



Bayou Birds



*San Bernardo Scenic Byway:
Orleans Loop*

888-278-2054

www.st-bernard.la.us



America's
Wetland

Birding Trail

On Louisiana's

Great Gulf Coast



Part of The Great American Trails Network

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INFORMATION

P
PARKING

RESTROOMS

DRIVING TRAIL

HANDICAP
ACCESS

BOAT ACCESS

CANOE ACCESS

BIKE TRAIL

CABINS

CAMPING

LOOKOUT
TOWER

PICNIC TABLES

VIEWING AREA

HIKING TRAIL

RESTAURANT

VISITOR
CENTER

WATER
FOUNTAIN

FISHING

SWIMMING

BEACH



ORLEANS LOOP

This loop offers a full-spectrum contrast for birders of all backgrounds and likes. Breton Sound, Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, the Bonnet Carre Spillway system, and St. Bernard State Park are astonishingly “wild,” despite the proximity to New Orleans—Louisiana’s largest urban center.

On the other side of the coin are Chalmette Battlefield, New Orleans City Park, and the heronry at Audubon Park, each of which are set amidst bustling urban activities. The Audubon Louisiana Nature Center straddles both the wild and the urban, located at the edge of “New Orleans East” and the vast wetland complex beyond.

Lake Ponchartrain dominates the northern end of New Orleans. For gorgeous views of this large brackish lake, stop by the National Wildbird Refuge at the southern end of the Causeway, or at Seabrook’s boat launch at the southeastern corner of the lake.



Bonnet Carre Spillway

Site 7-I



Site access: Free, Fee

GPS coordinates: N 30.00075; W 90.42896

Site contact: Spillway Office; 985-764-0126

Website: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/recreation>

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310/ Exit 220 in New Orleans, take the ramp onto I 310/ Boutte/ Houma and go south on I 310 for 1.9 miles to Exit 2/ US 61/ Kenner/ Norco. Go right (west) on US 61/ Airline Hwy for 4.5 miles to LA 627/ Prospect Ave. Turn left and head south 1.1 miles to LA 48/ River Rd. Turn right and go west on LA 48 for 0.8 miles. Continue west another 1.1 miles on River Rd. to the Spillway.

Description: The Bonnet Carre Spillway envelopes a massive 8000+ -acre complex of swamps, marshes, meadows, and bottomland hardwoods which stretch between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain. The complex is home to nearly every wading bird native to Louisiana: Anhinga, Great Blue Heron, Great, Snowy, and Cattle egrets, Black-crowned Night-Heron, White, White-faced, and Glossy ibises, and Roseate Spoonbill; and during spring, summer, and fall, American and Least bitterns, Little Blue, Tricolored, and Green herons, and Yellow-crowned Night-Heron.

Common winter waterfowl include Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, and Ruddy Duck. Wood Duck, Mottled Duck, Blue-winged Teal, and Hooded Merganser are also prolific during the winter months and as breeders during the summer months. Other water birds include Pied-billed, Eared, and Horned grebes, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, King, Virginia, and Sora rails, Common Moorhen, and American Coot.

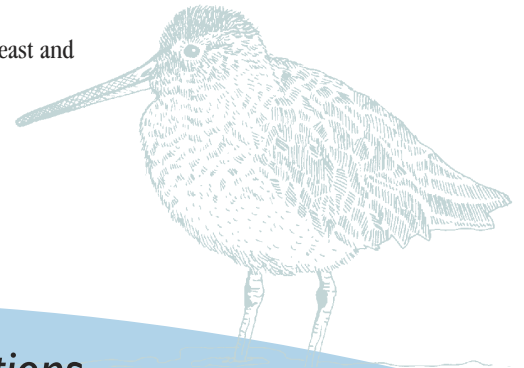
Raptors such as Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Red-tailed hawks, American Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon are present during the winter. In summer, Mississippi Kite, and Red-shouldered and Broad-winged hawks join the year round Turkey and Black vultures.

The meadows and associated sand/mud flats of the impoundments have some of southeastern Louisiana's best views of shorebirds during the fall, winter, and spring months. Look for Black-bellied Plover, Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Solitary, Spotted, Semipalmated, Western, Least, Pectoral, and Stilt sandpipers, Dunlin, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, and American Woodcock.

Check the complex for Laughing Gull, and Forster's and Caspian terns on a year round basis; Least and Black terns during June, August, and September; and Ring-billed, Bonaparte's, and Herring gulls in winter.



Between 25 and 35 square miles of Louisiana's wetlands disappear every year. The state has already lost 1,900 square miles of land since the 1930s and is expected to lose another 500 square miles over the next 50 years if nothing is done to save it.



Cultural/Historical Attractions

LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM

erties in the famous French Quarter: the Cabildo, Presbytere, 1850 House, Old U.S. Mint and Madame John's Legacy as well as Wedell-Williams Memorial Aviation Museum in Patterson, the Old Courthouse in Natchitoches, and the E.D.

White Historic Site in Thibodaux. These national landmarks house thousands of artifacts and works of art reflecting Louisiana's legacy of historic events and cultural diversity. For Museum hours, location and group rates call 800-568-6968 or visit <http://lsm.crt.state.la.us/>.



National Wildbird Refuge

Site 7-2



Site access:

GPS coordinates: N 30.01979; W 90.15425

Site contact: Carlyle Rogillio; 504-888-5510

Website: www.gnofn.org/~swallow/

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310 in New Orleans, go east 8.7 miles on I 10 to North Causeway Blvd./Exit 228. Exit and go right (north) on N Causeway Blvd. for 1.4 miles to the south end of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway. Park in the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge parking space on the right. The story board and walkway to viewing area are located on the Causeway's west side.

Description: Approximately 8 million Purple Martins migrate through southeastern Louisiana twice a year. Over 200,000 of these birds use the understructure of the southern end of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway as a major staging area before making their final push southward. To this end, the National Wildbird Refuge was constructed to assist in the conservation of Purple Martins, heighten public awareness of wildlife issues, and provide a long-term solution for the lack of wildlife habitat along the southern shoreline of Lake Pontchartrain. The Wildbird Sanctuary also plans to create a 5+-acre freshwater lagoon and a 20-acre brackish marsh, both of which should attract a wide variety of wading birds, waterfowl, shorebirds, seabirds, and songbirds.

Although Purple Martin viewing here is limited to spring and fall migration seasons, additional bird species can be seen year round. Look for Laughing Gulls, joined in fall, winter and spring by Ring-billed Gulls. Other seabirds include Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, and Royal, Caspian, and Forster's terns. Waterfowl to look for in winter includes Eared and Horned grebes, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, and Red-breasted Merganser. Keep an eye out for songbirds such as Eastern Phoebe (winter), Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Song and Savannah sparrows (winter), Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle.

City Park in New Orleans

Site 7-3



Site access: Free, Daily

GPS coordinates: N 30.00267; W 90.09432

Site contact: New Orleans City Park; 504-482-4888

Website: www.neworleanscitypark.com

(at Couterie Forest Arboretum Trail)

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310, go east on I 10 for approximately 10.5 miles to Exit 231A/City Park Drive. Turn left onto City Park Drive; go approximately 0.75 miles, to New Orleans City Park on the left (north) side of the street. You may park here and bird the entire park north to Robert E. Lee Blvd.; or, you may turn left (north) onto Marconi Blvd., go approximately 1.6 miles, turn right (east) onto Filmore Avenue, go approximately 0.5 miles, and turn left into the Couterie Forest Arboretum Trail parking lot. Park here and bird the Couterie Forest.

Description: The New Orleans City Park complex is well over 500 acres amply studded with large oaks, which are normally active with hawks, owls, and songbirds of many species. Spring and fall migration are the best times to peruse the large oaks within the manicured portion of the park for Eastern Wood-Pewee, Philadelphia, Red-eyed, and White-eyed vireos, Swainson's and Wood thrushes, Gray Catbird, Northern Parula, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Tennessee, Yellow, and Magnolia warblers, Indigo Bunting, and Summer Tanager.

The Couterie Forest Arboretum Trail, located at the northern end of the park winds through dense bottomland hardwoods, complete with interpretive signage, maps, marked trails, and an observation deck overlooking a large lagoon. This trail can produce all of the above mentioned and more during migration seasons. Additional winter visitors include Sharp-shinned Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, and Orange-crowned, Pine, and Yellow-rumped warblers.



Audubon Park Heronry

Site 7-4



Site access: Free, Daily

GPS coordinates: N 29.92994; W 90.12315

Site contact: Audubon Nature Institute; 800-774-7394
504-246-5672

Website: www.auduboninstitute.com

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310/ Exit 220 in New Orleans, go east on I 10 for 12.2 miles to Exit 232/ US 61/ Airline Hwy./ Carrollton Ave./ Tulane. Go south on S. Carrollton Ave. for 2.2 miles to St. Charles Ave. Turn left (south-east) on St. Charles Ave. for about 0.9 miles to Audubon Park and the heronry. Audubon Park is located on the right (south) side of St. Charles Avenue. The heronry is on an island near the jogging and biking trail on the east side of the park.

Description: This 130-acre park in uptown New Orleans is a gem amidst the city's famed "Garden District." In addition to its other amenities, Audubon contains a golf course and zoo. It also has one of the largest and oldest groves of coast live oaks in the U.S. today.

The ecological centerpiece of the park is the large lagoon which curls around the eastern third of the park, separating the jogging/walking trail from the golf course. The western bank of the lagoon is lined with mature oaks and hackberries, creating an easily visible roosting site for numerous wading birds including Anhinga, Great Blue, Little Blue, Tricolored, and Green (breeder) herons, Great, Snowy, and Cattle egrets, Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned night-herons, and White Ibis. Wood Duck is abundant year round. During winter, American Coot and Pied-billed Grebe are common guests in the lagoon.

"The Fly," located at the extreme southern end of Audubon Park, offers prime viewing of the Mississippi River's avian activity. Watch for any number of commuting wading birds plus Laughing Gull and Forster's and Caspian terns on a year round basis. During the fall, winter, and spring months Lesser Scaup and Red-breasted Merganser, as well as additional seabirds like Ring-billed, Herring, and (occasionally) Bonaparte's gulls, and raptors such as Osprey, Bald Eagle, and Red-tailed Hawk, navigate the river for food.

New Orleans Lakefront at Seabrook

Site 7-5



Site access: Free

GPS coordinates: N 30.03147; W 90.03714

Site contact: Orleans Levee Board; 504-243-4000

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310 in New Orleans, go east 10.1 miles on I 10 to its intersection with I 610. Veer left onto I 610 and continue east 3.6 miles to Exit 3/LA 3021/Elysian Fields Avenue. Merge onto LA 3021 and go north about 3.0 miles. At the roundabout, take the second exit onto Lakeshore Drive and follow it about 0.5 miles to the lakefront.

Description: The southeastern shore of Lake Pontchartrain at Seabrook has been developed into a peaceful park, with benches and a walking trail along the lakefront. Even the parking area has good sea birding since gulls, terns, and other seabirds routinely perch upon the pilings located here.

Laughing Gulls are always in good supply, and are joined by Ring-billed, Herring, and occasionally Bonaparte's gulls during the late fall, winter, and early to mid-spring months. Look also for Caspian, Royal, and Forster's terns on a year round basis which may be joined by Least and Black terns during spring and fall migration periods. Brown Pelican, Black Skimmer, and Fish Crow can be seen patrolling the site year round.

During the winter months, Double-crested Cormorants congregate in the area. Common Loon, Lesser Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser, and American Coot are also common visitors. Be on the lookout for more atypical species such as Eared and Horned grebes, Blue-winged Teal, Bufflehead, and maybe even Long-tailed Duck. Check the skies for wading birds, shorebirds, and raptors such as Peregrine Falcon, Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk, and perhaps Bald Eagle.





Audubon Louisiana Nature Center

Site 7-6



Site access: Fee, Daily

GPS coordinates: N 30.03218; W 89.96560

Site contact: Louisiana Nature Center Main Office;
504-246-5672

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310 in New Orleans, go east 10.1 miles on I 10 to I 610. Veer left onto I 610 and go east 4.2 miles to where I 610 re-merges with I 10. Continue east on I 10 east for 6.1 miles to Exit 244/Read Blvd. Go right (south) on Read Blvd. for about 0.4 miles. Turn left onto Nature Center Drive and follow it through Joe Brown Memorial Park to the center.

Description: Nestled in a 86-acre bottomland hardwood forest at the eastern edge of New Orleans, the Audubon Louisiana Nature Center features a rich botanic assemblage of black willow, live and water oaks, swamp red maple, honey locust, deciduous holly, hackberry, red mulberry, and American elm in which numerous woodland birds nest or visit.

Opened in 1980, the center is recognized as one of the top 5 urban nature centers in the country, boasting 3 nature trails, a natural science museum, a planetarium, a gift shop, and a picnic area. Over 70,000 school children visit the center annually and can explore the center's wildflower garden for butterflies and hummingbirds.

During spring and summer, check the wetland trail for Great and Snowy egrets, Little Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, and Common Yellowthroat. The woodland trails will produce Red-shouldered Hawk, Mississippi Kite, Acadian Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Carolina Wren, Carolina Chickadee, Northern Parula, Indigo Bunting, and Northern Cardinal.

Common winter birds include Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, American Robin, Hermit Thrush, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned warblers, and Swamp, Song, and White-throated sparrows.

Bayou Sauvage NWR

Site 7-7



Site access: Free, Daily

GPS coordinates: N 30.05370; W 89.88047

Site contact: US Fish & Wildlife Service; 985-882-2000

Website: <http://southeastlouisiana.fws.gov/bayousauvage.html>

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310 in New Orleans, go east on I 10 for 10.1 miles to I 610. Veer left onto I 610 and go east 4.2 miles to where I 610 re-merges with I 10. Continue east on I 10 for 2.7 miles to Exit 240B/ US 90/ Chef Menteur Hwy. Go right and head east 8.0 miles to the NWR, located on the left.

Description: Established in 1990, the 23,000-acre Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge is the largest urban wildlife refuge in the country. Resting entirely within the corporate limits of New Orleans, the refuge contains bottomland hardwood forests, freshwater and brackish marshes, as well as lagoons, canals, borrow pits, and natural bayous.

Bayou Sauvage can be accessed by vehicle, boat, bike, and foot. The Ridge Trail parking area, located on US 90, is the best place to begin. It serves as the trailhead for a 0.66-mile boardwalk trail into the adjacent swamp/bottomland hardwood forest. Birders can also access the longer Maxent Levee Trail from this locale. Those interested in exploring the refuge via canoe are likely to see River Otter and American Alligator along with the usual avian fare.

Bayou Sauvage is one of the best places in southern Louisiana to view Mottled Duck, as many pairs breed here in the marshes during the summer months. Wood Duck is also a common breeder in the forested areas. During the winter, these two species are joined by Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Hooded Merganser, and Ruddy Duck.

Raptors, woodpeckers, flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, buntings, sparrows, blackbirds, orioles, and finches all either breed here or visit this magnificent refuge at various seasons.



Chalmette Battlefield, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

Site 7-8



Site access: Free; Daily

Site contact: Visitor Center; 504-281-0511

GPS coordinates: N 29.94189; W 89.99451

Website: www.nps.gov/jela/

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310 in New Orleans, go 10.1 miles east on I 10 to its intersection with I 610. Veer left onto I 610 and go east 4.2 miles to where I 610 re-merges with I 10. Continue east on I 10 for 8.7 miles and to Exit 246/I 510/LA47/Paris Road. Go south on I 510/LA47/Paris Road for 9.0 miles to LA46/St. Bernard Highway. Go right (west) onto LA46/St. Bernard Highway for 1.45 miles and turn left at Chalmette Battlefield sign.

Description: This site commemorates Andrew Jackson's rag-tag army's victory over Major General Sir Edward Pakenham's 10,000 crack British troops in what would come to be known as the decisive battle in the War of 1812. The best time to bird the battlefield is just after a rain, when Great Blue and Little Blue herons, Great, Snowy, and Cattle egrets, and White Ibis flock to feed on insects and other small animals flushed from the turf by pooling rain water. The site's boat dock on the nearby Mississippi River is a good viewing platform for gulls, terns, and specialties such as Double-crested Cormorant, Lesser Scaup, Osprey, and Red-tailed Hawk, especially during the fall, winter, and spring months.

The narrow bands of bottomland hardwood can be active with Mississippi Kite, Red-shouldered Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers, White-eyed Vireo, and Carolina Chickadee during the summer months. Fall and winter bring nearctic woodland species such as American Robin, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers, and American Goldfinch.

St. Bernard State Park

Site 7-9



Site access: Free; Daily

Site contact: Park Information; 504-682-2101

GPS coordinates: N 29.86420; W 89.90026

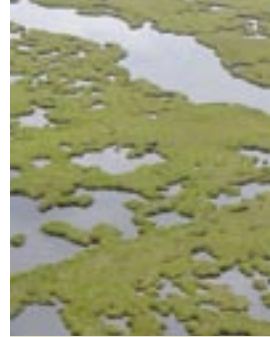
Website: www.lastateparks.com

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310 in New Orleans, go east 10.1 miles on I 10 to its intersection with I 610. Veer left onto I 610 and go east 4.2 miles to where I 610 re-merges with I 10. Continue east on I 10 for 8.7 miles to Exit 246/I 510/LA47/Paris Road. Go south on I 510/LA47/Paris Road for 9.0 miles to LA46/St. Bernard Highway. Turn left (southeast) and go 7.1 miles through Poydras to the intersection of LA 46 and LA 39. Veer right onto LA 39 and go approximately 0.7 miles to the park entrance on the left.

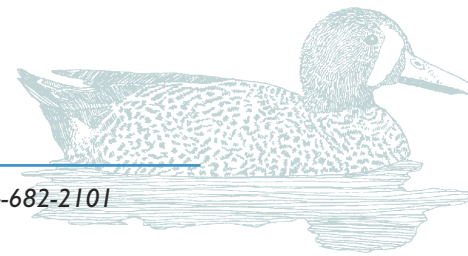
Description: Located 18 miles from the French Quarter in New Orleans, this wonderful 358-acre park hosts American Alligators that roam through the park's manmade lagoons, joining Eastern Cottontail and Swamp rabbits, Raccoon, Virginia Opossum, Gray Squirrel, Mink, and River Otter. The park's bottomland hardwoods hold year round avian residents such as Black and Turkey vultures, Wood Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Barred and Great-horned owls, Eastern Screech-Owls, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, and Pileated woodpeckers, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown Thrasher, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Cardinal, and Common Grackle.

Neotropical species arrive in early to mid-spring to nest, including Green Heron, Mississippi Kite, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Acadian Flycatcher, and White-eyed and Red-eyed vireos, along with Northern Parula, and Prothonotary and Hooded warblers.

Winter visitors include Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers, and Swamp, Song, and White-throated sparrows.



Estuaries are among the most productive natural systems on earth, producing more food per acre than the richest Midwestern farmland due to mixing of nutrients from land and sea.





Breton Sound Marina/Docks/Nature Study Area

Site 7-10



Site Access: Free, Fee

GPS Coordinates: N 29.81844; W 89.61201

Site Contact: Tony Fernandez; 504-279-4260 office,
504-676-3302 field

Directions: From the intersection of I 10 and I 310 in New Orleans, go 10.1 miles east on I 10 to I 610. Veer left onto I 610 and go east 4.2 miles to where I 610 re-merges with I 10. Continue on I 10 east for 8.7 miles to Exit 246/I 510/LA 47/Paris Road. Go south on I 510/LA 47/Paris Road for 8.7 miles to LA 39/Judge Perez Drive. Turn left (southeast) and go 8.3 miles to LA 46. Turn left, following LA 46 EAST signs for 11.6 miles to LA 624 in Yscloskey. Turn right (southeast) onto LA 624 for 5.8 miles through Hopedale to Breton Sound Marina on the right.

Description: This 200-acre site and associated woodlands was created entirely by dredge spoil when the adjacent Mississippi Gulf Outlet waterway was constructed in the 1950s. In the ensuing decades, a complex of coastal woodlands and marshes developed over the spoil. Today, the site functions much like a barrier island, possessing nearly identical vegetation and wildlife.

Check Bayou La Loutre for Brown Pelican, Osprey, and gulls (Laughing in summer; with Ring-billed in fall, winter, spring), along with numerous terns (Caspian, Forster's, and Gull-billed, year round; Least and Sandwich in summer; Black and Common during migration), and Boat-tailed Grackle. At the bayou's confluence with the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, Atlantic Bottle-nosed Dolphins often congregate. During the winter months, look for Common Loon and Double-crested Cormorant.

An extensive nature trail traverses freshwater marsh, salt marsh, and coastal woodland. The fresh marsh harbors Great Blue, Little Blue, and Tricolored herons, Great and Snowy egrets, Roseate Spoonbill, White Ibis, and Black-necked Stilt during the summer. In winter look for Black-crowned Night-Heron, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, along with Belted Kingfisher, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Sedge Wren, Palm Warbler, and Savannah Sparrow.

The area woodland hosts Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, White-winged Dove (summer), Ruby-throated Hummingbird (summer), Yellow-rumped Warbler (winter), Painted and Indigo buntings, Northern Cardinal, and Blue Grosbeak. During spring and fall migrations vireos, thrushes, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and orioles stream through in waves. Flycatchers, including Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, are in good supply from late August through mid-October.

Chamber of Commerce/Convention & Visitors Bureau Information

Jefferson Convention & Visitors Bureau
6640 Riverside Drive, Suite 160
Metairie, LA70003
Phone: 504-780-1909
Fax: 504-780-8061
www.jptourism.com

Louisiana Office of Tourism
PO Box 94291
Baton Rouge, LA70804-9291
Phone: 225-342-8100
Toll Free Consumer: 800-677-4082
Fax: 225-342-8390
www.louisianatravel.com

New Orleans Visitors Information
Center
7450 Paris Rd.
New Orleans, LA70128
Phone: 504-246-5666
Fax: 504-246-0201

St. Charles Parish Tourist
Information Center
13825 River Rd.
Luling, LA70070
Phone: 985-783-5140
Fax: 985-783-5145
www.stcharlesgov.net

Kenner Convention and Visitors Bureau
2100 3rd Street #10
Kenner, LA70062
Phone: 504-464-9494
Toll Free Consumer: 800-231-5282
www.kennercvb.com

New Orleans Tourism
365 Canal Street, Suite 1120
New Orleans, LA70130
Toll Free Consumer: 888-239-3806
www.neworleansonline.com

St. Bernard Parish Tourist Commission
8201 W. Judge Perez Dr.
Chalmette, LA70043
Phone: 504-278-4242
Toll Free Consumer: 888-278-2054
www.st-bernard.la.us

San Bernardo Scenic Byway

Follow the San Bernardo Scenic Byway deep into the Mississippi Delta to the world of the Islenos, Spanish colonists from the Canary Islands who founded St. Bernard in 1780. The San Bernardo Scenic Byway follows LA 46 to the fishing villages of Yscloskey and Delacroix Island, where charter fishing and the seafood industry are still the community's main business. For those interested in Civil War history, visit Chalmette National Historic Park which commemorates the Battle of New Orleans, Andrew Jackson's military victory that launched him on the road to the White House.