



# Bayou Birds



*Bayou Tech Scenic Byway:  
St. Mary Loop*

985-395-4905  
www.cajuncoast.com

Part of The Great American Trails Network 

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



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## ST. MARY LOOP

Encompassing the massive mouth of the great Atchafalaya Basin, the largest river-swamp in North America, this loop takes visitors through one serene swampscape after another. All of these can be filled with birds no matter what time of year you visit.

If you happen to be into power-walking for exercise and/or recreation, consider the Berwick and Morgan City Walking Trails. The former borders a mature bottomland hardwood forest, while the latter borders a baldcypress-tupelo gum swamp. Power-walkers can also head over to Lake End Park which features a trail system tailored for just that.

On the other end of the spectrum are Brownell Park and the nearby "Stephensville Road" ("Four-mile Bayou Road"), as well as Cotten Road near Kemper Williams Park. These three sites feature quieter, almost contemplative birding experiences. Brownell Park offers the best Bald Eagle viewing (winter only) in all of south Louisiana.



## Cypremont Point State Park

Site 6-1



**Site access:** Fee, Daily

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.73361; W 91.85218

**Site contact:** Park Information; 888-867-4510

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

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and US 167/ Exit 103A in Lafayette, go south on US 167/ NW Evangeline Thruway for 1.6 miles to US 90. Continue south on US 90 for 26.8 miles to CR 211/ Darnell Rd. Bear right (south) on CR 211/ Darnell Rd. and follow 1.7 miles. Go left (south) on LA 83/ Weeks Island Rd. for 10.4 miles to LA 319. Turn right (west) on LA 319 and go about 5.4 miles to Cypremont Point State Park Rd. Turn right and follow west 0.4 miles to the park.

**Description:** Perched at the northeastern edge of Vermilion Bay, Cypremont Point State Park offers a convenient view of beach-associated bird life. Indeed, the vegetation here is represented by a small tract of brackish marsh and a colony of wax myrtle adjacent to the overnight cabins. Laughing Gulls and Boat-tailed Grackles are year round residents here, and have become so tame that they serve as the park's mascots, if not escorts. During spring and summer these two species are dressed in all of their nuptial finery, presenting an attractive sight to all who view them.

While at Cypremont Point State Park, look also for Clapper Rail, Common Yellowthroat, and Savannah Sparrow (fall, winter, spring) around the brackish marsh. Additional seabirds to be on the lookout for include Ring-billed Gull (fall, winter, spring) and Forster's, Caspian, and possibly Royal terns. During migrational periods, Least and Black terns are likely to make appearances, along with shorebirds such as Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Willet, and Ruddy Turnstone, among others. Be on the lookout also for the introduced semi-aquatic Nutria, as well as Muskrat, and American Alligator.

## Atchafalaya Basin West Containment Levee at Charenton

Site 6-2



**Site access:** Free

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.90183; W 91.51345

**Site contact:** Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau;  
800-256-2931, 985-395-4905

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and US 167/ Exit 103 in Lafayette, go south on US 167/ NW Evangeline Thruway for 1.6 miles to US 90. Continue south on US 90 for 37.2 miles through New Iberia to Desonier Rd./ CR 15. Turn left and go north 1.9 miles to LA 182. Turn right (east) on LA 182 and go 1.6 miles to LA 670. Turn left and go north-east for 0.2 miles to LA 87. Go right (east) on LA 87 for 4.3 miles to Charenton Beach Rd./ CR 121. Turn left (north-east) on Charenton Beach Rd. and follow about 1.0 mile up and over the levee to the boat launch and parking area.

**Description:** The western containment levee of the Atchafalaya Basin at "Charenton Beach" offers an authentically rustic view into this massive swamp, the largest river swamp in North America. The boat launch is definitely utilitarian – a "working man's boat launch" – and is used primarily by local fishermen.

Just north of the boat launch, the water becomes very shallow as it runs eastward into the swamp proper, proving attractive to Spotted Sandpiper, Black-necked Stilt, and other shorebirds. Be sure to scan the horizons for large wading birds such as Anhinga and Great Egret, as well as Osprey, Bald Eagle, and other raptors (especially during the late fall, winter, and early spring months).

The black willow-dominated woodland located just outside of the levee is often teaming with songbirds such as Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Carolina Wren, Eastern Towhee, Swamp Sparrow (winter) and White-throated Sparrow (winter).

## Cultural/Historical Attractions

### INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM MUSEUM & EXPOSITION AT MORGAN CITY

The International Petroleum Museum and Exposition is the only place where the general public can walk aboard an authentic offshore drilling rig. The Museum was established to educate the general public on the significance of the offshore oil and gas industry and its affect on the local area, the state, the nation, and the world. The Museum is a tribute to the pioneering men and women of the petroleum industry as well as a living reminder of the positive contributions, technological advancements and the world-wide influence of an industry that began in this sleepy, fishing village community. For location, hours of operation, admission and tour information, call 985-384-3744 or visit [www.rigmuseum.com](http://www.rigmuseum.com).



Coastal Louisiana is home to the world's largest port system and one of the most productive river deltas.





## Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau—Franklin Visitors Center

Site 6-3



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**GPS coordinates:** Estimate N 29.79284; W 91.53364

**Site contact:** Franklin Visitor Center & Rest Area; 337-828-2555

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

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and US 167/ Exit 103 in Lafayette, go south on US 167/ NW Evangeline Thruway for 1.6 miles to US 90. Continue south on US 90 for 43.9 miles through New Iberia to the Franklin exit. At the end of the Franklin exit ramp, turn right (west), then another immediate right (north) on to the west service road of US 90 and drive 0.8 miles to the Cajun Coast CVB on the left side of the service road.

**Description:** You'll be greeted by friendly faces and a charming atmosphere upon entering this visitors center, styled after a Cajun/ Creole cottage. Here you will also be apprised of local cultural festivals and other events, which occur with regularity in Cajun Country. Avail yourself to the restrooms, water fountain/ coffee, and informational brochures.

Behind the visitors center, relax at one of the picnic tables and check out the small lake and associated swamp habitat. Wading birds such as Great and Snowy egrets, as well as Green Heron (spring/summer), Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (spring/summer), Little Blue Heron (spring/summer) and Great Blue Heron regularly visit the lake. Look along the wooded edges for Downy and Red-bellied woodpeckers, along with songbirds such as Eastern Kingbird (spring/summer), Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Prothonotary Warbler (spring/summer) and Orchard Oriole (spring/summer).

## Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge

Site 6-4



**Site access:** Free, Daily, Permit

(Available at Headquarters)

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.77065; W 91.48065

**Site contact:** Acting Refuge Manager; 337-828-0092

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

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and US 167/ Exit 103 in Lafayette, go south on US 167/ NW Evangeline Thruway for 1.6 miles to US 90. Continue south on US 90 for 43.9 miles through New Iberia and to the Franklin exit. Go left (east) onto LA 3211 and follow it to LA 182 in Franklin. Go right (south) on LA 182; the refuge headquarters are located about 1.0 mile south of Franklin on the left (north) side of LA 182.

**Description:** Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2001 with the primary purpose of aiding in conservation efforts for the Louisiana Black Bear, a federally threatened subspecies of the American Black Bear. The refuge totals just under 10,000 acres and is subdivided into several units. Both the Garden City Unit and the Franklin Unit feature walking trails through live oak-dominated bottomland hardwood forest and cypress-tupelo swamp. The Franklin Unit also contains 2 canoe trails, as well as a driving trail bordering much of the Franklin Unit, connecting it to the Garden City Unit via a levee road along the Hanson Canal. Check the refuge headquarters for more information regarding trail access.

Although little-documented due to the young age of the refuge, the avifauna here is both diverse and dense. Neotropical species such as Acadian Flycatcher, White-eyed and Red-eyed vireos, and Northern Parula, Yellow-throated, Prothonotary, and Hooded warblers nest in abundance. Year round residents include Wood Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and Pileated woodpeckers, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and many others

Common winter birds include Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, House Wren, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Savannah Sparrow, and American Goldfinch.



## Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau—Patterson Visitors Center

Site 6–5



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.67901; W 91.29223

**Site contact:** Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau; 800-256-2931

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

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 1 (Exit 153) in Baton Rouge, go south on LA 1 for 22.1 miles to LA 69/ Bowie St. in White Castle. Turn right and go south 11.4 miles to LA 70. Turn right (west) and go 28.0 miles. Bear left (south-east) on LA 182 briefly to US 90. Go west on US 90 for 1.3 miles until it reconnects with LA 182. Merge onto LA 182 and follow it west 5.5 miles as it briefly merges with US 90. Go another 0.4 miles. At the “Tourist Information” sign, turn right (north) back onto LA 182 and follow briefly to the center on the right.

**Description:** The Cajun Coast Visitors and Convention Bureau Visitors Center in Patterson is perched on the west bank of Bayou Teche, just downstream from its confluence with the Atchafalaya River. Step behind the center and view the bayou from the cool shade of ancient live oaks. Laughing and Ring-billed (fall/winter/spring) gulls, along with Caspian, Gull-billed, Forster’s and Least (spring/summer) terns constantly cruising the bayou, looking for scraps dropped by the numerous shrimp boats using the bayou as a conduit between their home ports and the nearby Gulf of Mexico.

The live oaks surrounding the visitors center hold numerous songbirds, especially during the fall, winter, and spring months. The cast of inhabitants changes with the seasons, and can include numerous vireo and warbler species along with Summer and Scarlet tanagers during spring and fall migration periods. In winter, look for Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, intermixed with Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned warblers.

## Cotten Road at Kemper Williams Park

Site 6–6



**Site Access:** Free

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.67766; W 91.29038

**Site contact:** Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau; 800-256-2931, 985-395-4905

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 1 (Exit 153) in Baton Rouge, go south on LA 1 for 22.1 miles to LA 69/ Bowie St. in White Castle. Turn right (south) on LA 69 for 11.4 miles to LA 70. Turn right (west) and go 28.0 miles. Bear left (south-east) on LA 182 briefly to US 90. Go west on US 90 for 1.3 miles until it reconnects with LA 182. Merge onto LA 182 and go west about 5.5 miles where it briefly merges with US 90. Go another 0.4 miles to the Kemper Williams Park sign on the left. Cotten Road is the entrance road to the park. Please bird this site from the roadside only.

**Description:** As you follow this road through bottomland hardwood forest, check the ground periodically for colonies of southern shield fern. In summer, the woodlands host Mississippi Kite, Red-shouldered and Broad-winged hawks, Barred Owl, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, and Pileated woodpeckers, Acadian Flycatcher, White-eyed and Red-eyed vireos, Blue Jay, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, and Prothonotary, Hooded, and Kentucky warblers.

During winter, expect additions such as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird. Spring and fall migrations bring additional species of vireos, thrushes, warblers, tanagers, buntings and orioles.

The cattails, rushes, and other emergent vegetation along the canal edges and large “bar-pit” can hold American and Least bitterns, Common Yellowthroat, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Orchard Oriole. Look also for Great and Snowy egrets and Little Blue, Green, and Tricolor herons. During the winter months, these wet sites also attract Great Blue Heron, White Ibis, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested and Neotropic cormorants, Lesser Scaup, and Ring-necked Duck, along with raptors such as Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned hawks, Merlin, and American Kestrel.





## Berwick Walking Trails

Site 6-7



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.70015; W 91.22928

**Site contact:** Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau;  
800-256-2931, 985-395-4905

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 1 (Exit 153) in Baton Rouge, go south on LA 1 for 22.1 miles to LA 69/Bowie St. in White Castle. Turn right (south) and go 11.4 miles to LA 70. Turn right and go west 28.0 miles to LA 182. Bear left (south-east) on LA 182 briefly to US 90. Go west on US 90 for 1.3 miles until it reconnects with LA 182. Merge onto LA 182 and follow it north-west 0.6 miles to Gilmore Drive. Turn right (east) onto Gilmore Drive and park immediately on the left. The trail originates here and proceeds for approximately 1.5 miles toward the Atchafalaya River levee.

**Description:** The Berwick Walking Trail traverses bottomland hardwood forest, open fields, and a network of canals. The dominant woodlands are filled during the spring and summer months with Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers, Loggerhead Shrike, White-eyed Vireo, Fish Crow, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, and Northern Cardinal.

During fall migration, look for Eastern Kingbird, Gray Catbird, Swainson's, Wood and Gray-cheeked thrushes as well as Summer and Scarlet tanagers. In winter, look for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, and Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers. Search along the canal edges for Sora, House Wren, and Common Yellowthroat, along with Swamp and Lincoln's sparrows. Follow the levees along the canals to a large open field where American Kestrel, Tree Swallow, and Eastern Meadowlark, along with other open-country sparrows and blackbirds, may be found.

## Morgan City Walking Trail

Site 6-8



**Site access:** Free

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.69723; W 91.17934

**Site contact:** Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention  
Bureau; 800-256-2931, 985-395-4905

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 1 (Exit 153) in Baton Rouge, go south on LA 1 for 22.1 miles to LA 69/Bowie St. in White Castle. Turn right and go south 11.4 miles to LA 70. Turn right (west) for 27.2 miles to Flamingo Rd. Turn left and head south 0.7 miles to US 90. Turn left (east) on US 90 for 1.0 mile to Justa St. The walking trail begins at Justa Street and ends at Lake End Park/ Hwy 70.

**Description:** The Morgan City Walking Trail is situated on a levee of baldcypress-tupelo gum swamp, generously dotted with black willow trees along its edge. The trail terminates after 2.5 miles at Lake End Park (site #9).

Near the park, the trail produces Laughing Gull, Forster's and Caspian terns, Boat-tailed Grackle, and Neotropical Cormorant year round, and American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, and Ring-billed Gull in winter.

Along the swamp side of the trail, expect to see Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, and Northern Cardinal on a year round basis. During spring and summer, look also for Mississippi Kite, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated and Prothonotary warblers.

Winter brings Red-tailed Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Winter Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers, and White-throated, Swamp and Song sparrows to the swamp.

Look for Viceroy, Giant and Tiger swallowtails, and Gulf Fritillary butterflies and Roseate Skimmer, Great Blue Skimmer, and Eastern Pondhawk dragonflies.



## Victor Guarisco Lake End Park

Site 6-9



**Site access:** Fee

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.72025; W 91.18778,

**Site contact:** Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau; 800-256-2931, 985-395-4905

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 1 (Exit 153) in Baton Rouge, go south on LA 1 for 22.1 miles to LA 69/ Bowie St. in White Castle. Turn right and go south on LA 69 for 11.4 miles to LA 70. Turn right and go west 26.5 miles to the park on the left.

**Description:** Lake End Park, perched on the western edge of Lake Palourde, hosts substantial numbers of birds, particularly during spring, fall, and winter. In winter thousands of Double-crested Cormorants and American White Pelicans crowd the lake. Near the northwestern edge of the lake look for Southern Bald Eagle, a Bald Eagle subspecies which actually nests during the winter months in the swamps to the north, south, and east of Morgan City. Between October and April, look for Bald Eagles hunting along the shoreline of Lake Palourde.

The Boat-tailed Grackle is the most prominent year round resident. On a seasonal basis, however, there is no telling what might visit the lake. Of the wading birds, Great Blue Heron and Great Egret are the two most prominent species at the park. Look for them, as well as Neotropic Cormorant.

Depending on the weather, numerous species of gulls and terns can show up at the lake. Laughing Gull, along with Forster's, Caspian and Royal terns can be expected on a year round basis. During migration, Herring and Ring-billed gulls, and Black, Sandwich and Least terns are also potential visitors. During winter, take notice as Bonaparte's Gull and Common Tern enter the mix.

In addition to all of the wildlife viewing, the park also provide numerous amenities to its guests: campsites, walking trails, restrooms, picnic pavilions, boat launches and slips, plus many others, including an interpretive center, currently in the planning stages.

## Brownell Memorial Park & Carillon Tower

Site 6-10



**Site access:** Free, Wed-Sun 9 am-5 pm

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.73683; W 91.17481

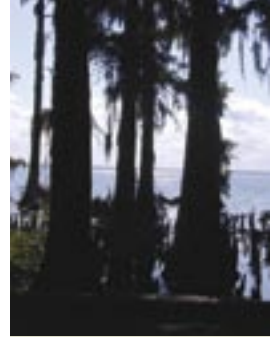
**Site contact:** Manager; 985-384-2283

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 1 (Exit 153) in Baton Rouge, go south on LA 1 for 22.1 miles to LA 69/ Bowie St. in White Castle. Turn right and go south 11.4 miles to LA 70. Turn right (west) and go 24.5 miles to Brownell Memorial Park and Carillon Tower.

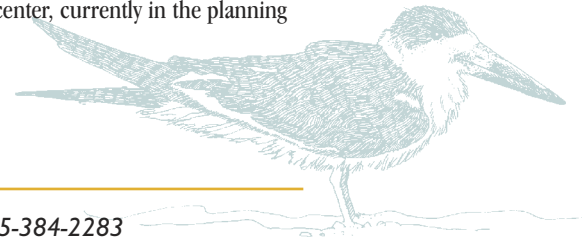
**Description:** Although small, Brownell Park provides one of the most serene, idyllic, and refreshing experiences in coastal Louisiana. Situated on the western shore of Lake Palourde amidst a pristine baldcypress-tupelo gum swamp, the park offers a walking path, foot bridges, a modest visitors center, restrooms, and well-placed benches.

Expect regular encounters with Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, and Northern Cardinal on a year round basis. At certain times of the year, various species tend to gather at the lake in substantially large numbers. Examples include hundreds of American White Pelicans and thousands of Double-crested Cormorants throughout the winter months. The Southern Bald Eagle is another common winter sight.

In early spring, northbound Yellow-rumped Warblers use Brownell as a staging area of sorts. Dozens can be observed on any given day between late February and mid-April. From mid-April through early June, similar numbers of Prothonotary Warblers can be seen at the swamp on a daily basis. By mid-June, most of these birds will settle down in the area as local breeders. In August and early September, large numbers of fall-migrating Yellow Warblers use Brownell Park as a staging area, just as the Yellow-rumped did six months earlier.



Almost half of all endangered or threatened species (birds, wintering waterfowl and mammals) rely on estuaries and coastal waters.







## Stephenville Road (Hwy 1397)

Site 6-11



**Site access:** Free

**GPS coordinates:** N 29.76419; W 91.17419  
(Stephenville Rd. X LA 70)

**Site contact:** Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau; 800-256-2931, 985-395-4905

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 1 (Exit 153) in Baton Rouge, go south on LA 1 for 22.1 miles to LA 69/ Bowie St. in White Castle. Turn right (south) on LA 69 for 11.4 miles to LA 70. Turn right and go west 22.5 miles; turn left (east) onto LA 1397 (“The Stephenville Road,” or “Four-Mile Bayou Road.”). Note: To follow Stephenville Road, turn right and cross the bridge over Four-Mile Bayou Road. After the bridge, turn left and continue down Stephenville Road.

**Description:** This small and winding road offers generous glimpses into one of the most pristine road-accessible baldcypress-tupelo gum swamps remaining in southern Louisiana. Because traffic is busy along the first 4 miles, birders should concentrate on the last 7 miles where the road bed changes from asphalt to limestone. Pull-off opportunities are much more frequent here. Please use reasonable caution because during warm months (March-October) both American Alligator and Cottonmouth Moccasin are fairly common along these roadsides.

Great Egrets often become active in early February, and by late February, Snowy Egret, Wood Duck, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers, along with Carolina Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse, begin courtship displays and vocalizations. Early March brings in the first Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Northern Parulas followed at the end of the month by Little Blue and Tricolored herons, and Yellow-throated Warbler.

By April, be on the lookout for additional wading birds such as Anhinga, and both Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned night-herons, along with large numbers of Prothonotary Warblers. April is also peak breeding time for many species of frogs. Fall and winter months bring several nearctic species such as Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Orange-crowned, Pine and Yellow-rumped warblers, and White-throated Sparrow.

### Convention and Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce

Cajun Coast Visitors and Convention Bureau  
112 Main St.  
Patterson, LA 70392  
Phone: 985-395-4905, 800-256-2931  
[www.cajuncoast.com](http://www.cajuncoast.com)



### Bayou Teche Scenic Byway

Bayou Teche Scenic Byway follows the pathway of Bayou Teche, a 125-mile stream that winds through the semi-tropical lands of southern Louisiana. Once described as the “most richly storied of the interior waters, and the most opulent,” this body of water was the center of a booming cypress industry in the early 1900s. Travelers along the stream can catch a firsthand glimpse of giant oaks with 150-foot reaches and trailing moss which sometimes hangs a yard below the oak branches. This area is also home to Louisiana’s “islands,” which are not true islands but rather more elevated areas than the surrounding landscape. Take notice of the opulent Greek Revival mansions scattered along the Byway’s lush fertile landscape which are a result of the “sugar money” derived from the area’s most abundant crop, sugarcane. To learn more about the 200-year-old Louisiana sugar cane industry, visit the Jeanerette Museum.