



LONGBOAT KEY | ST. ARMANDS | LIDO KEY
SIESTA KEY | CASEY KEY | VENICE
MANASOTA KEY | ENGLEWOOD | NORTH PORT

Lynn Hobeck Bates, APR
Communications Manager
lhobeck@visitsarasota.org
941-955-0991 Ext. 103

Top Spots for Discovering Natural Sarasota County

Birding & Wildlife Viewing

- **Celery Fields** in Sarasota offers more than 300 acres of wetlands, 100 of them restored, and upland habitat tours and opportunities to spot more than 200 bird species and 30 to 40 species of butterflies.
- **Jim Neville Marine Preserve**, an 118-acre preserve made of mangrove islands and tidal flats, features ideal bird watching and a maze of waterways. The preserve is only accessible by water.
- **Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center** sports nature trails, a butterfly garden, eagle nest-viewing areas, and an environmental center at this park in Englewood.
- **Venice Area Audubon Rookery** is a renowned location for bird photography and is free to all visitors daily. Daytime activity includes great blue herons, great egrets, anhinga snowy egrets, cattle egrets, glossy ibises, green herons, tricolored herons, and black-crowned night-herons. www.veniceaudubon.org/rookery
- The 72-acre **Red Bug Slough Preserve** features a diverse natural environment full of marsh rabbits, river otters, an occasional alligator, and an assortment of songbirds.
- Other parks include **Jelks Preserve** for bird watching; **Carlton Reserve** and **Sleeping Turtles Preserve North** for wild animal sightings; and **Curry Creek Preserve** to enjoy wildlife in a marshland habitat.

Camping

- **Myakka River State Park** offers lodging spanning from fully-equipped cabins to simple camping sites, with bike and canoe rentals as well as wildlife tours.
- **Oscar Scherer State Park** also has full-facility campgrounds with electric and water hook-ups for RVs and tents as well as primitive campsites. Reservations must be made up to 11 months in advance.
- **Turtle Beach Campground**, located at the southern end of Siesta Key on Turtle Beach, offers 40 RV and tent spots with full hookups, cable TV access, picnic areas, laundry room facilities and Wi-Fi. Spots may be reserved through Sarasota County and fill up quickly.
- **Sun-N-Fun Resort and Campground** provides year-round RV and tent camping from May through October. The resort itself has a number of activities and amenities, including a giant pool and 15 official pickleball courts. www.sunfunfl.com
- **Knight Trail Park** in Nokomis offers archery, hiking, and shooting sports. Basic camping is available. Reservations and camping permits are required.

Hiking & Biking

- **Venetian Waterway Park** is a 10-mile linear trail along the Intracoastal Waterway in Venice. It connects to the **Legacy Trail** at the Venice Train Depot.
- **Oscar Scherer State Park** has 15 mile soft biking trails and hiking trails, meandering along South Creek and Lake Osprey, a swimming destination.
- The **T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve** has more than 80 miles of hiking and biking trails through dry prairie, pine flatwoods, and seasonal wetlands.
- Hikers craving more natural surroundings will enjoy the trails at **Deer Prairie Creek Preserve** or **Mary Thaxton Memorial Preserve**.

Fishing

- **Venice Fishing Pier** at Brohard Beach Park is on the south end of the island of Venice, anglers drop a line here.
- **Tony Saprito Pier**, adjacent to the John Ringling Causeway Bridge, is popular for pier fishing.
- **City Island** provides bay and inlet fishing. New Pass Grill & Bait Shop offers bait and some of the best hamburgers for anglers.
- **Turtle Beach Park**, named for its sea turtle nesting and gopher tortoise habitats, is located at the southern end of Siesta Key. Its tidal lagoon connects Little Sarasota Bay to the mainland. .
- At **Myakka River State Park**, visitors fish for gar, bass, and sunfish from bridges, platforms and the shoreline.
- Aledia Tush, owner of CB's Saltwater Outfitters, recommends **Point of Rocks on Siesta Key**. Common fish found here include snook, bluefish, Spanish mackerel, and even flounder. Boaters fish for tarpon off of the rocks during the early summer months.

Kayaking

- **Neville Marine Preserve Trail**, a 118-acre preserve, is located in Little Sarasota Bay between Siesta and Casey Keys. This is a good trail for novice paddlers.
- **Caspersen Trail**, which launches at Caspersen Beach Park in Venice, loops through the park and continues south along the Intracoastal Waterway, offering two creeks to explore along the way.
- **Ted Sperling Park** at **South Lido Beach**, located at the southernmost tip of Lido Key, is a popular launch spot for kayaking through the mangrove tunnels.
- Sarasota's beachgoers have created numerous barrier islands easily accessible by kayak, such as **Edwards Islands Park** and **Rattlesnake Island**.

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