



Gulf Islands Guide



The Lifeblood of the Live Oak

The anguish and devastation faced by residents of Pensacola after Hurricane Ivan on September 16th, 2004, would have been far worse had it not been for the protection of trees. Live oaks and other durable trees were barriers that helped lessen the per hour winds and 10-16 foot storm surges of acted as safeguards to provide innumerable benefits; life itself.



According to the US Department of Agriculture, "an acre of forest absorbs 6 tons of carbon dioxide and puts out 4 tons of oxygen meeting the annual needs of 18 people." Trees also protect against erosion by blocking sediments and runoff from entering into streams thereby improving water quality. According to a study conducted by the University of Illinois, less violence occurs in public housing areas that are surrounded by trees.

The live oak is a symbol of life and intrigue used in novels, artwork and as an integral part of this park. In 1828, President Adams set aside approximately 1400 acres of trees as the Naval Live Oaks Reservation. Today, the country's first tree farm is part of Gulf Islands National Seashore and remains a natural oasis parallel to a congested highway. Although some of the live oaks were destroyed by the hurricane, many remain. Their curving branches appear as arms in a gesture of protection that can last for over hundreds of years. Visitors can see these stately trees at the Naval Live Oaks Area in Florida and Davis Bayou in Mississippi.

Thank you for coming to Gulf Islands National Seashore. Hurricane Ivan changed the way this Seashore and community look. (See pages 2-3.) Your safety and the protection of park resources are our concerns so we ask that you give attention to your surroundings and the repair work in progress. For up-to-date information on all facilities go on line to www.nps.gov/guis and click on the Hurricane Ivan Link at the bottom left hand corner.

Jerry Eubanks, Superintendent

Park Information

FL 850-934-2600
MS 228-875-9057
www.nps.gov/guis

EMERGENCY

Dial 911
FL-Cell *55

International Visitors

Bienvenidos a Islas del Golfo Nacional. Folletos disponibles en Centro Visitantes.

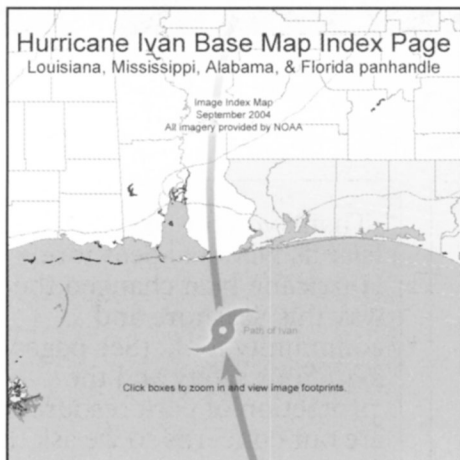
Un renseignement en francais sont disponibles aux centres des visiteurs dans le parc.

Willkommen zu unserem Nationalpark und seinen prachtvollen Inseln am Golf von Mexico. Details in Deutsch im Besuchszentrum zu erhalten.

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Hurricane Ivan



At 2:00 a.m. in the morning, on September 16, 2004, Hurricane Ivan struck Pensacola. In darkness, with winds at 130 m.p.h., the storm delivered a 10-16 foot storm surge destroying property and disrupting the lives of many in its path. Although the offshore islands took the brunt of the storm, new growth has sprouted from many plants. Instead of caving into the trauma of this catastrophic event many residents are following this lead and sprouting new life as we rebuild.

Thank you for your patience.



The hurricane was so powerful and unrelenting that it breached Santa Rosa Island. Access to this area is by boat only and visitors may use the beaches east of the Ranger Station.



Many who endured the wrath of Ivan felt that time stood still as captured by this clock surrounded by debris in the Naval Live Oaks Area. The clock was one of the smaller items that washed ashore in a list that includes kayaks, hot tubs, and ice machines.



The Ranger Station received quite a bit of damage to the exterior as illustrated by this photograph. Information will be offered to camping enthusiasts at this ranger station once again when the Fort Pickens Area is reopened to the public.



A picture of a hot shot crew. These crews fight fires throughout the country, but also are on call during emergency situations. Crews from around the country assisted Gulf Islands with recovery efforts after Hurricane Ivan struck.

Hurricane Ivan



Fort Pickens sustained flooding damage, but this structure built from 1829-1834, with 21.5 million bricks, still stands. Pickens is part of an elaborate third system fortification constructed after the British devastated America's seaports in the War of 1812.



There were wildlife casualties after Ivan hit. This raccoon was found by a ranger's house near the Fort Pickens fishing pier.



A favorite hangout among local fishermen and out-of-state tourists, only the skeletal design of the fishing pier remained after Hurricane Ivan.



Building 5, where the Fort Pickens Museum and rangers' offices were located, was pushed off its foundation and split in half by the storm surge coupled with 130 mile per hour winds.



Fort Massachusetts, on West Ship Island in Mississippi, sustained flooding damage from Hurricane Ivan. It is now, as are all other Mississippi sites, open to the public.



Fort Pickens Area historic structures were submerged in six feet of seawater for days.

Visitor Information

Visitor Centers

Florida

Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center

(850) 934-2600

Open daily . . . 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Fort Barrancas Visitor Center

(850) 455-5167

Open daily . . . March-Oct. 9:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Nov.-Feb. 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

* *Fort Barrancas guided tour daily 2:00 p.m.*

* *Advanced Redoubt guided tour,
Saturdays, 11:00 a.m.*

*For more information on Florida Interpretive
activities call (850) 934-2600.*

Fort Pickens Visitor Center

Temporarily closed due to Hurricane Ivan.

Mississippi

William M. Colmer Visitor Center

(228) 875-9057

Open daily . . . 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Pets

Pets must not be left unattended in vehicles on warm days. They are permitted in the campgrounds, along roads, in parking areas, and must be on a leash of 6 feet or less. They are not allowed on Florida beaches or in any structure. Pet owners are required to pick up after their pets and dispose of waste properly.



Entrance Fees - Florida Only

Single Vehicle Pass \$8.00
(Valid for 7 days)

Single Person Entry \$3.00
(Foot, bicycle, motorcycle for 7 days)

Gulf Islands Park Pass \$25.00
(Valid 1 year from month of purchase)

National Parks Pass \$50.00
(Valid 1 year from month of purchase)

Night Owl Permit \$30.00
(Extends hour-of-access for single private
vehicle. Requires an annual pass bearing a
matching signature to the permit. Limit two
signatures.)

Commercial Vehicles:

Vehicles (1-6 passengers) \$25.00
(plus \$3.00 per person)

Vans and Minibuses (7-25 passengers) . . \$40.00

Motor Coaches(26+ passengers) \$100.00

Golden Age, Golden Access, Golden Eagle
Passports are also valid. For \$15.00 National
Parks Pass may be upgraded to Golden Eagle.

Hiking

Some of the most beautiful
barrier island beaches and
maritime forests await those
who are willing to take a hike.
The park boasts several trails
that provide opportunities from a short
ten-minute stroll to several days of foot travel.
Maps are available at the park visitor centers.



Florida - Florida National Scenic Trail,
Woodland, and Andrew Jackson.
Mississippi - Nature's Way Trail.

Bicycling

Florida law requires riders age 16 or younger
to wear a helmet. Bicycles are allowed
on roadways and multi-use paths. They are
not allowed on nature trails, except for
the Florida National Scenic Trail. Observe all
traffic regulations. Keep to the right side of
the road and ride in single file.

Camping



(Florida-Temporarily closed due to Hurricane Ivan)

The Fort Pickens Campground in Florida operates primarily on a reservation system. Sites may be available on a first-served basis if all of them have not been reserved for the day. To reserve a site, call 1-800-365-2267 (enter first 3 letters of the park "GUL") or on the internet at <http://reservations.nps.gov>



Mississippi - Davis Bayou Campground (Open)

\$16.00 per night (electric)
(\$8.00 with Golden Age or Golden Access Pass)
\$14.00 per night (non-electric)
(\$7.00 with Golden Age or Golden Access Pass)

Primitive Camping

Mississippi - primitive camping is permitted on Horn, Petit Bois, Cat and East Ship islands.

Call (228) 875-9057 ext. 114.

Fort Pickens Campground (Temporarily closed)

\$20.00 per night - 200 sites
(\$10.00 with Golden Age or Golden Access Pass)

Group Camping: 10-25 people \$20 per night
26-40 people: \$30 per night

FL-Naval Live Oaks (Youth groups only)

MS-Davis Bayou, (228) 875-3962

Pavilion Reservations

Some pavilions may be reserved for exclusive use. Groups over 100 people or the use of special equipment such as generators, music systems, and public address systems require a Special Use Permit.

Florida (850) 934-2622
Naval Live Oaks Group Area
Pavilion \$50
Call (800) 365-2267 for:
Fort Pickens:
• Battery Worth (A or B) \$30



Mississippi (228) 875-3962

1-99 people: \$25
100 plus: \$100

- Davis Bayou Pavilion #1
- Davis Bayou Pavilion #3
- Davis Bayou Pavilion #5

Fires and Firewood

Campfires are permitted in the provided grills of the campgrounds and picnic areas. Dead wood which has already fallen to the ground may be collected for campfires in Fort Pickens campground, Naval Live Oaks Group area and the Davis Bayou campground.

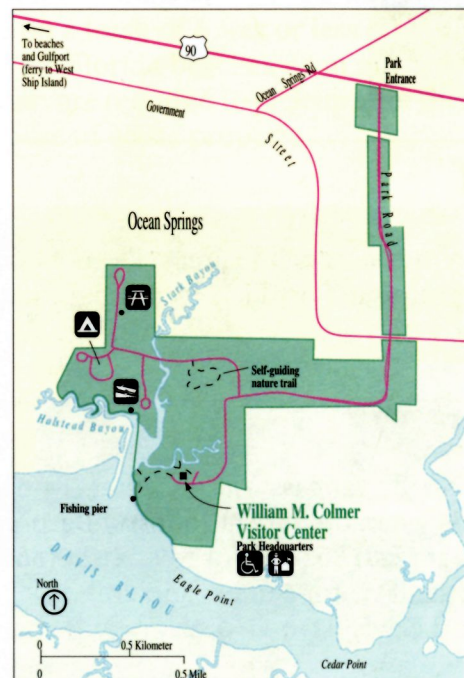
Accessibility



Beach wheelchairs: In Florida, call the Fort Barrancas Visitor Center (850) 455-5167. Otherwise, contact the lifeguards when on duty at Johnson Beach. In Mississippi, call Ship Island Excursions at (228) 864-1014 or toll free at (866) 466-7386. **Orientation films** are available at all visitor centers and are closed-caption at Naval Live Oaks (FL) and Davis Bayou (MS).



Mississippi District Map



Safety in the Water Observe the Warning Flags

- Red Flag:** Dangerous surf and strong rip currents. Swimming is not advised.
- Yellow Flag:** High surf and possible currents. Use caution when entering the water.
- Green Flag:** Calm water. No high surf or strong currents.

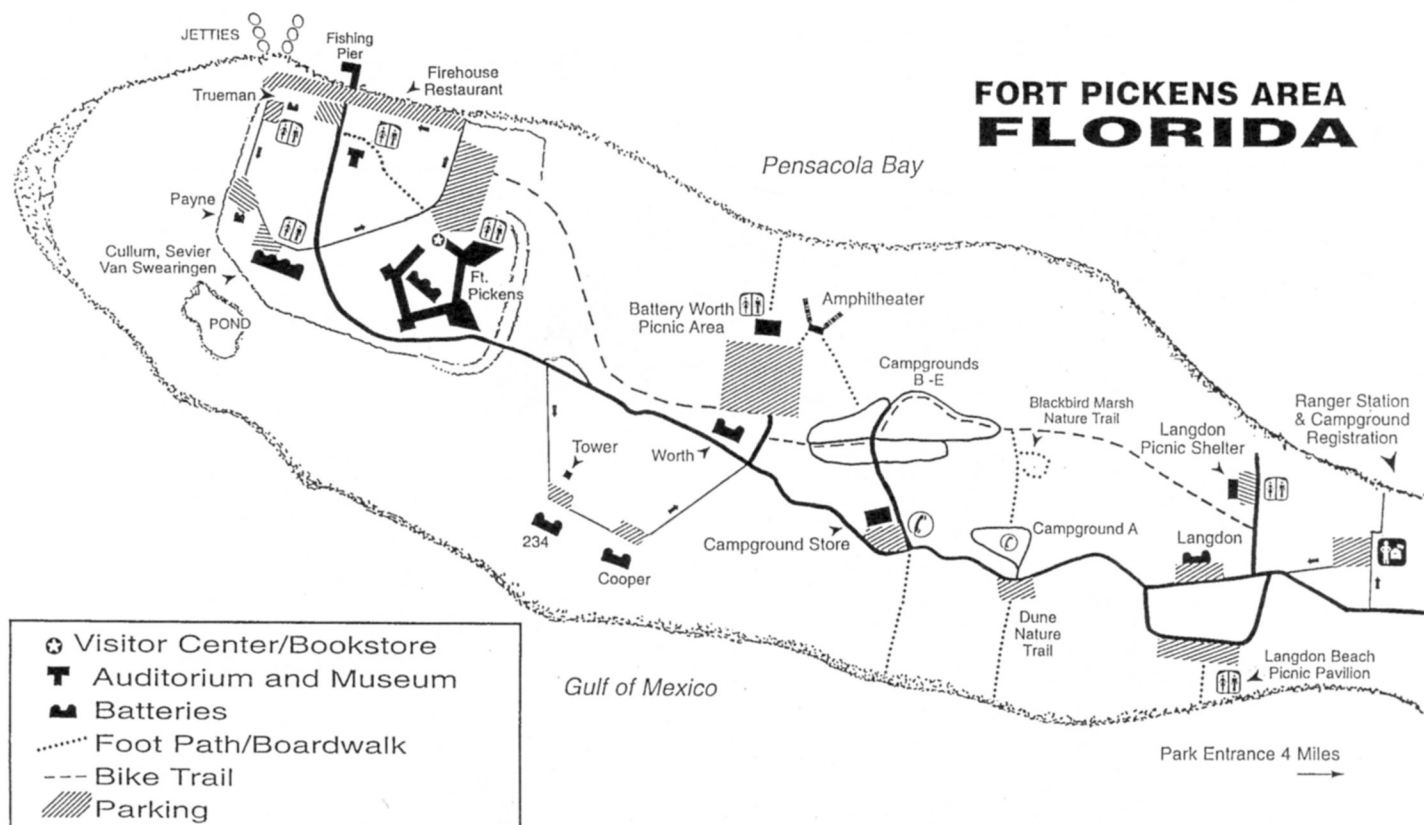
Surf Conditions in Florida call (850) 932-SURF (7873).

Rip currents are strong river-like currents moving away from the shore. Stay calm. Wave for assistance. Don't swim against the current. Swim parallel to shore.



Exploring Florida

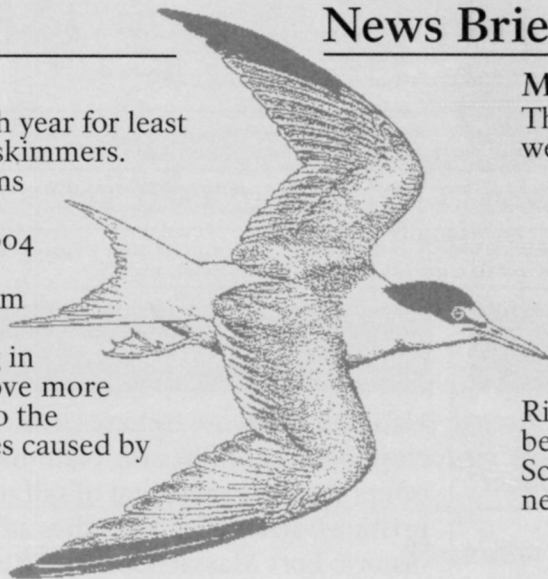
Trail Name	Trail Length	Comments
Blackbird Marsh Trail (Fort Pickens Area)	.5 mile	Crosses wetlands and relic dune communities (Temporarily closed due to Hurricane Ivan)  
Florida National Scenic Trail (Fort Pickens Area)	28.2 miles	Starts the 1300-mile trail to Big Cypress National Preserve  
Brackenridge Nature Trail (Naval Live Oaks Area)	.8 mile	Information on historic uses of live oak trees in shipbuilding  
Andrew Jackson Trail (Naval Live Oaks Area)	2.4 miles	Follows historic St. Augustine - Pensacola Road  
Multi-use Path (Naval Live Oaks Area)	2.0 miles	Asphalt trail for hikers, cyclists and roller blades   
Perdido Key Discovery Trail	.25 mile	Crosses a saltmarsh, maritime forest and rolling dunes (Temporarily closed due to Hurricane Ivan)  
Trench Trail (Fort Barrancas Area)	.5 mile	Connects Ft. Barrancas to the Advanced Redoubt 



National Seashore News Briefs

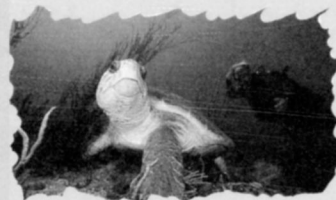
Shorebirds

2004 was a tough year for least terns and black skimmers. Nesting problems encountered by shorebirds in 2004 were caused by interruption from wildlife and visitors. Nesting in 2005 should prove more successful due to the open flat beaches caused by Hurricane Ivan.



Marine turtles

There were 24 nests in 2004. Twenty-two were loggerheads and two were Kemp's



Ridley. Turtle nesting at Gulf Islands is below average for the 4th consecutive year. Scientists are concerned with a decrease in nesting throughout the southeast.

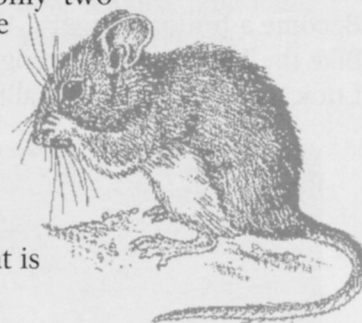
Seagrass Bed Closures

Both coves behind Perdido Key continue to be closed to vessels with combustible engines. Recent surveys indicate most boaters are complying with the closure, and they are using paddles or electric motors in the coves.



Perdido Key Beach Mouse

Ivan leveled most of the island and now mice are located in only two locations in the park at Perdido Key. As the dunes recover, more habitat will again be available for the mice. However, right now habitat is limited.



Personal Watercraft (PWC)

A proposed regulation to allow personal watercraft to operate within park boundaries, with certain restrictions, is to be published in the Federal Register this spring for a 60 day public comment period. Until a final rule is adopted, use of personal watercraft is not allowed. For up-to-date information check our website at www.nps.gov/guis.



Davis Bayou Trail

The long awaited one mile trail from the Davis Bayou Visitor Center to the Group Camping Area will officially open on June 4th in time for National Trails Day.



General Management Plan (GMP)

The Seashore continues to plan for the future through public comment regarding the GMP. NPS planners and Seashore staff met in the winter to develop potential management concepts (alternatives) that will be published this summer for public remarks.

Exploring Mississippi

Trail Name	Trail Length	Comments
William M. Colmer Visitor Center Trails	500 yards	Provides the best views of Davis Bayou; ends overlooking the Mississippi Sound.  
Nature's Way Trail	.5 mile loop	Explore the southern maritime forest  
Live Oaks Bicycling Route	15 miles	Winds along roads in the park (2 miles) and the adjacent community of Ocean Springs (13 miles) 
Davis Bayou Trail (Opens June 4th)	1 mile	Provides a safe route from the visitor center to the picnic areas with links to the C C C Overlook and Nature's Way Trails. 
C C C Overlook Trail (Opens June 4th)	.2 mile	Follows a wooded section of the old Civilian Conservation Corps roadbed to a grand overlook of the salt marsh. 

What is there to do here?

Do you have a half-day or less . . .

- View orientation films at the William M. Colmer Visitor Center
- Enjoy visitor center exhibits on the natural and cultural history of the park
- Walk one of several short trails
- Enjoy a picnic lunch by the bayou
- Fish or throw a cast net off the fishing pier
- Become a Junior Ranger
- Bike the Live Oaks Bicycling Route
- Look for alligators in the alligator pond



. . .or a full day or more?

- Take the ferry to West Ship Island March-October and enjoy a beach day on a remote barrier island.
- Take your own boat or charter a vessel and travel to Petit Bois, Horn, East Ship or Cat Islands and enjoy primitive camping



Educational Programs

National Parks are America's most exciting classrooms. Gulf Islands National Seashore offers the diverse habitat of salt marshes, pristine barrier island beaches and tours of historic Fort Massachusetts as a unique learning opportunity for children of all ages.



Ranger-led programs are offered year-round at Davis Bayou in Ocean Springs and on West Ship Island. March-October educators can choose from our Marsh Discovery Walk where students can explore the diversity of a marsh habitat and learn about the adaptations of its plants and animals or head out to West Ship Island for a fascinating look at the unique history of Fort Massachusetts. Other programs may be available.

I.S.L.A.N.D and M.A.R.S.H., our self-guided environmental education booklets, are also available for educators interested in introducing their students to the geography and ecology of barrier islands and coastal marshes found at Gulf Islands National Seashore.

To receive more information or arrange your visit, call (228) 875-9057 extension 106.

Ship Island Excursions, MS



Day Trips to Ship Island and Fort Massachusetts Mississippi

Pan Isles, Inc. National Park Concessionaire

One hour passenger ferryboat service to Ship Island departs from the Gulfport, Mississippi Yacht Harbor located at the intersection of U.S. Highways 49 and 90.

Spring March 5 - May 8

March 25 (Good Friday)
boat departs 9:00 a.m.,
12 noon, and 3:30 p.m.

Weekdays

Departs Gulfport 9:00 a.m.
Departs Ship Island at 2:30 p.m.

Weekends

Departs Gulfport 9:00 a.m.,
12 noon, and 3:30 p.m.*
(*Boat ride only)
Departs Ship Island
10:00 a.m., 2:30 and 5:00 p.m.

Summer May 9 - August 19

May 30 (Memorial Day)
boat departs 9:00 a.m.,
12 noon, and 3:30 p.m.
July 4th boat departs
9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12 noon and
2:30 p.m.

Weekdays

Departs Gulfport 9:00 a.m.,
12 noon, and 3:30 p.m.
Departs Ship Island
10:00 a.m., 2:30 and 5:00 p.m.

Weekends

Departs Gulfport 9:00 a.m.,
10:30 a.m., 12 noon, 2:30 and
3:30 p.m.* (*Boat ride only)
Departs Ship Island
10:00 a.m., 1:00, 2:30, 4:00 and
5:00 p.m.

Fall August 20 - October 30

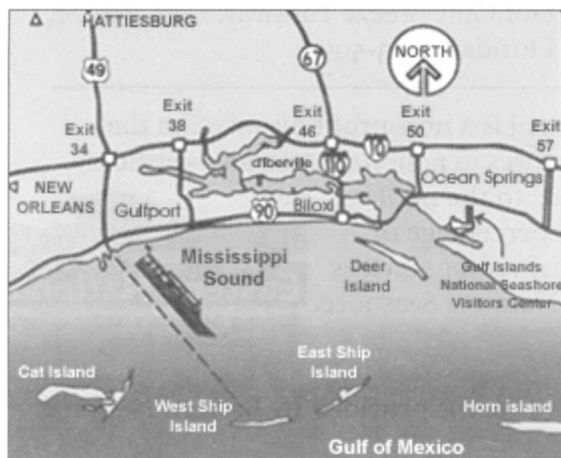
September 5th (Labor Day)
boat departs 9:00 a.m.,
12 noon and 3:30 p.m.

Weekdays

Departs Gulfport 9:00 a.m.
Departs West Ship Island
at 2:30 p.m.

Weekends

Departs Gulfport 9:00 a.m.,
12 noon, and 3:30 p.m.*
(* Boat ride only)
Departs West Ship Island
10:00 a.m., 2:30 and 5:00 p.m.



For information on a complete arrival and
departure schedule please call

1-866-466-7386

or

1-228-864-1014

www.msshipisland.com

Round Trip \$20.00

Children (ages 3-10) \$10.00

Seniors (ages 62+) & Military (active ID) \$18.00

A minimum number of 30 tickets must be sold for
each cruise, if not the cruise will be cancelled and
passengers will receive a refund.

Safety



Lifeguarded Beaches

ALL BEACH OPENINGS ARE TENTATIVE.

Mississippi - Ship Island
Memorial Day weekend-
Labor Day weekend

Florida - Perdido Key
April 1-September 5

Being Prepared at Gulf Islands

Bringing a few extra items to the Seashore can enhance your visit:

- Wear sunglasses.
- Use a sun screen lotion with a SPF rating of 30 or higher.
- Carry a flashlight with you while visiting the historic forts that have dark corridors.
- Bring a plastic bottle of vinegar to soothe the pain from contact with a jellyfish.

What to do in an Emergency

If you have a cell phone call park dispatch at (850) 916-3010 or *55 in Florida and 911 in Mississippi or contact an employee in the field. During business hours go the Visitor Centers.

Remember

- Do not swim at dawn, dusk, or night; these are prime feeding times for sharks.
- Do not swim in hazardous surf conditions.
- Use insect repellent when mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk.
- Do not pick plants or harass animals in the Seashore, and stay on open beaches and marked trails.
- Forts were not designed for comfort or safety. Use caution when exploring them.
- Do not leave anything valuable in your car.
- Pets and glass containers are not allowed on the beach.
- During thunderstorms move inside to a building or vehicle. If swimming or fishing, get out of the water immediately.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gulf Islands National Seashore
Superintendent
1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563-5000

Phone
(850) 934-2600

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www.nps.gov/guis

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



Volunteers-in-Parks

V.I.P.'s share their talents, skills and interests with the National Park Service, paying one of the highest compliments possible by offering a most valued possession-their time. For information on volunteer opportunities in this park write to: Volunteer Coordinator, 1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Gulf Breeze, Florida 32563-5000.

Eastern National is a non-profit organization that operates bookstores in national parks and seashores, providing service to the public, and returning a percentage of proceeds to assist visitor services at Gulf Islands National Seashore.



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