

# Horseshoe Bend

Horseshoe Bend  
National Military Park  
Alabama



*There is simply nothing like messing about in a boat - The Wind in the Willows*

## No Longer Wild, But Still Wily

The Tallapoosa River is no longer a wild waterway. Since 1902, its flow has been controlled by hydroelectric dams, regulating the level of the River as it winds around the Horseshoe Bend. The National Military Park is situated between two dams - Harris Lake Dam to the north and Lake Martin Dam downstream. Alabama Power Company owns and operates both projects and attempts to maintain the very popular Lake Martin level at “full pool” from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Generally water is released from Harris Lake between 11 PM and midnight with the number and/or amount of releases dependent upon recent rainfall and the consumer demand for electricity. Water levels can rise up to four feet during a release. Overnight float trips must be well planned due to these extreme water variations overnight. Keep in mind that during dry periods you may have to portage your vessel over low shoals.

## Safe and Secure Sailing is Up to You

The mean annual temperature of the region averages 66 degrees F. Daytime maximum temperatures in June, July and August will most often exceed 90 degree F. Floaters should use plenty of waterproof sunscreen, wear a hat and sunglasses, and carry plenty of water, snacks, and a change of clothing in a watertight container. Hypothermia is a risk any time. Make every effort to stay warm and dry.

Biting insects and reptiles seem to love the Tallapoosa River area. Wear insect repellent, particularly when on shore or camping. Some critters are best avoided so keep your eyes peeled for hornets, wasps, fire ants and snakes. Take care to locate campsites away from nests and ant hills.

Most access points are remote and not regularly patrolled. Make sure to leave valuables home. If you must leave items in your vehicle, secure them out of sight. Cell phone coverage is non-existent along this stretch of the Tallapoosa so make sure family or friends know where you are, when you plan on returning, and who you are with.

## Legalities and Leave No Trace

In Alabama, navigable streams or rivers are considered public property. However, the land creating the shores and shoals along the waterways are typically private property with owners’ rights extend to the average low water mark. In other words, once you take out, you are likely on private property. The Tallapoosa River flows through privately owned land, Alabama Power land and National Park Service land. Currently, camping is not permitted on either Alabama Power or National Park Service property. If you intend to stay out overnight while floating the Tallapoosa, you must get permission from the landowner before you set out.

The National Park Service supports the principles of Leave No Trace. Ask for more information at the Visitor Center. In simple terms, this means bring out what you take in; never litter; be kind to all living things; be very careful with fire; and be quiet and respectful so that everyone can have a good experience. It’s highly recommended that you also contain human waste and bring it out with you. Never use any water source as a privy. For your safety, leave the alcohol at home and immerse yourself in the outdoors unimpaired.

## Floating Possibilities 33.3 miles total



**Wadley to Germany Ferry:** Approximately 19.5 miles. Allow two days of float time. Directions from Park Visitor Center: Take Tallapoosa County Highway 79 to Daviston and turn right on Alabama Highway 22. Follow 22 to Wadley and the Tallapoosa River bridge. This is the put-in point. The first available take-out point will be the highway bridge at Germany Ferry on the right side of the river.

**Germany Ferry to Horseshoe Bend Park Boat Ramp:** Approximately 8.8 miles. Allow at least five hours float time. Directions from Park Visitor Center: Take Tallapoosa County Highway 79 to Germany Ferry Road. Turn right and continue to the river. The put-in point is on the right side of the bridge. The first take-out point will be at the National Park Service boat ramp at the Highway 49 bridge. Note: If you planning on leaving a vehicle at the boat ramp overnight, first get a free parking permit at the Visitor Center, 0.5 mile north on Highway 49.

**Horseshoe Bend Park Boat Ramp to Jay Bird Creek Landing:** Approximately 5 miles. Allow at least three hours float time. Put-in point is the National Park Service boat ramp on the south side of the Highway 49 bridge. The first take-out point is called Jay Bird Landing. The take-out is on the left side of the river just pass the mouth of the Jay Bird Creek. To reach the Landing by vehicle, go south on Highway 49 and turn right onto Rock Springs Road. Turn right onto Boone Valley Road. This road will take you to the Tallapoosa River.

## Tallapoosa Float Map

