

Southwest Florida

Caladesi Island State Park

One of America's most beautiful beaches

Real Fun in the Real Florida

Welcome to Caladesi Island State Park. Pristine beaches and warm gulf breezes keep this stunning island ranked among the best in America. Whether you are kayaking through the three-mile mangrove trail or staying overnight in the 108-slip marina, recreational opportunities abound at this timeless island in the Gulf.

More than 200,000 people visit Caladesi Island State Park every year for the experience of exploring this beautiful isolated island. Visitors can relax on the **beach**, take a **swim** or watch dolphins gliding through the glistening surf. A day's **fishing** can yield catches of flounder, snook, trout, redfish, snapper, whiting and sheepshead. A Florida fishing license may be required. Enjoy a **stroll** along the four miles of **beach** and **view**

American oystercatchers running from the water's edge to the dunes.

Visitors can learn why Caladesi Island is a consistent contender for America's Best Beach. A 108-slip marina is equipped with water and electric for **overnight boat stays**. **Ferry service** to the island is available at Honeymoon Island State Park. Rent a **kayak** and enjoy the three-mile, mangrove-shaded kayak trail. Rangers present a variety of programs, some of which are given on the deck at Café Caladesi. Check out our website for **park program** dates. The concession offers food, beverages, beach supplies, souvenirs and umbrella, chair and kayak rentals.

The **playground**, located in the park's **picnic area**, is a fun place for children. Just to the south visitors can find the entrance to the **nature trail**. Come enjoy the seclusion and serenity this island brings.

History & Nature

For nearly four miles the *beach dune community* proliferates with sea oats, dune sunflower and beach morning glory. This beach is on the Great

Florida Birding Trail. Visitors are likely to see shorebirds such as American oystercatchers, black skimmers, royal and least terns and snowy, Wilson's and piping plovers. Loggerhead and green sea turtles also use the beach for nesting. On the bayside of the island, great blue herons, snowy egrets and roseate spoonbills concentrate their feeding activities around the shallow water in the tidal flats.

In the *coastal strand*, sabal palms dominate and shade areas where Eastern diamondback rattlesnakes and gopher tortoises forage for food. In the *maritime hammock*, the canopy created by the branches of live oaks and cabbage palms shades the benches found along the nature trail. Visitors should watch for ospreys flying overhead and their nests located atop barren pine snags.

Undisturbed *pine flatwoods* such as the one on Caladesi are rare on Florida's barrier islands. On the eastern shore of the island, red, black and white mangroves, along with buttonwood, comprise the *mangrove forest*. These important trees provide shoreline protection and nursery habitat for many fish and invertebrates. In the 1880s homesteader Henry Scharrer and his daughter Myrtle lived on this island. Later in life, at the age of 87, Myrtle Scharrer Betz penned the

book *Yesteryear I Lived in Paradise*, telling her story of life on a barrier island.

Directions

By Boat: From channel marker #14, just west of the Dunedin Causeway, take an approximate 212 degree heading for approximately 1 mile. Follow the channel markers into the Caladesi Island State Park Marina.

The ferry service to Caladesi leaves from Honeymoon Island State Park hourly beginning at 10 a.m. Ferry service information: (727) 734-1501.

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected.

- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Alcoholic beverage consumption is allowed in designated areas only.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- For information about joining Friends of Island Parks, visit IslandParks.org.
- Please honor areas of the beach that are closed for vital shorebird nesting/resting.
- 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.

Contact information

Florida State Parks
Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks
Caladesi Island State Park
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Dunedin, FL 34698
Phone: (727) 469-5918
www.FloridaStateParks.org/caladesiisland