

## About the Refuge

Established in 1969, Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 565 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System — a network of lands set aside and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service specifically for wildlife. The area consists of 1,091 acres and is split by the Indian River Lagoon into two tracts: the Island Tract and the Mainland Tract.

The Island Tract features a 3.5 mile beach, the largest contiguous section of undeveloped beach in Southeastern Florida and one of the most productive sea turtle nesting areas in the Southeastern United States. The Mainland Tract includes a large remnant of sand pine scrub, hardwood hammock and about five miles of mangrove communities along the Indian River Lagoon. The Refuge is a sanctuary for nearly 40 species listed as either threatened, endangered or of special concern. It is a beautiful and unique place for walking nature trails, fishing in the surf or viewing wildlife.



## Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge

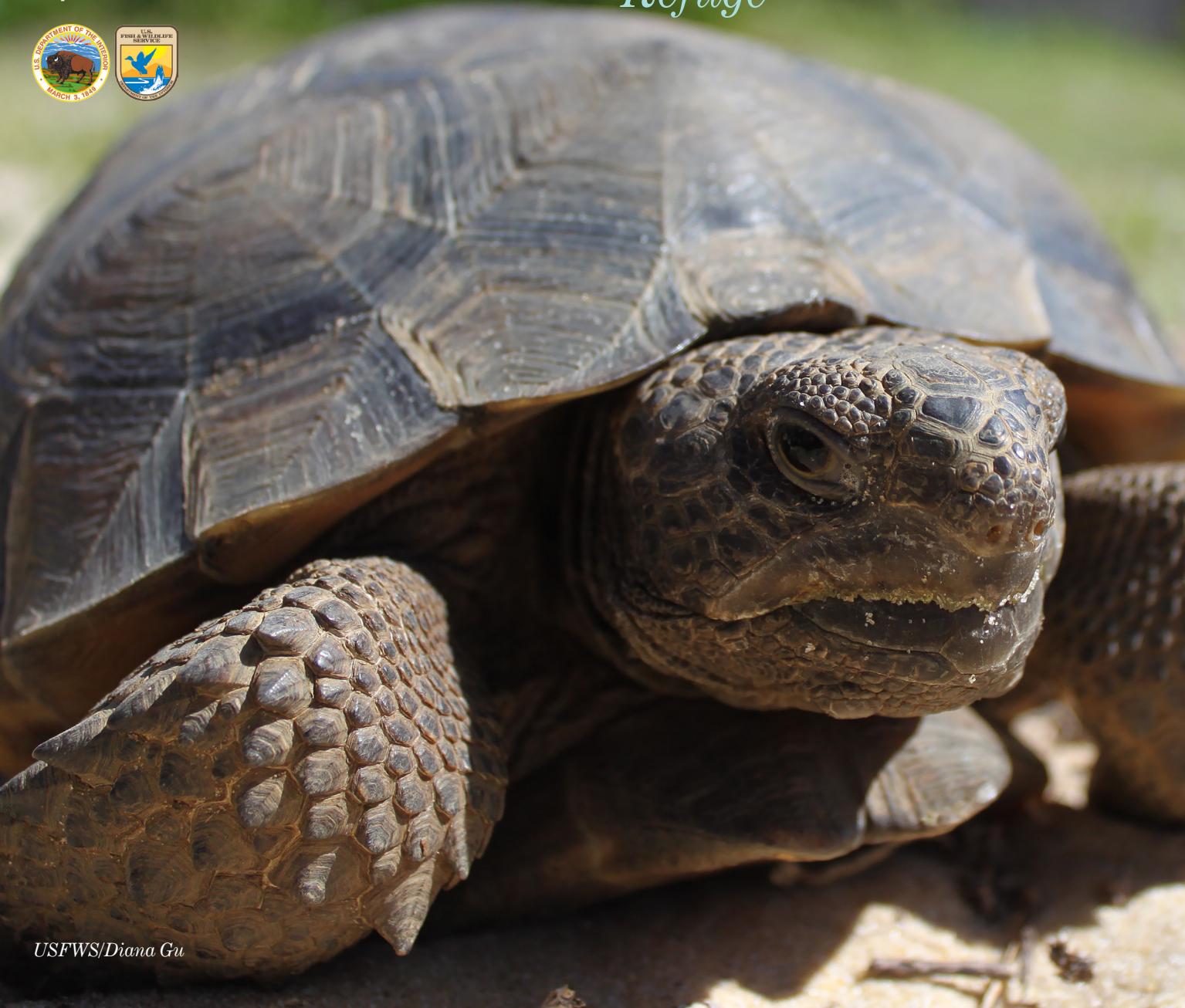
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
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# Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge



USFWS/Diana Gu

## Refuge Habitats

### Florida Sand Pine Scrub

Florida Sand Pine Scrub is a very rare habitat made up of dry, sandy ridges. To conserve water, plants have small tough, curled, hairy or waxy leaves and are dwarfed in size. These hardy plants are nutrient-rich sources of food for scrub animals. Gopher apples are a treat not only for gopher tortoises but also for raccoons, opossums and foxes. Birds, like blue jays and grackles, as well as mammals, munch on the acorns of myrtle oak. Prickly pear cacti produce fruits that are popular with catbirds, mockingbirds and gopher tortoises, which also eat the spiny pad!



### Indian River Lagoon

The Indian River Lagoon is the most biodiverse estuary in the U.S. and provides habitat for over 2,200 animals and 2,100 plants. In an estuary, salt water from the ocean mixes with fresh water from the inland and provides a breeding, staging and resting area for all kinds of wildlife. Seagrass beds flourish in the



lagoon and are used as cover or foraging areas by fish and the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin. The most common grass in the Indian River Lagoon is manatee grass, which is a staple in the diet of threatened West Indian manatees in the winter.



### Mangrove Forest

The mangrove forest along the shoreline of the Indian River Lagoon is vital to the health of the estuary. The roots of mangrove trees provide protected nursery areas for fish, crustaceans and shellfish. These nursery areas, in-turn, provide a food source for marine species such as snook, snapper, oysters and shrimp. The limbs of mangroves are also optimal roosting and nesting platforms for wading birds like the wood stork and great blue heron.



### Coastal Dunes

Coastal dunes have three zones: upper beach, foredune and coastal strand. The upper beach is closest to the ocean and is regularly disturbed by waves and tidal changes. The



Royal terns

foredune has plants like sea oats and railroad vine that can tolerate constant agitation from sand blown off the beach. The coastal strand has shrubs and trees such as sea grapes and saw palmetto that are often stunted due to the windblown salt and sand. The area between the upper beach and foredune is used as nesting grounds for shorebirds and sea turtles. The endangered leatherback and threatened green and loggerhead sea turtles nest on the Refuge every year. Some years, they can collectively produce over 3,000 nests!



Jessica Richards



Hardwood Hammock

A few of the hardwood hammock habitats (made up of hardwood tree species) on the Refuge grow on top of Native American shell middens. These are areas where tribes threw away shells and bones, which have created a calcium rich soil that helps support the hammock. The high humidity in these areas and dense cover under tropical trees provides the perfect habitat for a variety of wildlife such as neotropical migratory birds, land crabs and tree frogs.



Bobcat

Bradley Rosendorf

## Know Before You Go

### Free Visitor Center

The best place to start your visit is at the free Refuge Visitor Center where you can explore an exhibit room with live animals and interpretive displays, check out the gift shop or walk a short nature trail. The Visitor Center is operated by a non-profit partner of the Refuge, the Hobe Sound Nature Center, Inc. People of all ages can learn about the beauty of the unique Florida environments and participate in turtle walks, summer camps, evening forums and scrub tours.

**Hobe Sound Nature Center, Inc.**  
Phone: 772/546 2067  
[www.hobesoundnaturecenter.com](http://www.hobesoundnaturecenter.com)



### Refuge Hours

Visitor Center: Monday - Saturday, 9 am - 3 pm  
Refuge Trails and Beach: every day, sunrise to sunset

### Visitor Center Trails

A little over half a mile of sandy trails meander through dry ridges of sand pine scrub, pass beneath the dense canopy of tropical hardwood hammock and lead to a peaceful little beach along the Indian River Lagoon. There is also a short staircase leading directly to the Lagoon beach that makes it quick and easy to carry everything you need for a relaxing day at the beach. As you explore, you may even see a gopher tortoise munching on a blade of grass, an osprey bringing fish to its young or a scrub lizard scurrying across the trail.

### Island Tract Beach

Explore the 3.5 miles of coastal dune habitat on Jupiter Island. Enjoy the sunshine while fishing, sunbathing or just taking a nice walk in the soft sand. During your visit, you may see sanderlings, brown pelicans or royal terns.

### Peck Lake Beach Area

Take your boat, paddle board, kayak or canoe down the Indian River Lagoon and stop at the Peck Lake Beach Area. Often, you can see little blue herons and snowy egrets foraging along the water's edge or perhaps a manatee, dolphin or sea turtle swimming along the Intracoastal waterway. To get a taste of the ocean, pass through a short sandy trail to a scenic and peaceful section of the Refuge beach.

### Enjoy Your Visit

#### Come Prepared

As always in Florida, bring water, sunscreen, bug spray, hats and comfortable shoes when you visit!

### Hiking, Photography and Wildlife Observation

Explore a little over half a mile of sandy trails at the Visitor Center or enjoy the salty breeze as you walk along the 3.5 mile Atlantic Ocean beach. Stay in areas open to public use and on designated trails. Take only pictures and leave only footprints.

### Swimming

Take a dip in the Indian River Lagoon along the Mainland Tract or wade into the ocean on the Island Tract. Swim at your own risk (no lifeguards) and no nude sunbathing.

### Fishing

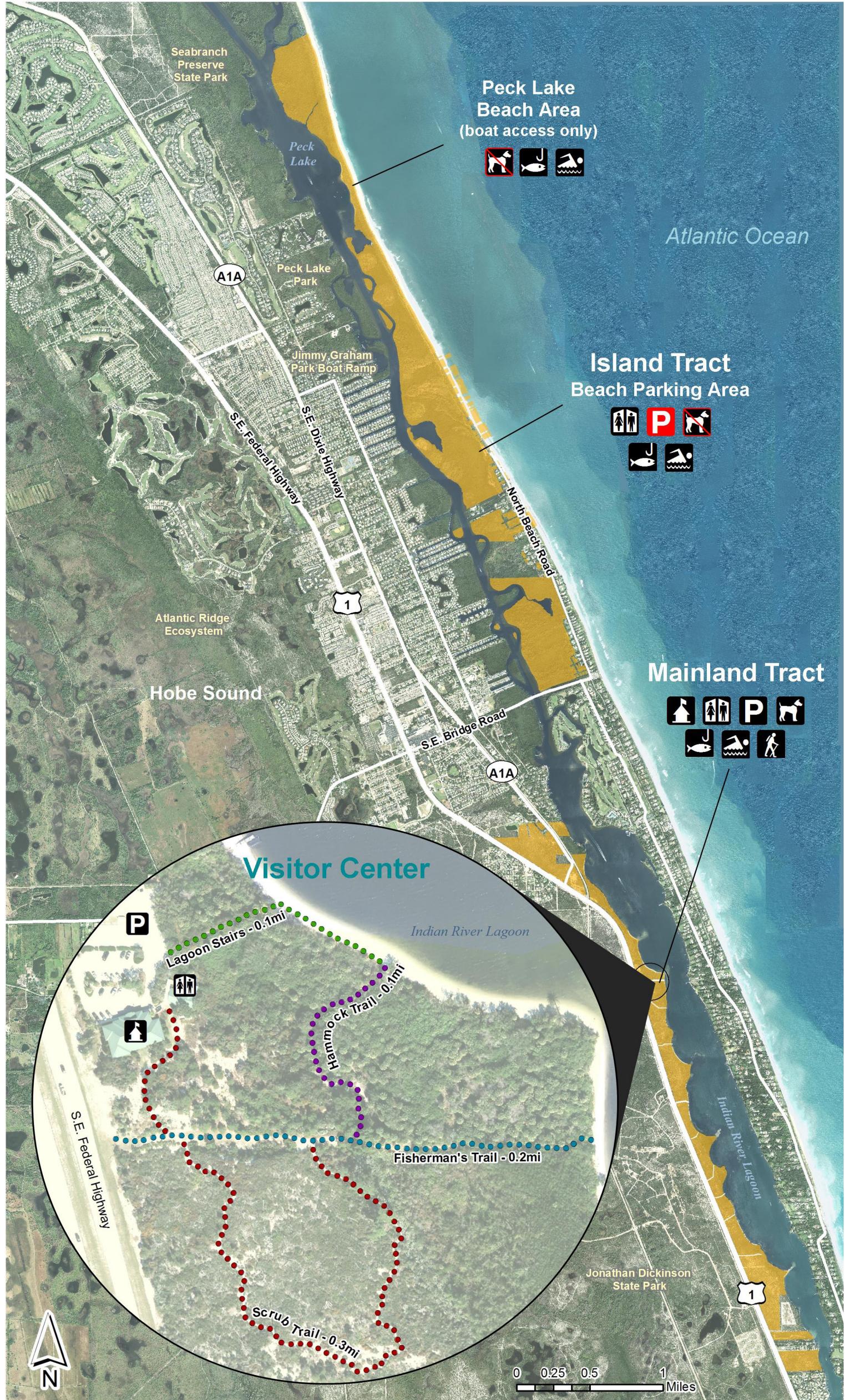
Follow one of multiple short trails on the Mainland Tract to fish off the water's edge along the Indian River Lagoon or surf fish in the ocean on the Island Tract. Fishing line receptacles are available at both locations. State regulations apply.

### Boating

Be aware of Manatee Protection Zones and beach or anchor offshore. Coast Guard and State regulations apply.

### Prohibited Activities

- Feeding, enticing or disturbing wildlife
- Taking of turtles, eggs or any wildlife or plants
- Release of any animals or plants
- Entry into areas posted as closed
- Metal detecting
- Hunting
- Aircraft (including drones)
- Camping
- Campfires
- Motorcycles, ATVs or motorized vehicles



#### Refuge Land

#### Pets

Well behaved, leashed dogs on the Mainland Tract only.

#### Visitor Center/Headquarters

#### No Pets

No pets of any kind allowed on the Island Tract or Peck Lake Beach Area.

#### Parking

#### Swimming

#### Fee Parking

Located at the end of N. Beach Road (daily fee required or purchase a Refuge or America the Beautiful Pass by cash/check only).

#### Restrooms

Island Tract has portable restrooms only.

#### Hiking

#### Fishing