

Southwest Florida

# Anclote Key Preserve State Park

*Where nature meets serenity*

## Real Fun in the Real Florida

Welcome to Anclote Key Preserve State Park where nature meets serenity. Located three miles off the coast from Tarpon Springs, this state park is an island-lover's paradise. Whether it's an **angler** searching for seatrout or a family looking for some fun in the sun, Anclote Key is their destination.

Anclote Key Preserve State Park is comprised of four islands – Anclote Key, North Anclote Bar, South Anclote Bar and Three Rooker Island. Rest and relaxation are two major pastimes at this park. Visitors can bring beach chairs, umbrellas and coolers to this coastal haven and relax for a day or two on a mini tropical retreat. These islands are prime spots for reeling in seatrout, tarpon and snook.

A **primitive camping** area is located on the northern tip of Anclote Key. Visitors will find grills, **picnic tables**, a **pavilion** and a composting toilet. Please note that there are no garbage receptacles on the island. Visitors must take out what they bring in! Temperatures can soar in the hot Florida sun, so visitors should be sure to bring drinking water as there is no fresh water available on the island.

This is a great place for **bird watching**. Binoculars enable a close-up view of eagles nesting in the pine trees and ospreys searching the water for fish. Wading birds such as egrets, herons and roseate spoonbills, fish in the seagrass beds and mudflats on the bay side of the islands creating vivid photo opportunities. Three-Rooker Island attracts great numbers of gulls, terns and black skimmers.

## **History & Nature**

The islands that make up Anclote Key Preserve State Park are renowned for their diversity and number of nesting shorebirds. On the Three Rooker Island large numbers of shorebirds nest in the summer. Species include American

oystercatchers, royal and least terns, black skimmers and snowy and Wilson's plovers. The adjacent waters are also an important feeding area for long-legged wading birds. At night, between the months of May and October, green and loggerhead sea turtles crawl from the gulf waters and lay their eggs on the beach.

The forest on Anclote Key is composed of a variety of trees such as slash pine, sea grape and cabbage palm. It provides important shelter and food for migrating birds and other wildlife such as gopher tortoises and box turtles.

Much of the eastern portion of the island is a marine tidal swamp composed of red, black and white mangrove trees. They are salt tolerant and their roots and leaves create a sheltered nursery area for juvenile fish and invertebrates. Just offshore **fishing** is excellent in the seagrass beds where sheepshead, redfish and seatrout are some of the species frequently caught.

The **lighthouse** at the island's southern end served as a beacon to ships for many years. President Grover Cleveland declared the island a lighthouse reservation in 1886. The lighthouse was built and began operation on September 15, 1887.

Today the lighthouse is maintained as a historic structure.

## **Park Guidelines**

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected, including sand dollars and shellfish.
- Please honor areas of the beach that are closed for vital shorebird nesting/resting.
- Pets are permitted on North Anclote Bar. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet, well behaved at all times and must stay out of posted areas.
- A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- There is no fresh water available on the island. Please bring drinking water with you.

- There are no garbage receptacles on the islands. Please take all refuse off of the islands with you.
- Camping registrations can be made by calling the resident ranger (727) 638-4447.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

## Directions

Anclote Key Preserve is located three miles off the coast of Tarpon Springs and is accessible only by boat.

## Park Information

Florida State Parks  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks  
**Anclote Key Preserve State Park**  
#1 Causeway Boulevard

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