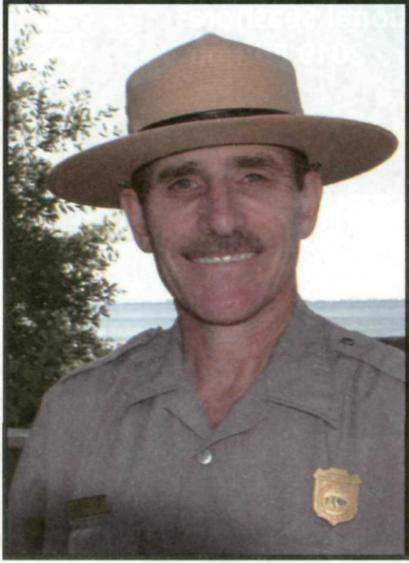


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Welcome to Gulf Islands National Seashore!



Welcome to Gulf Islands National Seashore! A visit to the country's largest national seashore has something for everyone - building sand castles and sunbathing on sugar white beaches, camping out under the stars and watching eagles & osprey overhead by day, exploring forts with cannons, tunnels, and draw bridges. With all there is to see and do on land, visitors are often surprised to find that a majority of the park - over 80% - is marine, with park waters extending a mile into the Gulf of Mexico and into the

quieter waters of the Santa Rosa and Mississippi sounds. Passengers aboard the West Ship Island ferry in Mississippi are often treated to pods of dolphins and diving pelicans. Visitors now have a choice of departing from either Gulfport or Biloxi for their 11 mile voyage to the island. Pensacola Bay Cruises was launched in 2018, and visitors can also venture between Pensacola, Pensacola Beach, and Fort Pickens aboard two 150 passenger, double decker tour boats operated by a park concessioner. Park rangers are aboard during the summer to point out wildlife and bring the rich history of Pensacola Bay to life. Be sure to ask the ranger about the only underwater fort (Fort McRee), a casualty of our ever-migrating barrier islands. Tickets include "hop-on, hop-off" privileges so passengers can visit different destinations throughout the day. Park entrance fees are waived for ferry passengers, and free tram service connects Fort Pickens and Langdon Beach. Relax, enjoy, explore!

Dan Brown
Superintendent

Numbers to Know

Gulf Islands National Seashore was established on

January 8, 1971

It stretches

160 miles

from end to end, containing a total of

139,175 acres

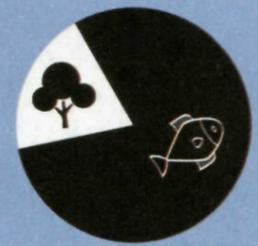
making it the

Largest National Seashore

in the U.S.A.

82%

of Gulf Islands National Seashore is submerged underwater



It supports a range of wildlife, including

5 types of sea turtles
and
345 species of birds

Volunteers In Parks



Current volunteer opportunities are posted:

www.nps.gov/guis/getinvolved/volunteer.htm

- Black Powder Demonstrations
- Campground Hosts
- Guided Programs
- Historic Preservation
- Librarian
- Living History Programs
- Site Hosts
- Guest Services
- Staffing Visitor Facilities

To inquire about additional opportunities, group opportunities, or ask general questions; email guis_volunteers@nps.gov

Contact Us:

Phone:

Park Headquarters: (850) 934-2600
William M. Colmer VC (MS): (228) 230-4100
Campground Reservations: 1-877-444-6777

Email:

guis_information@nps.gov

Mail:

1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563

On The Web



Website:
www.nps.gov/GulfIslands



Instagram:
[@GulfIslandsNPS](https://www.instagram.com/GulfIslandsNPS)



Facebook:
[/GulfIslandsNPS](https://www.facebook.com/GulfIslandsNPS)



YouTube:
Subscribe to GulfIslandsNPS



Twitter:
[@GulfIslandsNPS](https://twitter.com/GulfIslandsNPS)

Superintendent's Corner

Beach Roads: At What Price?

Upon becoming superintendent at Gulf Islands I received a crash course in "Barrier Islands 101". These are some of the things I learned. The islands are made up entirely of sand. The sand moves constantly from wind and waves, and shorelines fluctuate dramatically. The islands migrate westward due to prevailing Gulf currents. Hurricanes frequently overwash the low-lying islands, submerging them beneath storm surge. Storm surge will occasionally breach a barrier island, cutting it in two. Sometimes those breaches heal as currents continue to transport sand. Other times the breaches don't heal, and the island becomes two separate islands (Petit Bois Island in Mississippi was once part of Dauphin Island). The islands are gradually shrinking as sand erodes faster than new sand is introduced (our white sand comes from the southern Appalachians). This sand deficit is worsened by digging channels or inlets, and by removing dredged beach quality sand off-shore to deep water where it is lost to the natural sand transport system. Dunes grow, move, get knocked flat by storms, and grow again. Over time, barrier islands completely "turn over" or rotate (I'm still trying to figure that one out). That is what barrier islands are, and how they function. These natural processes are what make the park special and are why we enjoy it so much – it is exactly as nature made and continues to shape it.

These same dynamics, however, make it extremely difficult to try to maintain a hardened, fixed road on a surface that doesn't stay put. The unrestrained sand washes out from beneath the road, it collapses, and the debris is scattered. Road design techniques used elsewhere – red clay base, sheet piling or concrete sea walls, building a huge artificial berm along the road – would fundamentally change the very resource we all enjoy. Concrete road sections built on pilings sunk deep into the sand have been considered but rejected due to the exorbitant cost (ex. \$400 million for a 3 mile bridge). In the early 1940's, National Park Service Director Newton Drury rejected plans to build a road within what was then Santa Rosa Island National Monument. His rationale is recorded in J. Earle Bowden's book *Gulf Islands - The Sands of All Time*: "It would be an extremely expensive road to build and maintain and it would seriously affect the... dunes and dunes vegetation, the safeguarding of which is a primary responsibility of the [National Park Service]." His foresight went unheeded.

So what does the future hold for the seashore's roads? J. Earle Bowden Way must be maintained as an evacuation route for the two beach communities. Should one of the two bridges go out, that road becomes the only route off the island. The Fort Pickens Road is different. The NPS intends to maintain the Fort Pickens Road as long as it is feasible. However, it is located on the lowest, narrowest part of the island that is most at risk. Hurricane Ivan sliced through the island creating a channel between the Gulf and the Bay, temporarily stranding Fort Pickens on its own island. The breach healed, but it may be a forewarning. Ultimately nature could have the final say.

Once the roads are damaged by storms, the broken, scattered asphalt is litter. It no more belongs on our beautiful beaches than the aluminum cans, bottles, plastic and Styrofoam that are continually discarded. So we do our best to clean it up, a seemingly never ending task. Fortunately, funding provided via a settlement with BP has enabled us to remove 14,024 cubic yards of road debris in the past 3 years, filling over 700 large construction dumpsters to the brim. Unfortunately, we can only remove the larger debris, and the once pristine, sugar white sand is now laced with pea-sized asphalt and gravel that is nearly impossible to remove without adversely affecting the beach habitat, which we work very hard to protect. The island has been forever changed and will never be the same. Road access provides many benefits, but it comes at a very steep price.



Cruisin' the Bay

The lyrics of beach balladeer Jimmy Buffett capture the fun, joy, and relaxation of being on the water in a boat. Landlubbers and would-be boat owners can now join in by catching a ride aboard one of the park's beautiful new 150 passenger, double decker, catamaran tour boats that ply park waters between Pensacola, Pensacola Beach, and Fort Pickens during the spring, summer and fall. Christened the Turtle Runner and Pelican Perch by local school children, the two boats are the fleet for Pensacola Bay Cruises, operated by park concessioner HMS Ferries. Passengers can ride within the air conditioned main deck cabin with access to snack bar, video screen, and restrooms, or enjoy the sea breezes and vistas commanding a 360 degree view from the shaded upper observation deck.

*Somethin' 'bout a boat
Sittin' on the sea
Out there in the wind
Floatin' on the free*



The leisurely boat ride is part of the Gulf Islands experience you don't want to miss. Each leg of the route passes through National Seashore waters. During summer months, park rangers are aboard to point out dolphins, pelicans, and other wildlife, and bring the 500 year maritime history of the Pensacola area to life. Tickets are more than your pass of transport – they grant all-day "hop-on, hop-off" privileges so you can visit different destinations throughout the day, disembarking and re-boarding at the beach, city, or national park, all for the price of a single ticket. Going by boat avoids the traffic and congestion of beach-connecting roads and bridges, and the never-ending search for limited parking spaces. As an added benefit, upon arrival at Fort Pickens, tour boat passengers gain free entrance to the park (the \$20 national park entrance fee is waived for all tour boat passengers), where you can take a tour of the fort, watch musket and cannon firing demonstrations, or participate in other ranger activities. After exploring the fort, ride a free shuttle to Langdon Beach or the Fort Pickens campground aboard solar-powered electric trams operated by the National Park Service.

The hour-long trip across the Bay with Pensacola Bay Cruises is a great way to embrace the salt air and gain your sea legs, and connects the abundant activities and experiences of Pensacola, Pensacola Beach, and the Fort Pickens area of Gulf Islands National Seashore. And everything is better by boat.

Things to Do



Beach-combing

The quartz sand beaches of Gulf Islands National Seashore are some of the best in the United States. Whether you're taking in the sun, throwing the Frisbee, or searching the sand for wildlife and seashells, the park's beaches offer endless fun for the whole family. Please remember to leave what you find and take what you bring to the beach, including trash.



Bird Watching

Many different birds call Gulf Islands home. From herons to plovers, you're bound to see a wide variety while visiting the national seashore. If you're interested in tracking the birds you see download the *Bird Checklist* site bulletins are available at the Fort Pickens Discovery Center and visitor centers.



Boating

Did you know that over 80% of the park is located in the water? Boating can be a great way to experience the blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the many sounds, bayous, and bays in the area. Don't have your own boat? Check the calendar section of our website for ranger-led kayak or small skiff programs. Check weather and sea reports before heading out on the water.



Camping

Two campgrounds offer RV and tent camping with modern amenities including warm showers and restrooms. Looking for a wilder experience? Backcountry camping is permitted in several areas of the park as well. Go to page 10 for more information on camping in the park.



Fishing

There are plenty of opportunities to catch the big one. Whether you're on the beach, a pier, or a boat, you'll probably see visitors casting a line. Keep in mind that park regulations regarding fishing correspond to the state fishing regulations of Florida and Mississippi when you're fishing in those states.



Hiking

Throughout each area of the national seashore there are many hiking trails to explore. In Florida, you'll find over 15 miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail. Always be prepared for inclement weather, including thunderstorms. Check weather reports before hiking in the park.



Picnicking

There are many picnic areas and pavilions throughout the national seashore. Some of the pavilions may be reserved ahead of your visit. See the back page for more information about reserving a pavilion. Please remember to practice *Leave No Trace* principles and *Pack It In, Pack It Out*.



Ranger Programs

Experience the national seashore with a ranger or volunteer. Programs vary in topic from the historic forts to the unique environment of barrier islands, and even under water. The calendar section of our website (www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/calendar.htm) for ranger-led programs and activities.



Self-guiding Tours

Want to explore the historic structures preserved at Gulf Islands National Seashore at your own pace? Pick up a self-guiding tour brochure for historic forts and batteries. Informative signs throughout each area are also full of stories and facts about the structures and places.



Swimming

Swim beaches are located on the gulf and soundside of many of the park's areas and islands. Be mindful of surf conditions. In some areas, flags are used to show current conditions. Remember rip currents can happen at any time. Know what to do if you get caught in a rip current before entering the water and never swim alone.



Visitor Centers & Discovery Center

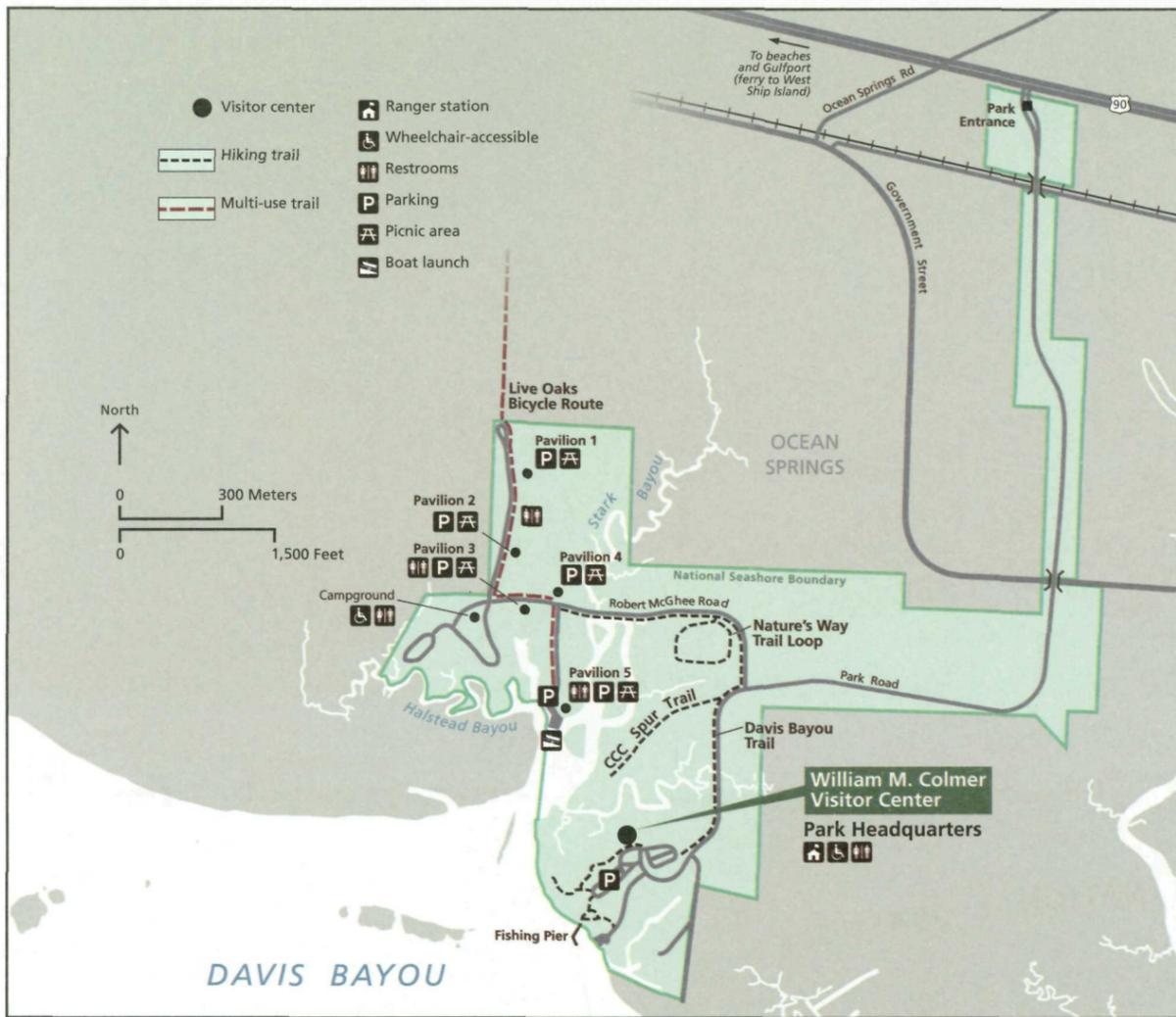
Take an in-depth look into the things that make Gulf Islands National Seashore a special place. The park's visitor centers, headquarters building, and discovery center are full of hands-on, interactive, and audio-visual exhibits for visitors to enjoy and learn more about the park's history and ecology.



Wildlife Viewing

From alligators to the Perdido Key Beach Mouse, Gulf Islands is teeming with wildlife. An exciting experience for any visitor, but please remember to keep your distance and do not disturb the wildlife. If you're interested in tracking the animals you see while you're in the park, pick up an *Animal Checklist* site bulletin.

Davis Bayou Area



The Davis Bayou Area is the only mainland area of the national seashore in Mississippi. The area offers incredible views of the bayou and the Mississippi Sound. The William M. Colmer Visitor Center offers many interactive exhibits about the bayou and the barrier islands for all ages. There are several hiking trails and picnic pavilions for visitors to enjoy while in the area.

Visitors can explore the bayou with a ranger on foot or by boat during the summer season. Visit our website or the bulletin boards posted throughout the area for ranger programs. There are opportunities throughout the year to learn about the area's natural and cultural features with a ranger. Program schedules are posted at the visitor center and campground.

For visitors interested in staying at the park overnight, the Davis Bayou Campground offers several sites for recreational vehicles and tent camping. In addition to the campground, there is also a boat launch in the Davis Bayou Area. See page 10 for more information on the seashore's campgrounds.

William M. Colmer Visitor Center

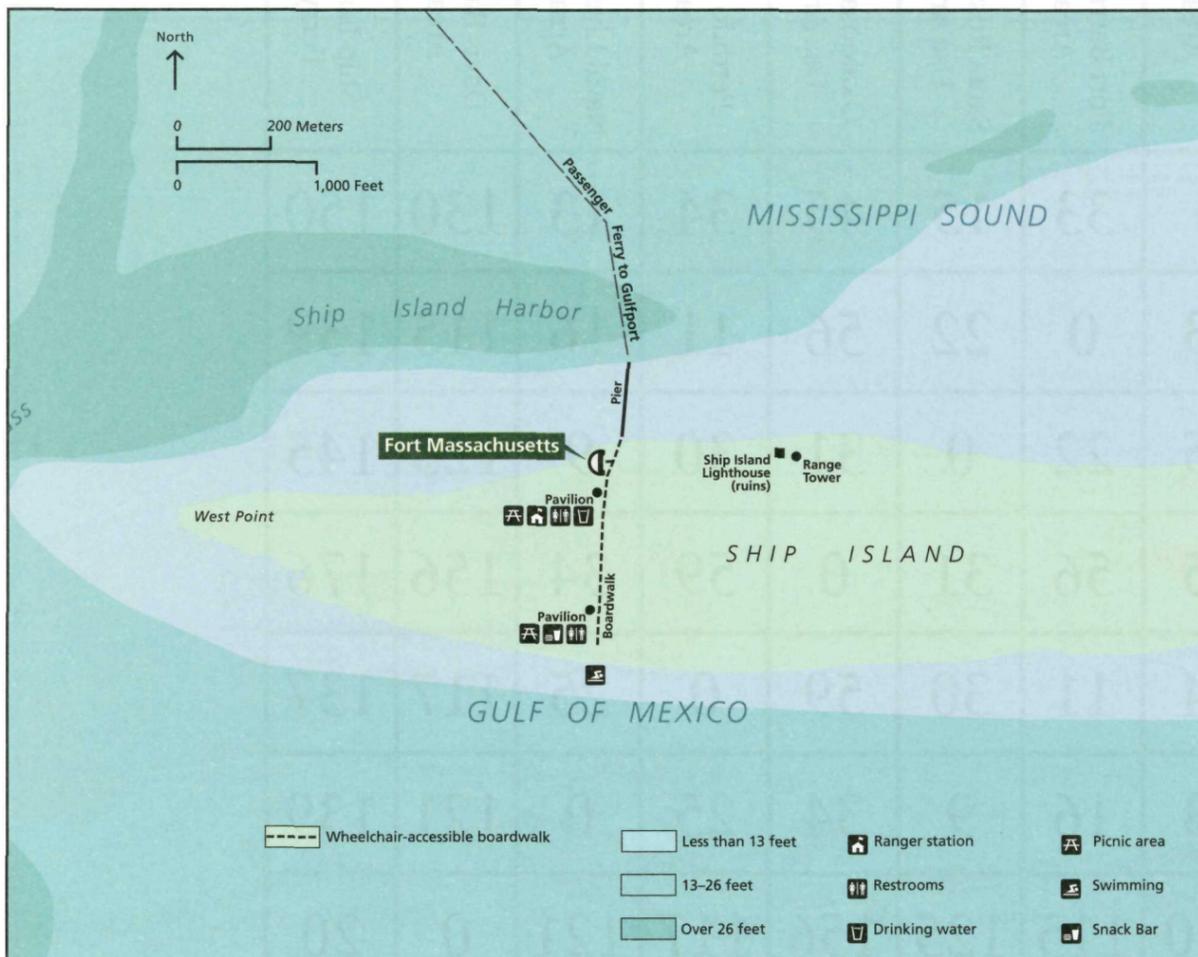
3500 Park Road

Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564

From I-10 East take Exit 50 toward Ocean Springs. Continue on MS-609 South for 2.8 miles. Turn left onto Bienville Blvd. The park entrance will be approximately 2.9 miles ahead on your right.

From I-10 West take Exit 57 toward Ocean Springs. Turn right onto Ocean Springs Road, and continue for 12 miles. At the intersection continue straight onto Park Road.

Ship Island



Ship Island is located 12 miles from mainland Mississippi, and features the masonry fortification, Fort Massachusetts. Visitor facilities include restrooms, picnic pavilions, a snack bar, beach equipment rentals, and tours of the historic fort all of which are available between mid-March and October. A commercial ferry runs to island during this season, depending on weather conditions. *Ship Island Restoration see page 10.*

For ferry schedule and pricing, please visit www.msshipisland.com

Ferry to Ship Island

1040 23rd Avenue

Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

From Ocean Springs follow Hwy. 90 to the west for 14 miles. Turn left onto 20th Avenue and then left onto Jones Park Drive.

195 Beach Boulevard

Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

From Ocean Springs follow Hwy. 90 to the west for 3 miles. The parking is on the left.

Mississippi Islands



Cat, Horn, West Petit Bois, and Petit Bois Islands are accessible by private boat only. You can find a list of licensed charter private boat operators for transportation to these islands on our website:

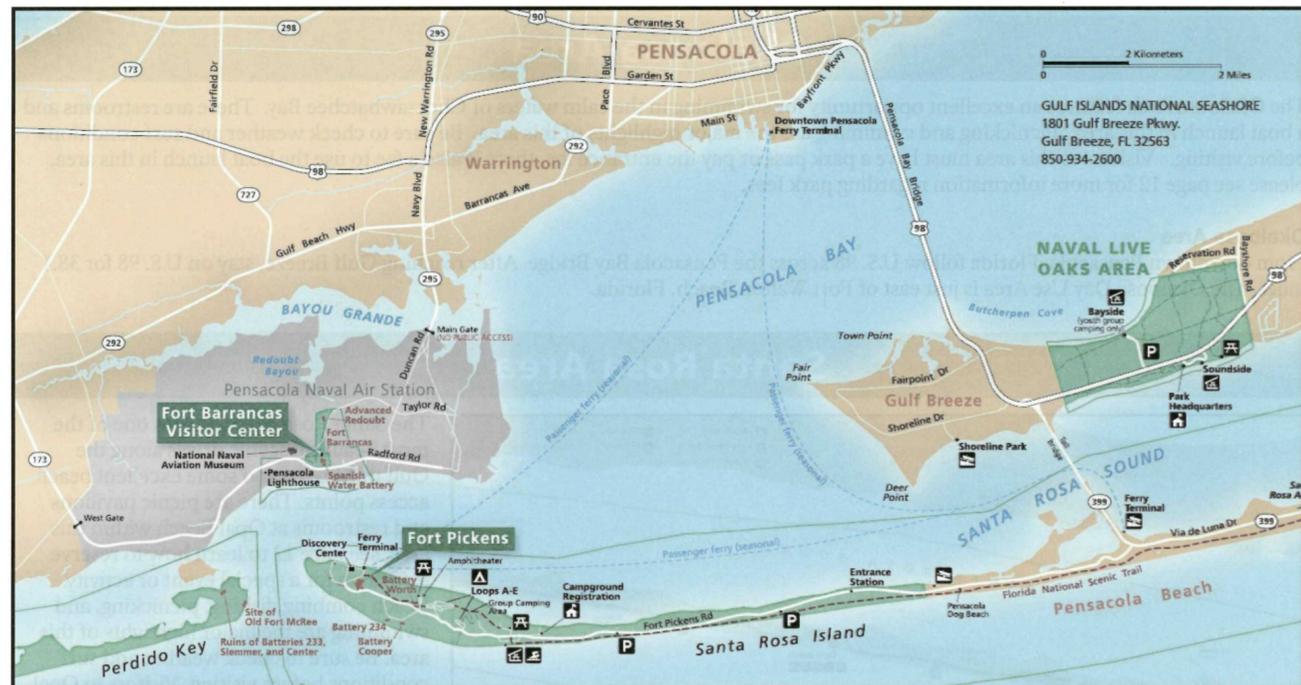
www.nps.gov/guis/getinvolved/cua HOLDERS.htm

Gulf Islands National Seashore Map



Miles	Fort Pickens Area	Fort Barrancas Area	Santa Rosa Day Use Area	Okaloosa Day Use Area	Perdido Key Area	Naval Live Oaks Area	Davis Bayou Area	Ship Island Ferry
Fort Pickens Area	0	33	15	45	34	13	130	150
Fort Barrancas Area	33	0	22	56	11	16	115	139
Santa Rosa Day Use Area	15	22	0	31	30	9	125	145
Okaloosa Day Use Area	45	56	31	0	59	34	156	176
Perdido Key Area	34	11	30	59	0	25	117	137
Naval Live Oaks Area	13	16	9	34	25	0	121	139
Davis Bayou Area	130	115	125	156	117	121	0	20
Ship Island Ferry	150	139	145	176	137	139	20	0
Mississippi Islands	Visit page five for information on how to visit Mississippi's barrier islands.							

Pensacola Bay Areas



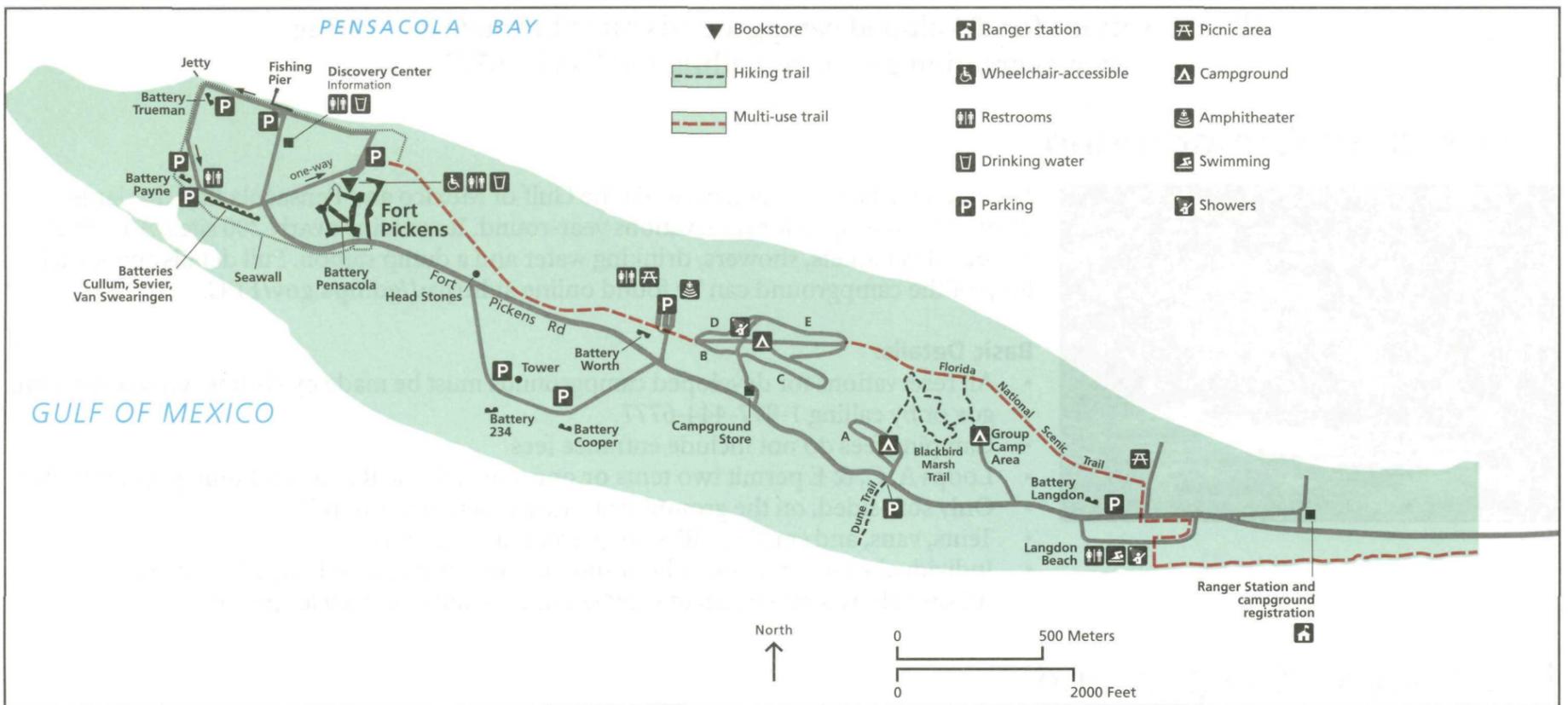
Pensacola Bay Cruises operates a seasonal tour boat service between downtown Pensacola, Pensacola Beach, and Fort Pickens. For information about the service, please visit <https://go.nps.gov/PBC>

**Downtown Ferry Terminal
Commendancia Pier**
Located at the south end of Commendancia Street which is south of Main Street and east of Palafox Street.

**Pensacola Beach Ferry Terminal
Quietwater Pier**
Located to the north of the intersection of Fort Pickens Road and Via De Luna within the Quietwater Beach Boardwalk complex.

**Fort Pickens Plaza
Fort Pickens Tour Boat Pier**
Located just north of the historic fort within the Fort Pickens Ferry Plaza complex and exhibits.

Fort Pickens Area



The Fort Pickens Area is located on the western end of Santa Rosa Island and preserves over a century of American coastal defensive structures. The Fort Pickens Discovery Center offers fun interactive exhibits for all ages about the history of the site as well as its natural wonders. Take a hike on one of the many trails through the area, including the Florida National Scenic Trail. There's a bookstore open year round at historic Fort Pickens. Visit the incredible white-sand beaches and enjoy the blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico at one of the many beach access points. The Fort Pickens Campground is ideal for those looking to spend an extended vacation at the park.

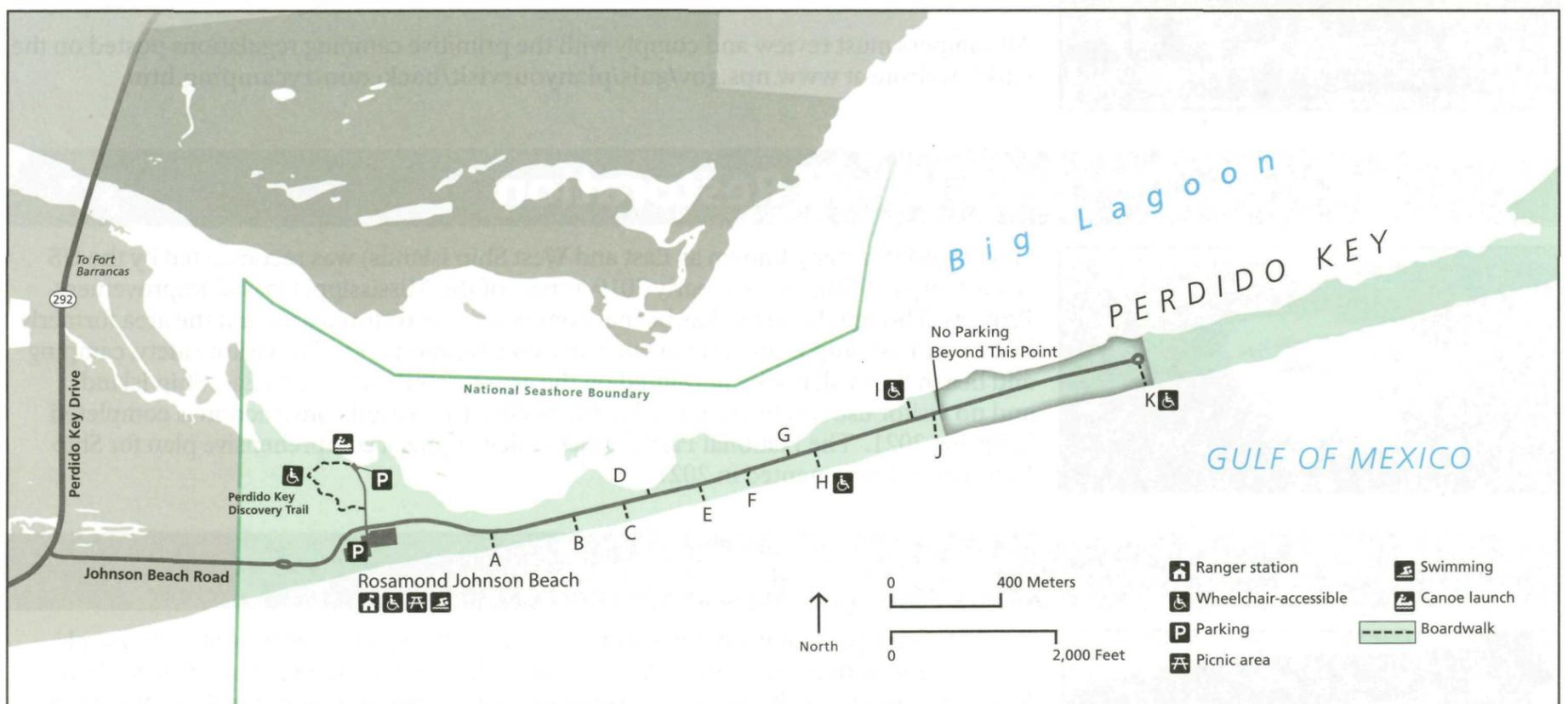
Visitors can explore the historic fortifications with a ranger or with one of the self-guiding tour site bulletins. Check out our website or the bulletin boards posted throughout the area for ranger programs. There are opportunities throughout the year to learn about the area's natural and cultural features with a ranger. Program schedules are posted monthly at the beginning of each month. Watch your step as you walk through the area, many surfaces are uneven and sandy. There is an entrance fee for the Fort Pickens Area. See page 12 for information of park fees and more information on the seashore's campgrounds.

Historic Fort Pickens

1400 Fort Pickens Road, Pensacola, Florida 32561

From I-10 East or West take Exit 12 toward Pensacola Beach. Continue on I-110 South for 5.5 miles and follow signs to Gulf Breeze/Gregory Street East. Continue onto U.S. Hwy 98/Pensacola Bay Bridge for 4.6 miles. Use the right two lanes to turn right onto Pensacola Beach Road. After the toll both, turn right at the light onto Fort Pickens Road. Continue straight for 3.5 miles.

Perdido Key Area



The Perdido Key Area is often called the hidden gem of Northwest Florida. In addition to spectacular beach access points, this area has several picnic pavilions and hiking opportunities. Be sure to check weather and surf conditions before visiting. There is an entrance fee for the Perdido Key Area, see page 12 for information of park fees.

Johnson Beach

Perdido Key Area is off Florida Route 292, southwest from Pensacola; turn east on Johnson Beach Road. When heading south on 292, just after going over the bridge, turn left onto Johnson Beach Road, where road curves to the right. When heading north on Florida Route 292, take a right turn onto Johnson Beach Road, as the road curves to the left, before you reach the bridge.

Developed Campgrounds

All reservations for developed campgrounds must be made by visiting www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777.

Fort Pickens Campground



Located on a barrier island between the Gulf of Mexico and Pensacola Bay, this large campground is open for reservations year-round. It contains nearly 200 sites. Amenities include flush toilets, showers, drinking water and a dump station. Full details about each loop of the campground can be found online at <https://go.nps.gov/FPC>.

Basic Details:

- All reservations for developed campgrounds must be made by visiting www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777.
- Camping fees do not include entrance fees
- Loops A, C, & E permit two tents or one tent and one RV (motorhome/pop-up/trailer).
- Only soft-sided, on the ground tents are permitted in Loop B.
- Tents, vans, and small are RVs are permitted in Loop D.
- Individual water and power hook-ups are only available in Loops A, C, & E.
- All sites allow a maximum of eight occupants and two vehicles per site.

Davis Bayou Campground

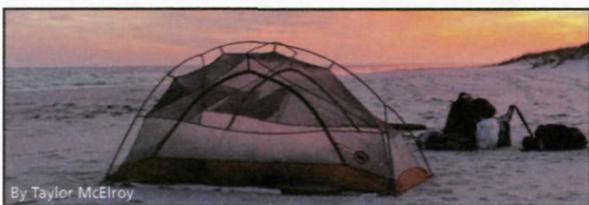


Located east of downtown Ocean Springs, Mississippi, visitors enjoy the campground for its easy access to boating, fishing, biking and hiking trails. The campground features 52 sites nestled among live oaks and pine trees and is adjacent to a saltwater marsh. Most campsites offer some shade throughout the day and all offer a tranquil setting for migratory bird watching and picnicking. Full details about the campground can be found online at <https://go.nps.gov/DBC>.

Basic Details:

- All reservations for developed campgrounds must be made by visiting www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777.
- All sites permit two tents or one tent and one RV (motorhome/fifth-wheel/trailer).
- All sites allow a maximum of eight occupants and two vehicles per site.
- Each site features individual water and power hook-ups.
- A central dump station is available for registered campers.
- Generators are not permitted at any time in the campground.

Backcountry Camping



Boat-In Backcountry camping is open in Florida at Perdido Key and in Mississippi at Petit Bois, West Petit Bois, Horn, and East Ship Islands, as well as the NPS portion of Cat Island

All campers must review and comply with the primitive camping regulations posted on the park's website at www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/backcountrycamping.htm.

Ship Island Restoration



Ship Island (formerly known as East and West Ship Islands) was reconnected by the US Army Corps of Engineers in early 2019 as part of the Mississippi Coastal Improvement Projects. Though the island has been reconnected, the restored area and the area formerly known as East Ship Island remain an active construction area. For visitor safety, camping and beach fires will not be permitted on the area formerly known as East Ship Island and no visitor use will be permitted in the restored area until construction is completed in Spring 2021. The National Park Service is developing a comprehensive plan for Ship Island to be implemented in 2021.

Ranger Programs



Guided ranger programs offer one of the best ways to explore the cultural and natural stories of the national seashore. Programs are offered year-round at Fort Pickens, Fort Barrancas, and Davis Bayou Areas. Seasonally, programs are also available at West Ship Islands and the Naval Live Oaks Area.

For the current schedule of programs visit our website www.nps.gov/guis/calendar.htm.



Become a
Junior Ranger
at Gulf Islands
National Seashore!

Investigate the Arrowhead

Island Treasures

The arrowhead is the symbol of the National Park Service.

You will see this arrowhead in every National Park Service site you visit. It is found on park ranger uniforms, on signs, in visitor centers, and lots of other places.

Test your investigation skills!

Step 1. Find an arrowhead symbol in the park.

Step 2. Where did you find it?

Step 3. Look carefully at the arrowhead symbol. Every object in the arrowhead represents a feature protected within all National Park sites. Take a close look at the arrowhead and see if you can figure out the answers to the following questions.

1. The _____ represents all plants.

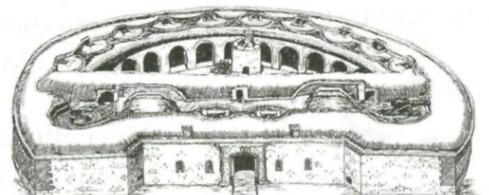
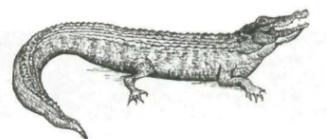
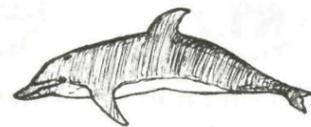
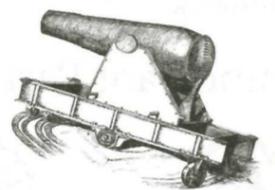
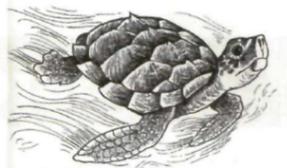
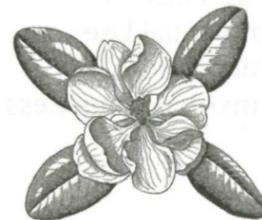
2. The _____ represents all animals.

3. The _____ represents land formations.

4. The _____ represents history.



Circle the items you see on the island.



Continue your quest to become a Gulf Islands National Seashore Junior Ranger by picking up a Junior Ranger booklet at any of the park's visitor centers.

Permits, Pavilions, Fees, & Passes

Special Use Permits

A special park use is a short-term activity that takes place in a park area and typically provides a benefit to an individual, group or organization, or a First Amendment cause, rather than the public at large. The National Park Service may permit a special park use providing the activity will not cause derogation of the park's resources or values, visitor experiences, or the purpose for which the park was established. Primarily reviews focus on any potential damage to natural or cultural resources and anticipated disruption of normal public use.

Activities include but are not limited to:

- Weddings
- Sporting events, races, & festivals
- Public assemblies and commercial filming
- Research and collection activities
- Scattering cremated remains

For more information on special use permits please visit: www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/permits.htm

Commercial activities may also be permitted, through Commercial Use Authorizations. Learn more at: www.nps.gov/guis/getinvolved/business

Entrance Fee (Valid for 1-7 Days)	
Private Vehicle	\$20
Motorcycle	\$15
Pedestrians & Bicyclists	\$10
Annual Passes	
Gulf Islands Annual Pass	\$40
Interagency Annual Pass	\$80
Interagency Senior Pass	\$20
Interagency Military Pass	Free
Lifetime Passes	
Interagency Senior Lifetime Pass	\$80
Interagency Access Pass	Free

Entrance fees are charged for most of the Florida areas of the national seashore. Passes are good for seven days and can be purchased at the park entrance stations or online at www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/entrancefees.htm. For more frequent visitors, the national seashore offers an annual pass providing 12-months of unlimited entries into all of the park's areas. Annual passes may also be purchased at the park's entrance stations.

Commercial tours and educational institutions may also find fee information on the park's website.



Fees collected at national parks are used by the National Park Service for improvement and maintenance of park facilities and programming. Park entrance fees are separate from camping or permit fees.

For more information on entrance, camping, and facilities fees please visit our website www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/fees.htm



Pavilion Reservations

Several pavilions throughout the national seashore may be reserved in advance by the public. Seven sites in the Florida areas and three at the Davis Bayou Area in Mississippi can be reserved.

All reservations for pavilions must be made by emailing guis_information@nps.gov

Safety Reminders & Important Park Regulations

For Your Safety:



The sun can be intense. Wear sunblock.



Be mindful of uneven surfaces.



Closed areas protect you and wildlife.



Extreme weather possible.



In case of an emergency call 911.

Important Park Regulations:



Glass not permitted on beaches.



Pets are not permitted on beaches.



Metal detectors are not permitted.



Off road driving prohibited in all areas.



Unmanned Aircraft are not permitted.

Learn more and get a complete list of park regulations on our website www.nps.gov/GulfIslands

Shorebird Closures



When walking on the beaches of the national seashore between February and September, be sure to keep a keen eye out for signs and posts marking shorebird nesting areas. These areas are closed to all visitor use, as nesting shorebirds are easily spooked leading to nest abandonment and death of young birds. If you come across a closure, be sure to keep your distance and find an alternate route around the closed area.

The national seashore provides nesting habitat for several species of ground nesting shorebirds including least terns, snowy plovers, wilson's plovers, and black skimmers. Least terns come from as far away as Central and South America to raise their young on these beaches. Many shorebirds are listed by the states of Florida and Mississippi as threatened or endangered, and all are protected by state and federal laws.