

History & Nature

During the Second Seminole War, the Hernandez-Capron Trail was built to link St. Augustine with Fort Pierce at St. Lucie. After the war, the new road allowed settlers to move into the Brevard/Indian River area. Ranchers used the road to move cattle until the 1970s.

Around 1889, the Herndon family settled this land. Their homestead was burned in the early 1940s. Sometime after 1895, the Carlton family built a home in the area. That was destroyed in the 1930s. Other families have built homesteads here, but none remain. The land has been used for growing citrus, ranching, turpentine and logging. The state began acquiring land in 1995. Today, the preserve totals almost 22,000 acres.

St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park protects the open grassy forests of longleaf pine that were once commonplace throughout Florida. The pine flatwoods form a backdrop for other biological communities, including cypress domes, scrubby flatwoods, scrub, sandhills and a beautiful strand swamp. These habitats are home to many native plants and animals, including more than 74 protected species.

Longleaf pine, wiregrass and saw palmetto dominate the landscape. A forest of red, black and white mangroves borders the St. Sebastian River. A number of rare plants, including several lilies, occur naturally. Wildlife found in this area of the park includes Florida scrub jays, red-cockaded woodpeckers, Bachman's sparrows, Eastern indigo snakes, bald eagles and gopher tortoises.

Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park

1000 Buffer Preserve Drive
Fellsmere, Florida 32948
(321) 953-5005

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- Park hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year. Call for visitor center hours.
- All plants, animals and property are protected.
- Pets must be kept on a hand-held leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the visitor center.
- For camping information and reservations, call (321) 953-5005 or (321) 953-5004.
- Horses must have proof of a negative Coggins test.
- For information about joining the park's citizen support organization, visit <http://www.nbbd.com/npr/cpa/> or call (321) 953-5004.
- 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 administration office.

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St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park

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Wildlife Haven along the St. Sebastian River



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St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park is part of the **Great Florida Birding Trail**. Many species of birds use the preserve during migration, including swallow-tailed kites, hawks, hummingbirds and robins. The most popular birds are red-cockaded woodpeckers, Florida scrub jays, Bachman's sparrows, sandhill cranes, wood storks, southern bald eagles and American kestrels. Stop by the **Visitor Center** for bird lists, trail maps and exhibits about the park.

West Indian manatees gather in the C54 canal from November through March. Other **wildlife viewing** includes birds, deer, coyotes, bobcats, wild turkeys, eastern indigo snakes and gopher tortoises.

Photographers, bird-watchers and nature enthusiasts can **explore** up to 60 miles of wilderness trails on foot, fat-tire bicycle or horseback.

Canoeing and boating on the St. Sebastian River are popular activities. Launching facilities are available outside the preserve. **Fishing** catches in the brackish waters of the St. Sebastian River include tarpon, snook, bass and mullet.

Enjoy a **picnic** at one of the three picnic areas within the park. Facilities include covered pavilions, picnic tables and grills.

Six primitive, hike-in, tent camping only areas are available by reservation. Two sites are located on the north side and four on the south side. All sites are primitive with no potable water, electric or restroom facilities and "leave no trace" ethics apply. Two equestrian camp areas can accommodate groups up to 20 people and include facilities such as paddocks, non-potable water for horses and a pitcher pump. A campfire ring and benches are provided at all areas. Please call (321) 953-5005 to make reservations.



Directions

The north entrance for the visitor center and Manatee Vista is off Babcock Street (County Road 507) just north of the C-54 Canal. Exit I-95 at County Road 514 to reach County Road 507. The south entrance is off Fellsmere Road (County Road 512) 1.8 miles east of I-95.