

Egmont Key

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1974.
- Acres: 328.
- Located in Hillsborough County.
- Location: the refuge is located off shore from the town of St. Petersburg, FL and is accessible only by boat.
- Administered by Chassahowitzka NWR.

Natural History

The refuge's beach and upland habitat support more than 117 species of birds. Two bird sanctuaries protect nesting brown pelicans, royal, sandwich, and least terns, laughing gulls, black skimmers and shorebirds such as oystercatchers. Thirty to sixty loggerhead sea turtles nest on Egmont Key each year. Many gopher tortoises and box turtles inhabit the island as well.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- One staff person.
- 160,000 visitors annually.
- Managed as part of Chassahowitzka NWR Complex.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide nesting, feeding, and resting habitat for brown pelicans, terns, and other colonial nesting water birds.
- Preserve and protect barrier island habitat and historical structures.
- Provide habitat and protection for endangered species such as manatees, sea turtles and others.
- Provide wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education for the public.

Management Tools

- Law enforcement.
- Prescribed fire.
- Wildlife population surveys.

- 97-acre bird nesting sanctuary (year round closure).

- Education/interpretation.

- Exotic plant removal.

- Partnerships.

Public Use Opportunities

- Wildlife observation.

- Sport fishing.

- Walking trails.

- Nature photography.

- Beach use.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities exist for refuge maintenance projects, exotic plant removal and beach clean ups.

Calendar of Events

May: Marine Quest.

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

Questions and Answers

Why is Egmont Key also known as a State park?

Egmont Key is cooperatively managed with Florida State Parks.

Where is Egmont Key National Wildlife Refuge?

Egmont Key National Wildlife Refuge and State Park is located off shore from the town of St. Petersburg, Florida.

How do I visit Egmont Key National Wildlife Refuge?

Access to the refuge is by boat only. In the town of St. Petersburg there are commercial guide boats that provide tours of the refuge. The refuge/state park is open daily from 8:00 am- sunset. For additional information, contact Egmont Key State Park, 4905 34th Street S, Box 5000, St. Petersburg, FL 33711. Phone: 727/893 2627.

What is there to do on Egmont Key?

The beach is open year round to wildlife-dependent public uses such as wildlife observation, bird watching, fishing, and photography. The interior of the island has several walking trails where visitors can walk through the maritime forest and also get a glimpse of the past cultural history of the island.

Why are some areas on the island closed to public use?

Certain areas are designated Wildlife Sanctuaries and are set aside to provide nesting and resting habitat for endangered brown pelicans and other migratory birds.

What is the military history on Egmont?

Ft. Dade was built in 1882 on Egmont Key with temporary gun batteries to protect Tampa at the outbreak of the Spanish/American War. Over 70 buildings were built between 1899 and 1916 and a small town with 300 residents existed.