

## Some Common Creatures



Cuban Anole  
(*Anolis s. sagrei*)

The small brown lizard seen darting among the saw palmetto or around your home is most likely the brown anole or Cuban anole. It is a very aggressive invasive exotic. Unfortunately it is replacing the native green anole by competing for the same food.



Green Anole  
(*Anolis carolinensis*)

As the seasons change, you may see masses of small white butterflies fluttering through the preserve. This is the great southern white butterfly. Females lay their eggs on saltwort, which is the host plant for the caterpillar stage of the great southern white.



Great Southern White Butterfly  
(*Ascia monuste*)

### Be Prepared

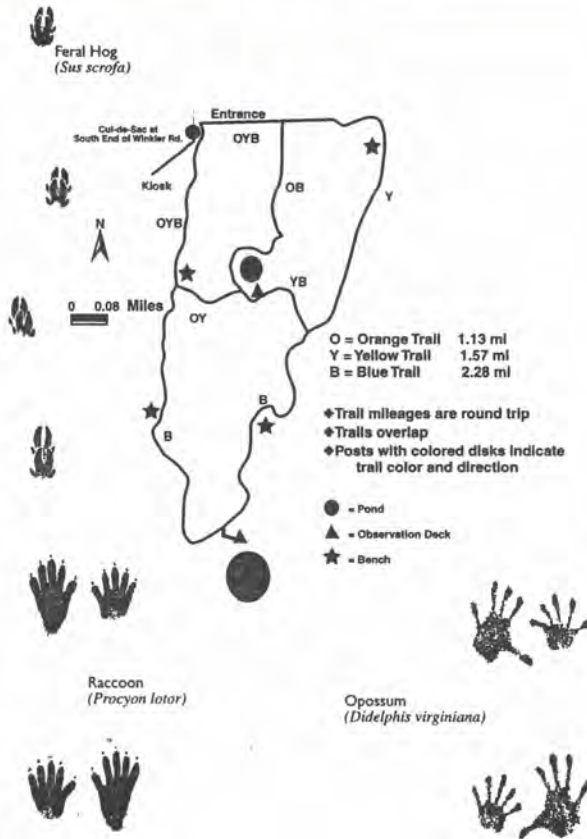
Before you head for the trails, you may want to bring the following:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water       | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof hiking shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bug spray   | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hat         | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain jacket | <input type="checkbox"/> Compass                 |

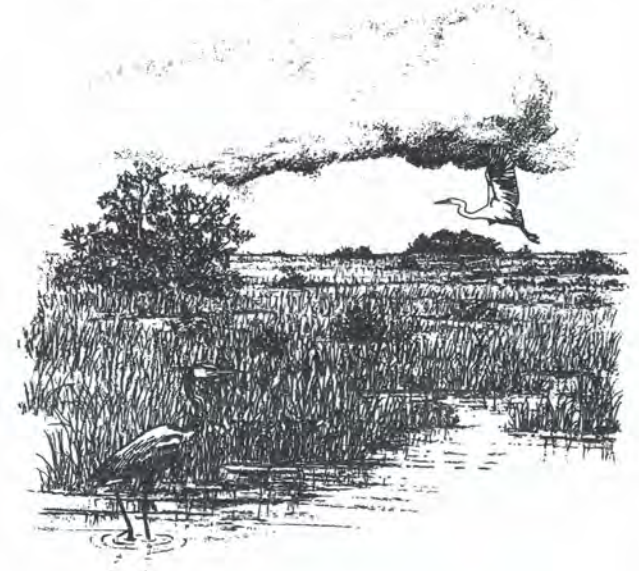
The best time to visit this area is during the dry season (November – May). Make sure to give yourself plenty of time to walk the trail system. Know what time the sun sets and be prepared for rainy weather.

Because this is an outdoor adventure, animals may be out and about too. Venomous snakes and other creatures live in these woods. Keep in mind that these animals are just as afraid of you as you are of them. If you should encounter a venomous snake, do not try to harm or kill it. Instead, slowly back away and leave the area. The best way to stay safe is to stay on the trails.

## Trail Map



# Winkler Point



Welcome to the Estero Bay State Buffer Preserve. This preserve is about 9,000 acres, but the size continues to grow as we acquire more land. The Aquatic Preserve was established in 1966 and consists primarily of Estero Bay and its tributaries. This public access point is referred to as Winkler Point, and encompasses over 600 acres of flatwoods, salt flats, and transitional tidal marsh.

This natural area is a work in progress. A primary concern is management of invasive exotic species. Invasive exotics are plants and animals that are not naturally found in the United States. They threaten the natural balance of an ecosystem by forcing native plants and animals to compete with them for food and space. Melaleuca is our biggest problem. These tall trees with the white, flaky bark have taken over entire areas of the preserve and many areas throughout south Florida.

For your protection and to show respect for this natural area, please remain on marked trails and remember that all plants and animals are protected within the preserve.

This trail guide provides a basic introduction to the plants and animals you are likely to see along the trails. Please contact us if you would like more information. Thank you and enjoy!

Provided in support from:



### Contact Information

This site is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (OCAMA). Are you interested in volunteer opportunities or making a financial contribution to our conservation efforts? Become a member of our citizen support organization, the Estero Bay Buddies, by calling the number below. Thank you for your support.

Estero Bay Aquatic and State Buffer Preserves  
700-1 Fisherman's Wharf  
Ft. Myers Beach, FL 33931  
(239) 463-3240

## Orange Trail 1.13 miles



Melaleuca  
(*Melaleuca quinquenervia*)

Melaleuca and Brazilian pepper are invasive exotics. These non-native species quickly reproduce and spread, forcing out native species and taking over the landscape. The large areas of standing, dead trees with papery bark are melaleuca trees that have been aerially-treated with herbicide by helicopter. Brazilian pepper is a shrub with red berries and glossy green leaves that smell strongly when crushed. Other invasive exotics include Cuban anoles, feral pigs, and Australian pinos.



Brazilian Pepper  
(*Schinus terebinthifolius*)

This common Florida plant dominates the understory of the pine flatwoods community. In the summer, saw palmettos produce berries which are popular with raccoons, bears, and other animals.



Saw Palmetto  
(*Serenoa repens*)

One of the most common trees in south Florida, slash pines are adapted to fire. Their thick bark is resistant to damage.



Slash Pine  
(*Pinus elliottii*)



Red-shouldered Hawk  
(*Buteo lineatus*)

The red-shouldered hawk is often seen along the road hunting for snakes and frogs. It has rusty-colored wings, barred breast feathers, and noticeable white bands on its tail. Listen for its shrill "kee-yeer" call, but don't be fooled by mimicking blue jays.

## Yellow Trail 1.57 miles



Black Needle Rush  
(*Juncus roemerianus*)

The salt marshes are home to black needle rush and sand cordgrass, two plants that can tolerate the high amount of salt, heat and sunlight in this harsh environment. Salt flats are too salty for most plants, but are extremely important water filters. They filter out sediments and nutrients from water coming from the uplands before it reaches the bay.



Sand Cordgrass  
(*Spartina alterniflora*)



Fiddler Crab  
(*Uca rapax*)

The small fiddler crab lives in a burrow in the sand, which it plugs up when the tide comes in. When the tide recedes the crab emerges to feed, scraping algae and detritus off the grains of sand. "Feeding balls" made of sand are deposited outside the burrow opening as it eats.

Saltwort, sea purslane and glasswort are low growing plants that occur in salt marshes. Saltwort has smooth, succulent leaves and tiny flowers bunched on short spikes. Sea purslane has succulent leaves, a reddish stem and pink flowers. Glasswort has a translucent, beaded appearance with no obvious leaves or flowers.



Saltwort  
(*Batis maritima*)



Sea Purslane  
(*Sesuvium portulacastrum*)

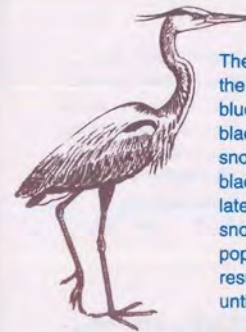
Glasswort  
(*Salicornia bigelovii*)



Cabbage Palm  
(*Sabal palmetto*)

Cabbage palms and sabal palms are the same species, and are very common throughout Florida. The term "cabbage" comes from the tree's edible heart. Palm berries ripen in the fall and are enjoyed by many wildlife species.

## Blue Trail 2.28 miles



Great Blue Heron  
(*Ardea herodias*)

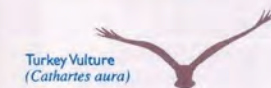
The tallest of the wading birds, the great blue heron is slate blue with a white head and a black stripe above its eye. The snowy egret is white with a black bill and yellow feet. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, snowy egret plumes were very popular on women's hats. As a result, these birds were hunted until they were nearly extinct.



Snowy Egret  
(*Egretta thula*)



Bald Eagle  
(*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)



Turkey Vulture  
(*Cathartes aura*)



Black Vulture  
(*Coragyps atratus*)

Bald eagles, black vultures and turkey vultures can all be seen flying above the preserve, although black vultures are the most common. Eagles are usually seen alone or in pairs and soar with their wings flat. Vultures fly with their wings in a "V" shape, and are often seen circling in groups of 3 or more. Bald eagles do not get their white head and tail until they are over five years old.



Red Mangrove  
(*Rhizophora mangle*)

The red mangrove, with its strange alien-like prop roots, occurs close to the shore and in deeper water. The black mangrove grows further inland and its roots look like dark, finger-like projections emerging from the soil. The white mangrove occurs well above the high tide mark and has large, rounded, football-shaped leaves.



White Mangrove  
(*Laguncularia racemosa*)



Black Mangrove  
(*Avicennia germinans*)

There are three ponds within the preserve. The two northernmost ponds are fresh water, with water levels that fluctuate based on seasonal rains. Wading birds and ducks are common visitors to these ponds. The large pond to the south is salt water and tidally influenced by Hell Peckney Bay, which is a back bay of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve.

