

Southeast Florida

Jonathan Dickinson State Park

One of Florida's largest and most diverse state parks

Real Fun in the Real Florida

The **Elsa Kimbell Environmental Education and Research Center** is open every day, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Its exhibit hall uses interactive displays and panels to interpret the natural and cultural features of the park. A variety of programs are offered.

Two family **campgrounds** are available. One is located a short distance from the ranger station, the other four miles into the park, near the Loxahatchee River. **Cabins** may be rented from the concessionaire, along with **canoes, kayaks** and **motorboats**. A tour of the Loxahatchee aboard the *Loxahatchee Queen II* is a popular way to enjoy the park. Call the concessionaire at (561) 746-1466.

A **picnic area** with four pavilions and a **playground** borders the Loxahatchee. Three of the pavilions can be reserved, and the fourth is available first-come, first-served. An old-fashioned "swimming hole" is located along the river, just east of the concession store.

Four **nature trails** and off-road and paved **bicycle trails** offer opportunities to experience wild Florida. **Horse trails** are available for those bringing their own mounts. A network of 9 to 12-mile **hiking trails**, part of the Florida Trail system, leads to primitive campsites.

The **Hobe Mountain Observation Tower** offers commanding views of the park, the Intracoastal Waterway and the Atlantic Ocean. Hobe Mountain, an ancient sand dune, rises 86 feet above sea level, making it one of the highest points of land in south Florida.

Nature walks and evening **campfire programs** are offered. In addition, tours are given regularly at the **Trapper Nelson Interpretive Site**.

History & Nature

The 11,500-acre park is named for Jonathan Dickinson, a Quaker merchant whose vessel shipwrecked nearby in 1696. His book, *God's Protecting Providence*, records the story of his party's capture by the Jobe (Hoe-Bay) Indians and their release and journey up the coast to St. Augustine. Victims of war and disease, these native people died off shortly thereafter.

During World War II, the land the park now occupies was home to Camp Murphy, a top-secret radar training school with over 6,600 men. The land became a state park in 1950.

Far upriver is the Trapper Nelson Interpretive Site, the restored homestead of a man who came to this area in the 1930s and lived off the land, trapping and selling furs. He became famous as the "Wildman of the Loxahatchee," opening his "Trapper's Jungle Gardens and Wildlife Zoo" to the public.

About 20 percent of the park is covered in coastal sand pine scrub, a biological community so rare it has been designated "globally imperiled." More rare and endangered species, like the Florida scrub-jay, Florida mouse and gopher frog, are

found in the scrub than in the rest of the park combined.

The Loxahatchee River winds slowly through the park, passing under a canopy of centuries-old cypress trees. This river was designated as Florida's first "National Wild and Scenic River" in 1985.

Wildlife found in the park includes deer, raccoons, foxes, bobcats, opossums, alligators and otters. Over 140 species of birds have been identified here, making Jonathan Dickinson an excellent birding destination.

Directions

Located 12 miles south of Stuart on U.S. 1.

Park Guidelines

- Hours of operation are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.

- An entrance fee is required. Additional user fees may apply.
- The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.
- 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.
- 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 the Friends of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, call (561) 744-9814.
- For camping information, contact Reserve America at (800) 326-3521 or (866) I CAMP FL or TDD (888) 433-0287 or visit ReserveAmerica.com.

- 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
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks
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