

Trail Rules:

- Stay on marked trails to help prevent erosion and damage to plants.
- Leave all plants and flowers for others to enjoy.
- Keep all pets on a leash, and cleanup after your pet.
- Do not litter. Pack it in, pack it out.
- Bicycles are not permitted on these 5 nature trails.

Helpful Hints:

- Bring water and insect repellent.
- Bring a field guide and binoculars, they are helpful in identifying plants and animals.
- Give venomous snakes and poisonous plants plenty of room.
- You are more likely to see wildlife in the early morning or late afternoon – remember that the visitor center gate locks at closing time.

Visitor Center Area Hours:

March-October, Tue.-Sat., 9 AM-4 PM
November-February, Daily, 9 AM-5 PM

(256) 350-6639

Information available at the Visitor Center:

- Biking & Hiking Guide
- Canoe & Kayak Guide
- Hunt Permit
- Refuge Map
- Wintering Birding Locations
- North AL Birding Trail Guide
- Variety of other information...

Funds for printing were provided by the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge Association. Please consider becoming a member.



www.friendsofwheelernwr.org

Cover Photo Credit: Marielos I.

Nature Trail Guide



**Wheeler
National Wildlife Refuge**



Five established nature trails are available for use on the Refuge. They wind along the water, crops fields, and woodlands.

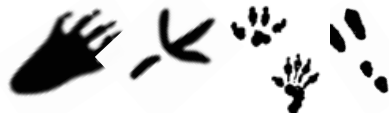
Atkeson Cypress Trail (.3 miles – 15 minutes)



The Atkeson Cypress Trail is located just behind the Visitor Center. It begins with a boardwalk that crosses over a cypress swamp then continues through a wooded area. A bench located adjacent to a section of land where crops such as wheat, corn, or soybeans are grown is a good place to sit and listen for birds such as quail, woodpeckers, or warblers. A variety of plants and wildlife may be viewed from this trail.

Wildlife Observation Building (200 yards – 5 minutes)

The trailhead, located behind the Visitor Center, leads to the Wildlife Observation Building which overlooks a waterfowl/wildlife display pool. During winter months, thousands of ducks, geese, and Sandhill cranes use the area for feeding and loafing. During spring, summer, and fall, butterflies and hummingbirds are attracted to the flowers in the Backyard Wildlife Area. Several feeders are filled year-round to attract various species of birds including chickadees, tufted titmice, finches, sparrows, northern cardinals, and blue jays. Make sure you check for eagles and kestrels!



Dancy Bottoms Trail (1.25 miles round trip – 1 hour)

Located in a bottomland hardwoods area near Flint Creek. During winter months, waterfowl use the slough near the trail and can sometimes be seen if hikers are quiet. Deer, squirrels, rabbits, woodpeckers, and many other species of wildlife are often encountered along this trail. From the Visitor Center, turn right on HWY 67 for 1.7 miles to the red-light at Indian Hills Road. Turn right here. In approximately 3.1 miles, turn right onto Red Bank Road. The short road to the parking area is located about 1.7 miles on the right just before a small bridge. This is site 33 on the North Alabama Birding Trail.

Due to permanent flooding, trail ends at 1.25 miles.

Flint Creek Trail (1.5 miles – 1 hour)

Located on the north side of HWY 67 approximately ¼ mile west of the Visitor Center entrance, this scenic trail offers an opportunity to see various species of plant and animal life associated with an oak-hickory forest. Two boardwalks cross the backwaters of Flint Creek, then the trail continues into the woods. For a short loop, take the first trail to the left after you cross the second bridge. For the longer loop, continue straight ahead and pass the covered pavilion. Common trees including hickory, oak, red maple, sweet gum, yellow poplar, and dogwood create shade for most of the trail during much of the year. Sassafras, witch hazel, grapevine, and greenbriers are common understory species. Chipmunks, squirrels, woodpeckers, wrens, and northern cardinals are commonly seen along the trail. Many different species of warblers can also be heard or seen here during their spring and fall migrations.



Beaverdam Swamp Boardwalk (1 mile – 30 minutes)

The boardwalk is accessed from Frontage Road located just off exit 7 on I-565 traveling towards Huntsville from I-65. Beaverdam Swamp hosts some of the largest black tupelo trees in the state. The boardwalk crosses the swamp where large tupelo trees create a very shady path. Various species of frogs, turtles, small fish, and other amphibians and reptiles are often visible. Songbirds are common in the canopy as well. This is site 25 on the North Alabama Birding Trail.

