

= San Antonio Bay =

San Antonio Bay is a bay on the Texas Gulf coast situated between Matagorda and Aransas Bay . It consists mainly of the combined waters of the San Antonio and Guadalupe rivers , and is located at the mouth of the Guadalupe River , about 55 miles (89 km) northeast of Corpus Christi and 130 miles (209 km) southeast of San Antonio . It is protected from the Gulf of Mexico by Matagorda Island , leaving only relatively small and distant outlets to the Gulf for little mixing of bay and Gulf waters . The remoteness of the bay has prevented the establishment of major ports as seen on Aransas and Corpus Christi Bay , to the south .

The Aransas National Wildlife Refuge is found on the southwest portion of the bay . The diverse wildlife on these shores make up for the lack of a sizable human settlement .

= History =

The Karankawa Indians used the land near the Guadalupe River delta and San Antonio Bay for camping purposes . They also populated Matagorda Island on the opposite side of the bay . Captain Luis Cazorla of Presidio La Bahía crossed San Antonio Bay to visit the island in 1776 , and discovered that the Indians had killed the mates of a shipwrecked British trading vessel . For a short time , he convinced the Indian leaders not to kill shipwreck survivors on the island . An effort was made to convert the Indians with the establishment of Mission Refugio on San Antonio Bay in 1793 , after Fray José Francisco Garza found a shallow crossing that the Indians used to travel to the mainland . To prevent the Indians from using Matagorda Island as a hiding place to stage attacks , La Bahía commandant Juan Cortés burned and cut brush around the point of crossing . No permanent colony was ever established on the island .

After the arrival of white settlers to the baytown of Hynesville in the 19th century , the Karankawa began to commit offenses against the settlers , including the unsanctioned slaughter of their livestock . As a result , the settlers engaged the Indians at the 1852 Battle of Hynes Bay , near the San Antonio Bay extension of Hynes Bay . The Karankawa were swiftly defeated , and the survivors agreed to never return ; finding refuge across the Rio Grande in Tamaulipas . A few years later , the Hynes extension began to fill with mud , leaving it shallow and hard to navigate . Reports from Hynesville suggest that alligators infested the bay , killing a few residents .

At the beginning of the 20th century , Preston R. Austin set out to build a new port on the western shore . He established the town of Austwell in 1911 , and quickly began dredging in 1914 to build a channel . In the early stages of development , the channel filled with mud and was abandoned . Meanwhile , on the eastern shore , the city of Seadrift , which had been established following the American Civil War , began to develop into a place of interest for fishing and shipping . The town , which was most likely named for floating debris swept ashore by the Guadalupe River , was incorporated in 1912 , and by 1914 had a population of 1 @, @ 250 . The growth subsided in 1919 , after a hurricane ravaged the area . In 1926 , only 321 lived in the town . The population slowly recovered , and had surpassed its original peak in 1990 , following a wave of Vietnamese refugees , who emigrated to the city after the Vietnam War . In 2000 , the city had 1 @, @ 352 residents .

= Features =

The land near the bay lies on the Texas Coastal Plain . It consists of grassy prairies , which support conifers and water @-@ tolerant hardwoods . Most of the surrounding land is used for agricultural purposes with the exception of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge , which is preserved for wildlife .

On average , the San Antonio Bay system is 2 meters (6 @. @ 6 ft) deep , and covers approximately 531 square kilometers (205 sq mi) . The system is made up of the bay itself and its extensions . The main extensions include : Espiritu Santo Bay , to the bay 's east ; Hynes Bay , to the northwest , and Guadalupe Bay due north .

Every second , approximately 116 cubic meters (31 @, @ 000 U.S. gal) of water flows into the bay . The exchange with the Gulf of Mexico occurs at Cedar Bayou and Pass Cavallo . As a result of the

seawater exchange , the bay 's salinity is 13 parts per thousand (ppt) , compared to the seawater average of 35 ppt . There is very little seawater exchange , with most of the bay 's waters coming from the freshwater flows of the converged San Antonio and Guadalupe rivers .

= = Ecosystem = =

A wide variety of wildlife can be found in and around San Antonio Bay . According to Texas Parks and Wildlife , the following fish have been caught in the bay : palmetto bass , striped bass , hardhead catfish , black drum , red drum , crevalle jack , southern kingfish , ladyfish , lefteye flounder , pinfish , spotted seatrout , and the sheepshead .

The shores along the bay , specifically the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge , are home to countless birds including the endangered whooping crane , pelicans , herons , egrets , roseate spoonbills , shorebirds , ducks , and geese . American alligators , collared peccaries , feral hogs , coyotes , bobcats , raccoon and white @-@ tailed deer as well as clams and crabs are included among the bay 's diverse wildlife . Several pelicans that had been rescued and cleaned after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill , were brought to the shore of San Antonio Bay in June 2010 .

= = Industry = =

Nearly detached from the Gulf of Mexico by barrier islands , San Antonio Bay does not support a large shipping industry . The only port of merit on the bay is Seadrift , where a shipping channel has been dredged to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway . Most inhabitants near the bay work at chemical , crab @-@ picking , and aluminum plants .

For centuries , oyster farming has been a mainstay of the surrounding economy . However , in December 2009 , commercial harvesting was suspended after the norovirus was discovered in several exported crops , resulting in a recall .