

Ready to get away from the everyday hustle and bustle and reconnect with your wilder side? In Southwest Louisiana, you don't have to go far to find numerous habitats brimming with life. So what kinds of wildlife can you expect to see in Southwest Louisiana? Read on, and we'll tell you as well as show you key locations to get a closer look!



Many animals such as otters, nutria, muskrat, mink, wading and shorebirds can be found throughout the region, but differences in habitat make specific portions of Southwest Louisiana more well suited for certain species.

Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge's 16,000-acre freshwater impoundment, known as the Pool, supports several nesting colonies of wading and water birds, including the largest refuge wintering area among the national refuges. Additionally, a large population of alligators and furbearers such as mink, nutria and raccoon are also found on the refuge. Endangered species reported on the refuge include bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and Louisiana black bears.

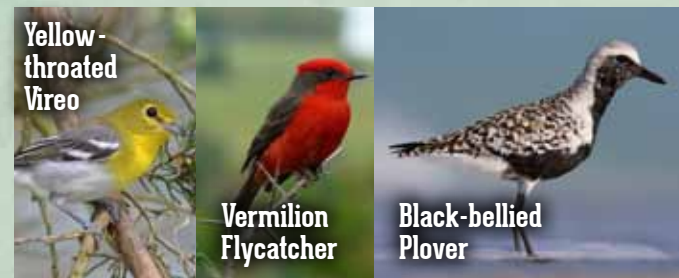
Sabine National Wildlife Refuge and Rockefeller Refuge are closer to the coast and influenced by brackish and salt waters; therefore, gulls, terns, pelicans, plovers, and other shore birds will be more prevalent in these areas as well as along the 26 miles of natural Gulf beaches.

Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge is one of the most biologically diverse wildlife areas in the nation. Aside from wintering waterfowl and migrant neotropical birds, common residents include nutria,

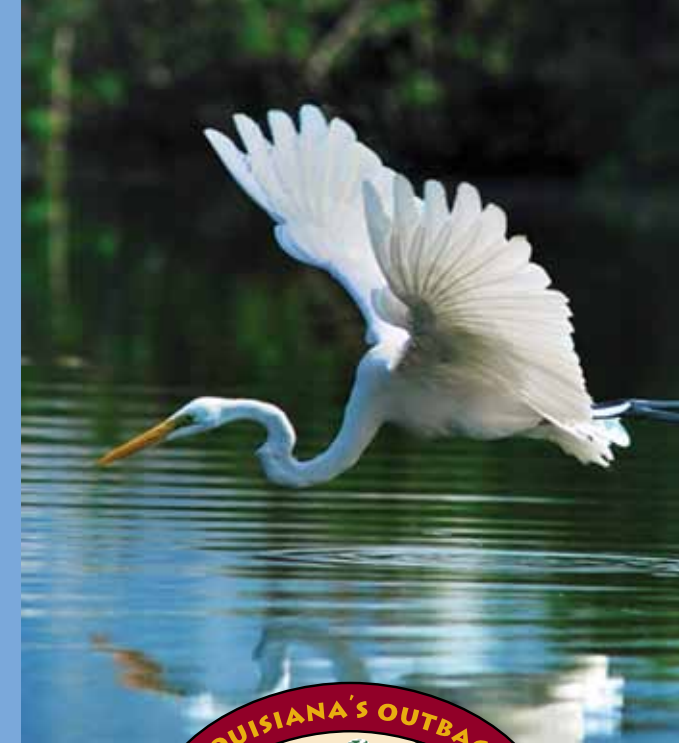
muskrats, rails, raccoons, minks, otters, opossums, white-tailed deer, and abundant alligators.

Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge features marshy areas which attract birds and alligators. With Southwest Louisiana's location at the convergence of two major flyways, this area sees vast amounts of migratory birds. Additionally, fur-bearing animals frequent this refuge as well as white-tailed deer. One of the best public viewing areas is Pintail Wildlife Drive.

Oak cheniers (named for the French word "chene," meaning oak) will be the best places to find song birds and neotropical migrants. These areas are scattered throughout the area, but there is a concentration of the habitat at the **Peveto Woods Bird and Butterfly Sanctuary** near the coast.



Oak cheniers are scattered throughout Southwest Louisiana.



For more information about outdoor experiences along the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road—such as birding, fishing, crabbing and wildlife viewing—visit CreoleNatureTrail.org.

Go to iTunes App Store or Android Market and search "Creole" to download the FREE Creole Nature Trail app for your smartphone or tablet, available in multiple languages.



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For complete information on Southwest Louisiana, stop by the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau's tourist information center located at 1205 N. Lakeshore Drive in Lake Charles or visit VisitLakeCharles.org.



Explore Southwest Louisiana's Wild Side



CreoleNatureTrail.org
Near Lake Charles, Louisiana

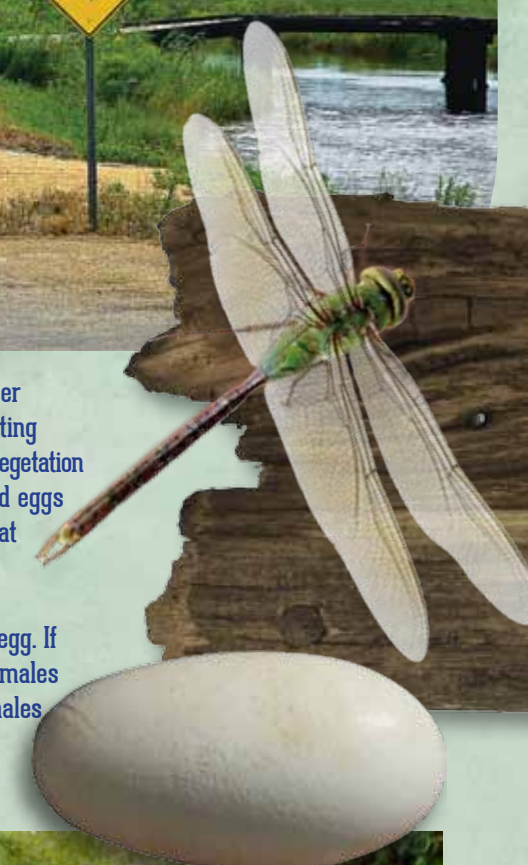


Alligator eggs picked up from the wild and hatched on farms produce alligators that grow much faster and are more robust than wild alligators of the same age.

The Creole Nature Trail All-American Road

The Creole Nature Trail All-American Road, known as *Louisiana's Outback*, passes through the equivalent of alligator "heaven"—vast freshwater marshes. There are many places to see alligators. They will usually be lying in the sun by the water or mostly submerged in the water with only their eyes above water level.

Alligator research conducted at Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge helped to understand mating habits: females build a nest of mud and vegetation above flood level, lay 20-40 goose-egg-sized eggs which hatch after about 65 days. The heat for incubation comes from the rotting vegetation - like a compost pile. The sex of the young is determined while in the egg. If the temperature is above 91-93 degrees, males develop, if it is below 85-86 degrees, females develop; between these temperatures either sex can develop.



The highest density of American Alligators is in the coastal wetlands of Louisiana's Chenier Plain.

