How do we manage the Refuge?**

	How	Why
Wetland Management	Managing water levels through dikes and water control structures	Promote food production, & rest area for waterfowl and waterbirds
Prairie Restoration	Using herbicides to control non-native plants	Provide a mix of native habitats which provides the best resources for wildlife
Controlled Burns	Crews set fire to selected areas under specific Environmental conditions	Mimic historic wildfires to maintain native habitats
Exotic Plant Control	Using herbicides to control unwanted plants	Helps maintain natural diversity, rejuvenate prairies
Farming	Cooperative farmer rice farming	Providing high-protein foods for winter waterfowl

### **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 poison ivy, venomous snakes, and fire ants.

### **Help 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.

### **Where is it?**

From the intersection of Highway 288 and FM 523 in Angleton, take FM 523 to Highway 2004 intersection. Continue on 523 for 5.5 miles to County Road 227. Turn left on CR 227 and proceed 1.7 miles to the refuge entrance. The Refuge office is off of FM 2004 between Austin Bayou and CR 208.

This refuge along with more than 550 refuges administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service provide areas to sit quietly beside a pond and watch the reflection of the sun setting as we rejuvenate our spirit, and pass on to a new generation a love for America's wild places.

*American  
Bittern*



# Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge

**Legend**

- Refuge
- Hunt Area
- Refuge Boundary
- Auto Tour Route
- Gravel Road
- Fishing Areas
- Boat Ramp
- Headquarters
- Information
- Hiking Trail





**Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge**

**24907 FM 2004**

**Angleton, TX 77515**

**979/922.1037**

**Texas Mid-Coast NWR Complex**

**2547 CR 316**

**Brazoria TX 77422**

**979/964.4011**

**979/964.4021 Fax**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

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

**For Refuge Information**

**1 800/344 WILD**

**Texas State Relay Service**

**1 800/735 2989 Voice and TTY**

**All Photographs By Greg Lavaty, unless noted.**

**September 2009**



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