

VENICE AREA AUDUBON ROOKERY

4006 S. Tamiami Trail, Venice

Park Hours: 6 a.m. to Sunset



WELCOME!

The Venice Area Audubon Rookery is well known to bird photographers. The rookery island's deep lake is small enough so that from the shaded pavilion benches you hardly need binoculars for a clear view of the birds. Invasive plants have been replaced by Florida-friendly vegetation so you can easily walk around the lake and watch bird activity on all sides of the island. The unpaved path around the lake is approximately 0.3 miles or a leisurely 15-minute walk.

During nesting months (December-May), daytime activity includes birds busily building or enhancing nests, courting, incubating eggs and raising chicks. Nesting season is busy but the rookery has bird visitors throughout the year. Optimal times to see or photograph the most birds are early morning or late afternoon.

AMERICAN ALLIGATOR

The southeastern U.S. is the only place in the world where alligators exist naturally. They are an important part of Florida's aquatic ecosystems. Alligators may be present in all bodies of fresh water and reside in the lake at Venice Area Audubon Rookery. Alligators patrol the lake, keeping mammalian predators from preying on the island's birds.

Learn how to keep alligators and visitors safe by following these tips:

- Do not approach or disturb alligators. Alligators can perceive movements as threatening, so stop until the alligator has moved back into the lake or turn around and walk in the opposite direction if you see one.
- Do not feed alligators.
- Be aware of baby alligators. Female alligators are never far from their hatchlings.



FOR YOUR SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF THE PARK

- Leave natural features, plants and animals undisturbed.
- Pack it in, pack it out. Please do not litter.
- Take valuables with you and lock your vehicle.
- Sarasota Sheriff's Office:
Emergency: **911**
Non-emergency: **941-316-1201** (report crime or incident)



Nature center

Rookery

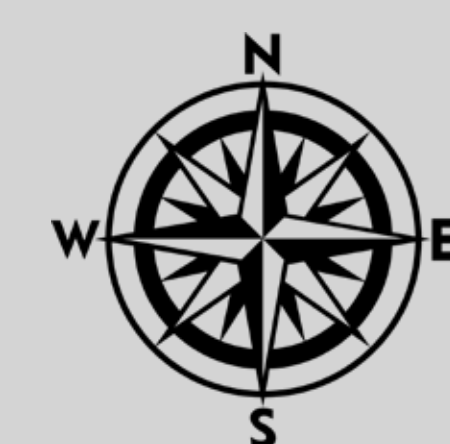
Boundary

Parking

Viewing area

Trail - unpaved

Picnic shelter



0 20 40 80 Feet

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ANHINGA

Sometimes called snakebird, darter or water turkey, the anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) is a water bird of the warmer parts of North and South America. The average body length is 35 inches. The anhinga is a member of the darter family Anhingidae. The anhinga's feathers are not waterproofed by oils like those of ducks and can get waterlogged. When necessary, the anhinga will dry out its wings and feathers.



Anhinga

GREAT BLUE HERON

The great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*), is a wading bird in the heron family Ardeidae and are common over most of North and Central America. It is the largest North American heron. The head to tail length can range from 36-54 inches. Great blue herons build a bulky stick nest, and the female lays three to six pale blue eggs. One brood is raised each year.



Great blue heron

GREAT EGRET

Great egret (*Ardea alba*), also known as the great white egret, white heron or common egret, is a wading egret, found in most of the tropical and warmer temperate parts of the world. The great egret is a large bird with all white plumage, and it is only slightly smaller than the great blue. In 1953, the great egret in flight was chosen as the symbol of the National Audubon Society. The great egret can have multiple broods per year.



Great egret

BAT HOUSES

Watching hundreds of bats emerge from their houses at the Venice Area Audubon Rookery has become a popular evening activity. Bat houses are located just south of the rookery pond. Bats usually emerge within 10 minutes of sunset. The most common bat found at this location, the Brazilian free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) roosts in large colonies, can fly at speeds up to 60 miles per hour and heights up to 10,000 feet. They may travel up to 50 miles away from their roost to snack on thousands of insects every night. Other species may include the evening bat (*Nycticeius humeralis*), tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), and possibly the endangered Florida bonneted bat (*Eumops floridanus*).



Brazilian free-tailed bat
(Photo courtesy of Darrel Peters)

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PARKS

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Mission: To provide clean, safe and inclusive parks with diverse opportunities for all.



Sarasota County