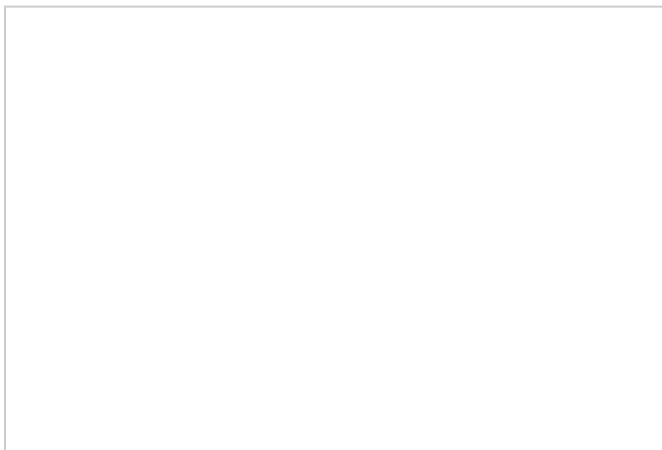




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Creole Nature Trail



From picturesque prairies and coastal marshlands to the sunbaked beaches of Louisiana's Gulf Coast, there's no better place for outdoor adventure in the Bayou State than the [Creole Nature Trail All-American Road](#). Stretching along 26 miles of scenic shoreline south of Lake Charles, past scenic lakes and through three national wildlife refuges, the trail offers an all-in-one route to world-class birding, crabbing, fishing, shelling, and wildlife watching. When you're ready for your next great escape to nature in Louisiana, follow the Creole Nature Trail.

Your adventure begins at the Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point, where you'll get a crash course in the area's natural wonders and the state's unique culture through an array of creative exhibits. Get to know the

region's flora and fauna as you learn how to spot alligators and migrating birds, then let your mouth water as you breathe in the aromas of Cajun/Creole cuisine before you "play along" with a zydeco band.

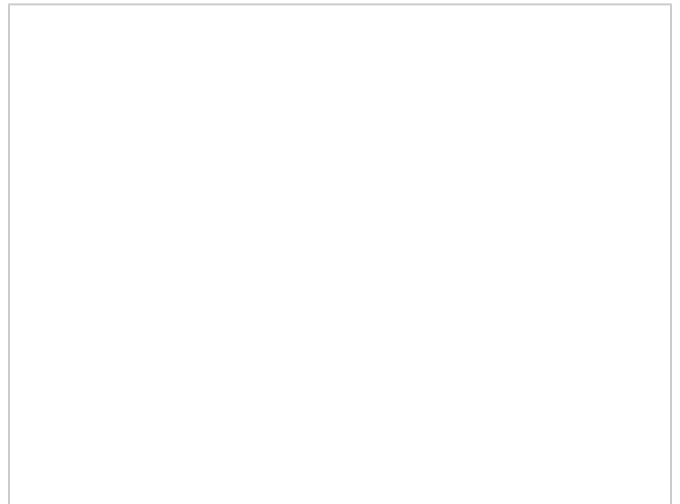
The Adventure Point is in Sulphur, the gateway to the Creole Nature Trail. Head south along Highway 27 until you reach the town of Hackberry, a quaint village that resides between Black Lake and Calcasieu Lake on the outer reaches of the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge. Covering 125,000 acres, the refuge is a major wintering spot for waterfowl in the Mississippi Flyway, and it hosts neotropical songbirds that pass through on their seasonal migrations. More than 250 species of birds can be found here throughout the year, along with a multitude of other kinds of animals, including alligators, armadillos, coyotes, river otters, and bobcats.

Continue your journey south and you'll find yourself in Holly Beach. Listen to the crashing waves of the Gulf of Mexico as you wander along secluded beaches covered in impressive shells. What makes this area one of the best places to go [shelling in Louisiana](#)? It sits west of the Mississippi Delta, and the gulf's southeast tidal flow deposits an impressive array of shells on the shoreline. Take your time and you'll pass all manner of whelks, cockles, angel wings, coquinas, and periwinkles, to name a few. Pick out a few of your favorites and you can take them home with you!

Follow the trail west to reach Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge, one of the country's most biologically diverse wildlife areas that also has one of the highest alligator nesting densities in the nation. Double back to head north on LA 27 from Oak Grove, a route that takes you through the Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. Look out your window and you'll notice the emergence of prairie lands and rice fields. Don't miss a cruise on the Pintail Wildlife Drive, a three-mile tour that provides some spectacular wildlife viewing.

Driving north takes you to a fork in the road. West takes you to Lake Charles, while east on LA 14 affords an escape to the Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge. Known for the Lacassine Pool, a 16,000-acre impoundment that provides some of Louisiana's best bass fishing, the refuge is an idyllic destination for watching neotropical songbirds during the migration seasons. Spring and fall often bring vireos, tanagers, orioles, and warblers, while a stunning array of ducks arrive in the winter.

Finally, your adventure ends in Lake Charles. Known for its lively casinos and delicious Cajun cuisine, this southwestern Louisiana destination has everything you need to kick back and relax after a remarkable time experiencing the best this corner of the Bayou State has to offer.



Can't wait to see it all for yourself? Download the free Creole Nature Trail app from [iTunes](#) or [Google Play](#).