























Bayou Birds

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*Cultural Wetlands Scenic Byway:
Terrebonne Loop*

985-868-2732

www.houmatourism.com



America's
Wetland
Birding Trail
On Louisiana's
Great Gulf Coast





TERREBONNE LOOP

The Terrebonne Loop weaves through long, isolated stretches of brackish and salt marshes, occasionally punctuated by dense, mature, bottomland hardwoods. The loop begins in the shady forests associated with Mandalay National Wildlife Refuge and Pointe-Au-Chien Wildlife Management Area, both of which bear an undeniably sub-tropical character to them. Those interested in learning more about the cultural, industrial and ecological aspects of life on South Louisiana's waters should visit the Bayou Terrebonne Waterlife Museum in Houma on their way from Mandalay Refuge to Pointe-Au-Chien WMA. While in Houma, make sure to stop at Southdown Plantation House, the 19th-century sugar manor house that is now home to the Terrebonne Museum of history and culture. South of Houma, the loop suddenly opens up into the sun-washed recesses of the marshlands, filled with herons, egrets, ibises, Ospreys, and in winter, waterfowl and Bald Eagles.

As you travel the marsh country, remember that the few north-south roads radiating southward out of Houma are often busy with oilfield and fisheries traffic, while the fewer east-west roads which connect them are nearly traffic-free. This is especially true of the breathtakingly scenic LA 57 and Falgout Roads.

LUMCON (the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium facility) stands like a temple at the southern extremity of the marshland system. This research facility welcomes visitors, and offers incredibly detailed interpretative exhibits of Louisiana's wetland ecosystems.





Mandalay Refuge Nature Trail

Site 8-1



Site access: Free, Daily 8 am-4:30 pm
GPS coordinates: N 29.55946; W 90.79042

Site contact: Refuge Manager; 985-853-1078
Website: <http://southeast.fws.gov/mandalay/index.html>

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 10.8 miles. Take the south exit for US 90/ Houma. Go west on US 90 for 13.75 miles to Exit 210/ Houma/Raceland. Turn left onto LA 182/Business 90 and drive south 22.0 miles through Houma, following the Business 90/ LA 182 signs. About 5.0 miles west of Houma, the Mandalay NWR Nature Trail sign will be on the left. Turn south onto the access road and follow it to the parking area.

Description: Established in 1996, the 4200+ acres of this national wildlife refuge are dominated by freshwater marsh and cypress-tupelo swamp with a higher bottomland hardwood ridge on the northern edge of the system. Upon the ridge, lies a 1700-foot nature trail which traverses a forest dense with water oak, hackberry, green hawthorn, American elm, honeylocust, and dwarf palmetto. Look here for Wood Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and Pileated woodpeckers, Carolina Wren, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, and Common Grackle.

The trail terminates at a secluded wading bird rookery which annually hosts nesting Anhinga, Great, Snowy and Cattle egrets, as well as Little Blue and Green herons. Look also for the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron.

Numerous neotropical songbirds nest here such as Yellow-billed Cuckoo, White-eyed, Yellow-throated and Red-eyed vireos, Northern Parula, Prothonotary and Hooded warblers, and Indigo and Painted buntings. Between November and March, look for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, House and Winter wrens, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers, as well as Swamp, Song and White-throated sparrows.

Cultural/Historical Attractions

SOUTHDOWN PLANTATION/TERREBONNE MUSEUM

Southdown Plantation House is a 19th-century sugar manor house and home to the Terrebonne Museum of History and Culture. The plantation was built in 1859 as a one-story Greek Revival house by sugar planter, William J. Minor, and remained in the Minor family until 1932. In 1975, the Southdown Plantation House and Servant's Quarters were donated to the Terrebonne Historical and Cultural Society, who turned the property into a museum. Among the extensive exhibits hosted by the museum are the original bedroom furniture of the Minor family and other antique furnishings, a history and culture room, the Boehm Bird Collection, a Native Peoples room, a sugar industry room and a restored 1880's plantation worker's cabin. For more information about the museum and hours of operation, call 985-851-0154 or visit www.southdownmuseum.org.

BAYOU TERREBONNE WATERLIFE MUSEUM

The Bayou Terrebonne Waterlife Museum preserves and promotes the area's long, colorful and historically important connection with the seafood and water transportation industries, as well as Louisiana's wetlands and water based hunting, gathering and mining occupations. For location, hours, facility rental and museum information, call 985-580-7200 or visit www.houmaterrabonne.org.

Pointe-Au-Chien WMA

Site 8-2



Site access: Free, Daily, Permit

Site contact: WMA Supervisor; 337-373-0032

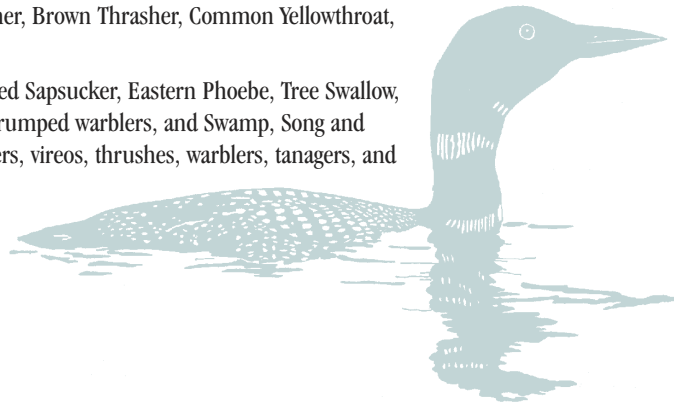
GPS coordinates: N 29.48233; W 90.54846

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 10.8 miles. Take the south exit for US 90/ Houma and go west on US 90 for about 13.75 miles to Exit 210/Houma/Raceland. Turn left onto LA 182 and drive south for 11.5 miles. Turn left onto LA 3087 and go south-east for about 5.5 miles to LA 659. Turn left and go 3.3 miles to LA 24. Continue approximately 5.5 miles to LA 55 and go south approximately 5.1 miles. Go left onto Dolphin St. in Montegut and follow less than 1.0 mile to the western edge of the WMA.

Description: The 29,000 acres of Pointe-Au-Chien WMA are almost totally comprised of brackish and salt marsh habitat, accessible only by boat. However, a few bottomland hardwood ridges run through the site. One of these, located on the far western edge of the management area in Montegut, is easily accessible by foot.

From the parking area, follow the road colonized by live, water, and swamp-chestnut oaks, hackberry, American persimmon, and other bottomland hardwood trees and shrubs. During the summer months, expect to see Red-shouldered and Broad-winged hawks, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers, White-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown Thrasher, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Cardinal and Painted and Indigo buntings.

Common winter birds include Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Kestrel, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers, and Swamp, Song and White-throated sparrows. During spring and fall any number of migrating flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, warblers, tanagers, and orioles are possible.



Marguerite Moffet Sanctuary

Site 8–3



Site access: Free, Daily

GPS coordinates: N 29.32340; W 90.64500

Site contact: David Muth, Chief of Planning and Resource Stewardship; 504-283-4437

Website: www.jjaudubon.org

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 10.8 miles. Take the exit for US 90/ Houma and go west on US 90 for 13.75 miles to Exit 210/Houma/Raceland. Turn left onto LA 182 and drive south for 11.5 miles. Turn left onto LA 3087 and go south-east for 5.5 miles to LA 24. Turn left on LA 24 and go 3.3 miles to LA 56. Continue south on LA 56 for 17.75 miles to the sanctuary sign on the right.

Description: The New Orleans Audubon Society's Marguerite Moffet Sanctuary is comprised predominately of brackish marsh terminating upon a low, brushy ridge. A 600-foot raised walkway, observation platform, and educational kiosks aid in interpreting this isolated, wildlife-rich site.

Typical bird life includes waders such as Great Blue, Little Blue and Green herons, Great and Snowy egrets, Roseate Spoonbill, and seabirds such as Laughing and Ring-billed (fall, winter, spring) gulls, and Forster's and Caspian terns. In winter, large numbers of waterfowl such as Pied-billed Grebe, Common Loon, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, and Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal fill the area. Additional species include Double-crested and Neotropic cormorants, American White and occasionally, Brown pelicans, as well as Osprey, Clapper Rail, Black-necked Stilt, and Greater Yellowlegs.

Check the low brushy ridge for flycatchers, warblers, and sparrows. Good winter possibilities include Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Tree Swallow, House and Sedge wrens, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers, and Song, Swamp and White-throated sparrows. Marsh Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Cardinal, and Red-winged Blackbird are year round residents. For best viewing, bring binoculars and a spotting scope and tripod.

Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium

Site 8–4



Site access: Free, Daily

GPS coordinates: N 29.25457; W 90.66138

Site contact: LUMCON, 985-851-2800

Website: www.lumcon.edu

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 10.8 miles. Take the exit for US 90/ Houma and go west on US 90 for 13.75 miles to Exit 210/ Houma/Raceland. Turn left onto LA 182 and drive south for 11.5 miles. Turn left onto LA 3087 and go south-east for 5.5 miles to LA 24. Turn left and go 3.3 miles. Continue on LA 56 and go south about 24.8 miles to the facility.

Description: Located in the community of Cocodrie, on the northern reaches of Terrebonne Bay, the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) facility is dedicated to marine research and education. The facility welcomes visitors, and offers boardwalks, a fantastic museum-grade natural history exhibit, a library, and a 6-story observation tower, which provides a panoramic view of 10 square miles of surrounding marshes and estuaries. LUMCON is a "must" for any birder possessing time enough to make the drive. Also, the regionally famous Coco's Marina is located next door to the LUMCON facility, offering a boat launch, charter fishing, and fabulous dining.

During the warmer months, common birds around the LUMCON facility include Great and Snowy egrets, Little Blue and Tricolored herons, Roseate Spoonbill, Laughing Gull, and Foster's, Caspian and Least terns. Winter brings numerous additions, the most noteworthy of which include Clapper Rail, Black-bellied Plover, Short-billed Dowitcher, Least Sandpiper, and Willet.



Louisiana's wetlands serve as protection from hurricanes and storm surges for more than two million people living in the coastal zone, including the city of New Orleans.



Hwy 57 and Falgout Canal Road

Site 8-5



Site access: Free

Site contact: Houma Area CVB; 985-868-2732

GPS coordinates: LA 57: N 29.30787; W 90.64792

Falgout Canal Rd: N 29.38262; W 90.71371

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 10.8 miles. Take the exit for US 90/ Houma and go west on US 90 for 13.75 miles to Exit 210/ Houma/Raceland. Turn left onto LA 182 and drive south 11.5 miles. Turn left onto LA 3087/US 90 Business and continue straight to LA 661. Turn left and follow about 0.8 miles to LA 311. Turn left and go 0.3 miles to LA 315. Turn right and go approximately 12.0 miles to Falgout Canal Road. Go left and continue east to LA 57.

Description: This close to the Gulf of Mexico roadways are traditionally built along the natural levees associated with north-south bayous. However, these parts of LA 57 and Falgout Canal Road are among the very few examples of east-west roadways connecting associated north-south bayous/roadways deep into the marsh country. Moreover, these east-west roadways are very quiet, with astonishingly wild and beautiful scenery along their paths.

The drive along LA 57 and Falgout Canal Road is at its best during the fall, winter, and early spring months when bird life is at its peak. At this time Double-crested and Neotropic cormorants, Great Blue Herons, Roseate Spoonbills, and other large wading birds/allies pack into the shallow marsh pools. Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, and Blue-winged and Green-winged teal are also in abundance between November and February. Common Loon, although somewhat uncommon, is another waterbird to watch for here.

Check the skies for Turkey and Black vultures, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, and other large raptors. Seabirds such as Laughing and Ring-billed gulls, and Forster's, Gull-billed and Caspian terns also commonly occur here.

Convention and Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce

Houma Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
 114 Tourist Dr. (U.S. Hwy 90 at La. Hwy. 24)
 Houma, LA 70359
 Phone: 985-868-2732
 Toll Free Consumer: 800-688-2732
www.houmatourism.com



Cultural Wetlands Scenic Byway

The Cultural Wetlands Scenic Byway covers territory dominated by a vast network of swamp and marsh lands leading south to the Gulf of Mexico. This fertile ecosystem developed through millions of years of silt deposits from the Mississippi River. Follow the Byway as it traces the path of Bayou Lafourche, which is known to residents as “the longest street in the world.” After passing through several historic communities, including Raceland, Larose, Golden Meadow, and Leeville, visitors will eventually reach Grand Isle, considered to be one of the top ten fishing spots in the world.