



## Bayou Birds



*Jean Lafitte Scenic Byway:  
Lacassine Loop*

337-898-6600

[www.vermilion.org](http://www.vermilion.org)

or

800-346-1958

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## LACASSINE LOOP

The Lacassine Loop begins directly on busy Interstate 10 at the Louisiana Oil and Gas Park and Visitor Information Center. From here, however, it quickly descends into some of the quietest and most idyllic sites on the entire birding trail. The first of these is the remote Lorraine Park, constructed at the old wooden bridge across Bayou Lacassine. This park is probably the best site on the loop for observing Anhinga, Pileated Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, and other swamp-dwelling species. From Lorraine Park, the loop winds through a complex of freshwater marshes, rice fields, canals, and lakes, all of which hold an amazing assortment of bird, butterfly, and dragonfly species.

The picturesque Lake Arthur Boardwalk and Park is a fine site for picnicking and relaxing while watching gulls, terns, raptors, and woodland birds. Talen's Landing Rookery, located just a few miles south of Lake Arthur, possesses a nice wading bird nesting colony from March to June.

The heavily agricultural Thornwell area is a particularly good site for dragonflies, waterfowl and raptors (winter), wading birds (year round), and shorebirds (spring, fall, winter). Should you visit the area during the winter months, be sure to scan the skies and horizons on a regular basis. The chances are pretty good here for spotting interesting and uncommon raptors such as Golden Eagle and Crested Caracara, and maybe even Sandhill Crane.

Possibly the most spectacular site on the loop is the massive Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge, where woodland, swamp, marsh, and open water collide. The birding throughout all of the accessible areas of the refuge can sometimes be overwhelmingly good! Rarities such as Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Crested Caracara, and Vermilion Flycatcher, among others, are most often sighted during the spring, fall, and winter months.



## Louisiana Oil & Gas Park

Site 3-1



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.24758; W 92.66667

**Site contact:** Jeff Davis Parish Tourist Commission;  
800-264-5521

**Website:** [www.jeffdavis.org](http://www.jeffdavis.org)

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 26/ Exit 64 in Jennings, go north on LA 26 for about 0.3 miles to Rue Acadian. Turn left onto Rue Acadian and into the park. The Information Center is located on the left after 0.2 miles.

**Description:** Themed around a tribute to the beginnings of Louisiana's petroleum industry, this site features an information center, walking trails, and a sizable lake surrounded by handicap-accessible picnic shelters and overlooks.

Check the cattail and iris clumps around the lake for Green Heron, Marsh Wren, and Common Yellowthroat; and during migration, Least Bittern and Sora. Various swallow species utilize the lake at different times of the year. Summer brings Purple Martin, Barn and Cliff swallows, while winter features Tree Swallows, and migration brings others such as Northern Rough-winged and Bank swallows.

Loggerhead Shrike is a year round resident here, as is Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, and Red-winged Blackbird. Look for all of these on or around the lake edge.

During spring and fall migration, large numbers of Eastern Kingbirds utilize the site as a staging area. Take the time to walk the northern edge of the park, which is lined with live oak and hackberry trees echoing with the songs of vireos, thrushes, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and orioles.

During the winter months, look for Lesser Scaup and Ring-necked Duck in the lake. One or two Belted Kingfishers, along with several Eastern Bluebirds, manage to take up residence along the lake edge as well.

## Lorraine Park

Site 3-2



**Site access:** Free, Fee, Daily

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.12978; W 92.90781

**Site contact:** Jeff Davis Parish Tourist Commission;  
800-264-5521

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 101 in Lacassine, go south on LA 101 for 7.2 miles to Lorraine Rd. Turn left and head east on Lorraine Rd. for about 2.0 miles to the park.

**Description:** Built at the site of the historic Lorraine Bridge, Lorraine Park is a 6.4-acre park owned by the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury. This relatively small site, located on the edge of scenic Bayou Lacassine, is where 3 forested habitats converge: baldcypress-tupelo gum swamp, mixed oak-pine bluff, and live oak-dominated bottomland hardwoods. This combination attracts a substantial number of birds.

Common throughout the year are Wood Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-bellied and Pileated woodpeckers, and Tufted Titmouse. During the winter months, these birds are joined by Eastern Phoebe, and Pine and Yellow-rumped warblers. Spring and summer bring neotropical nesting species such as Northern Parula and Prothonotary Warblers. Also listen for the deeper, rolling, "churry-churry-churry-tszit" breeding song of the Yellow-throated Warbler, which generally prefers the very tops of the baldcypress trees.

Check the live oaks near the edge of the bottomland hardwood forest on the southern end of the park for vireos and warblers, especially during the spring, fall, and winter months. Winter specialties include Blue-headed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers. Don't neglect to look also for Sharp-shinned Hawks. During migration periods, common birds of passage include Yellow-throated and Red-eyed Vireos, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked thrushes, Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-white, Bay-breasted, Tennessee, and Magnolia warblers, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Baltimore Oriole.



Louisiana's coastal wetlands serve as protection for the infrastructure that transports 25% of oil and gas consumed by America's communities to power our cars, homes, businesses and industries.





## Lacassine NWR Pool

### Site 3-3



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**Site contact:** Refuge Headquarters; 337-774-5923 weekdays

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.00555; W 92.91091

**Website:** <http://lacassine.fws.gov>

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 99/ Exit 54 in Welsh, go west on I 10 for 6.2 miles to Exit 48/ LA 101. Go south on LA 101 for 9.5 miles to LA 14. Go left (east) on LA 14 for 3.7 miles to Illinois Plant Rd./ CR 75. Turn right and follow Illinois Plant Rd. south-west for about 4.5 miles into the Refuge and Lacassine Pool. Lacassine Pool is located at the end of Illinois Plant Rd.

**Description:** “Lacassine Pool” is a 1600-acre impounded marsh swarming with bird life on a year round basis. Common nesting birds frolic through great rafts of blooming pickerel weed, American lotus, white water lily, and duck potato. Common nesting species include Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Mottled Duck, King Rail, Purple Gallinule, Common Moorhen, and Common Yellowthroat. Frequent summer visitors include nearby nesting species such as White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Black-necked Stilt, Mourning Dove, and Fish Crow.

In fall and especially winter through early spring, ducks crowd into the Pool. Ubiquitous species include Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Mottled Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, and Green-winged Teal. Deeper pockets of water often hold “diving” species such as Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, and Ruddy Duck.

Raptors such as Cooper’s and Red-tailed hawk, Crested Caracara, Northern Harrier, and others frequently patrol the area. Spectacular American Alligators are also commonly observed throughout the pool area in all but the coldest mid-winter days.

## Thornwell Site

### Site 3-4



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**Site contact:** Jeff Davis Parish Tourist

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.09575; W 92.82571 (LA 99 X LA 380)

**Commission;** 800-264-5521

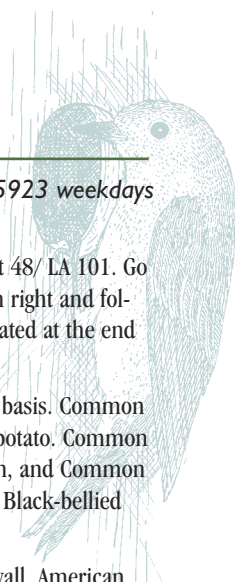
**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 99/ Exit 54 in Welsh, go south on LA 99/ N. Adams for 0.8 miles to US 90. Turn left and go east on US 90/ E. Russell Ave. for 0.3 miles to LA 99/ S. Simmons St. Go right (south) and head south 9.8 miles to its intersection with LA 380. Go left (east) onto LA 380 and follow it through the region.

**Description:** The Thornwell region of southwestern Louisiana provides some of the most spectacular winter birding in the state, involving wading birds, ducks, geese, raptors, shorebirds, flycatchers, and sparrows. Caution to motorists is advised, however, because the roadways are narrow and the entire area is essentially a converted freshwater marsh.

The area’s rice fields are criss-crossed by an extensive network of irrigation canals. During fall, winter, and spring, the check the scrub-type vegetation lining the banks of the canals for Sora, King, and Virginia rails, Carolina, Sedge, and Marsh wrens, along with numerous flycatchers and sparrows. Raptors such as Northern Harrier, Cooper’s, and Red-tailed hawks, as well as Short-eared Owl and Loggerhead Shrike constantly patrol the region. Some of Louisiana’s rarest raptors such as Crested Caracara, Swainson’s and Ferruginous hawks and Golden Eagle have been recorded here.

The rice fields overflow with wading birds (mostly Great and Snowy egrets, White and White-faced ibis, and Roseate Spoonbill), ducks (especially Mallard, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal), geese (Snow, Ross’s, Greater White-fronted, and Canada), and shorebirds (predominately Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Black-necked Stilt, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Western and Least sandpipers, Dunlin, and Long-billed Dowitcher).

During spring, summer, fall months, look for dragonflies including Common Green, Comet, and Regal darners; Common Whitetail, Golden-winged and Great Blue skimmers; Blue Dasher; Eastern Pondhawk; Black Saddlebags; and Four-spotted, Halloween, and Calico pennants. Look also for other wildlife such as American Alligator, Mink, and River Otter in the canals.



## Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge—Streeter Rd./Unit B North Levee

Site 3–5



**Site access:** Free; Daily

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.01594; W 92.78311  
(Streeter Road X LA3056)

**Site contact:** Refuge Headquarters; 337-774-5923  
weekdays

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 99/ Exit 54 in Welsh, go south on LA 99/ N. Adams for 0.8 miles to US 90/ E Russell Ave. Turn left and go east for 0.3 miles to LA 99/ S. Simmons St. Turn right (south) for 11.9 miles to LA 14. Go left (east) for 1.8 miles to Hwy 3056. Go right (south) on Hwy 3056 for 3.7 miles to Streeter Road. Go right (west) 0.7 miles to the trail head for Lacassine NWR Unit B North Levee Trail on the right. Continue down Streeter Road 0.7 miles to access an observation deck on the right.

**Description:** Streeter Road parallels a baldcypress slough thickly vegetated with baldcypress trees, cattails, vine thickets, and shrubs for its first 0.7 miles. During the spring, the area is usually teeming with songbirds such as White-eyed Vireo, Carolina Chickadee, and especially Northern Cardinal.

After 0.7 miles, pull off to access the walking trail on the North Levee of Lacassine NWR Unit B. This trail continues along the baldcypress slough, traversing similar vegetation, with additional trees such as American persimmon and hackberry. Look for Carolina Wren, Prothonotary Warbler, Indigo Bunting, and Orchard Oriole in summer, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Yellow-rumped Warbler in winter. Spring and fall migrations bring additional species of vireos, warblers, tanagers, and orioles.

Drive another 0.7 miles to the handicap-accessible observation tower overlooking the marshes and rice fields comprising Unit B. Depending on the time of year, wading birds, waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors can be viewed here.



## Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters

Site 3–6



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.00358; W 92.78161

**Site contact:** Refuge Headquarters; 337-774-5923 weekdays

**Website:** <http://lacassine.fws.gov>

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 99/ Exit 54 in Welsh, go south on LA 99/ N. Adams for 0.8 miles to US 90. Turn left and go east on US 90/ E. Russell Ave. for 0.3 miles to LA 99/ S. Simmons St. Turn right (south) for 11.9 miles to LA 14. Go left (east) on LA 14 for 1.8 miles to Hwy 3056. Go south on Hwy 3056 for 4.5 miles to the office. The office is open weekdays year round from 7am-3:30pm.

**Description:** The Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters facility sits on the extreme north-eastern edge of the 35,000-acre refuge. The final 1-mile stretch of the 5.5-mile entry road (LA 3056) is lined with mature live oaks and other vegetation. If you have the time, take the opportunity to make frequent stops along this stretch, for it holds an amazingly diverse community of woodland birds varying with the seasons. Fruiting trees and shrubs such as sassafras, deciduous holly, and American beautyberry attract not only vireos, thrushes, tanagers, but also flycatchers and orioles from August through April.

Two secluded, handicap-accessible marsh overlooks adjacent to the headquarters building provide glimpses of shy wading birds such as Anhinga, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, and Green Heron. Look also for other birds such as Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Phoebe, and Common Yellowthroat which frequent the edges of the vegetation. Make sure to visit the headquarters building which houses informational brochures and staff eager to answer your questions.





## Lake Arthur Boardwalk & Park

Site 3–7



**Site access:** Free, Daily

**Site contact:** City Hall; 337-774-2211

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.07603; W 92.67703

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 26/ Exit 64 in Jennings, go south on LA 26 for 11.8 miles to LA 14/ Third St. Turn right and head west 0.4 miles to Arthur Ave. Turn left and go south about 0.2 miles to Lake Arthur Boardwalk & Park.

**Description:** This 6-acre municipal park is studded with numerous mature live oaks, which are indigenous, evergreen, and possess massive rounded canopies that fill with songbirds during spring and fall migration as well as throughout the winter months. During spring migration, look for common transient species such as Northern Parula and Blue-winged, Tennessee, and Magnolia warblers. The live oaks should also be good for Red-eyed and Yellow-throated vireos, Summer and Scarlet tanagers, and Baltimore and Orchard orioles from late March through late April.

The all-weather scenic overlook perched on the edge of Lake Arthur provides an excellent platform for scanning the lake and associated horizons for Double-crested and Neotropic cormorants, Anhinga, Great Blue Heron, Great and Snowy egrets, as well as many species of waterfowl during the late fall, winter, and early spring months. Seabirds such as Laughing Gull and Forster's Tern are present year round; and during migration periods additional species such as Franklin's, Bonaparte's, Ring-billed, and Herring gulls and Caspian, Least, and Black terns turn up regularly.

## Talen's Landing Rookery

Site 3–8



**Site access:** Free, Daily

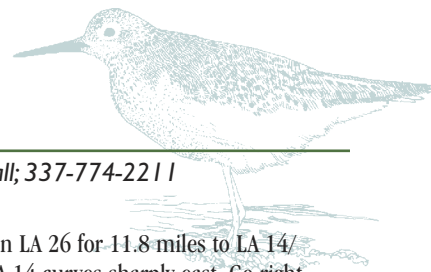
**Site contact:** City Hall; 337-774-2211

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.02325; W 92.63759

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 26/ Exit 64 in Jennings, go south on LA 26 for 11.8 miles to LA 14/ Calcasieu Ave. Continue south on LA 14 for 5.0 miles to Talen's Landing Road, where LA 14 curves sharply east. Go right (south) onto Talen's Landing Road and drive 2.9 miles. The rookery is on the left side of the road, approximately 75-feet off of the road.

**Description:** The Talen's Landing Road wading bird rookery is a rather small clump of baldcypress and black willow trees rising up from the prairie habitat. Each year between March and July it is chock full of nesting Great, Cattle, and Snowy egrets, Green Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, and Roseate Spoonbill, among others. Its proximity to the road offers an excellent opportunity for viewing/ studying these birds.

During the winter months, the countryside surrounding the rookery also features a wide variety of ducks and geese, rails, Red-tailed Hawk, and songbirds such as Sedge Wren, Gray Catbird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, and numerous sparrow species including Savannah, Swamp, and Song.



## Cultural/Historical Attractions

### ZIGLER MUSEUM

The Zigler Museum, the result of the dreams of Ruth B. Zigler, is a fine art museum housed in the colonial-style Zigler home. The West Wing contains a collection of five centuries of European and American artists. The collection which began with a mere 20 pieces has since grown into over 200 works of art, wood and bronze sculptures, Audubon's Double Elephant Folio of Birds of North America by the Abbeville Press, and the Wildlife Art Collection. The east wing of the museum features colorful southwestern Louisiana wildlife dioramas, while the central galleries host rotating exhibits. The museum also has the largest private collection of works by William Tolliver. For location, hours of operation and admission information, call 337-824-0114 or email [zigler-museum@charter.net](mailto:zigler-museum@charter.net).

## Maree Michel Road

Site 3–9



**Site access:** Free

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.02149; W 92.51309

**Site contact:** Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission;  
337-898-6600

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 26/ Exit 64 in Jennings, go south on LA 26 for 1.0 mile to US 90/ Shankland Ave. Turn left and go east on US 90 for 11.3 miles to LA 91/ S. Crocker St. Go right (south) on LA 91 for 11.3 miles to LA 14/ Main St. in Gueydan. Turn left (east) for 1.3 miles to Maree Michel Rd. Turn left on Maree Michel Rd. It runs 6.2 miles to its terminatus at Meridian Line Road.

**Description:** Maree Michel Road is a quiet agricultural road paralleling a large rice irrigation canal. The hackberry and privet scrub lining the banks of the canal provide excellent bird habitat, especially for fall-migrating and overwintering species. From August through October, look for Eastern Kingbird and Eastern Wood-Pewee, along with Yellow-bellied and Least flycatchers. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nest in the open, scrubby habitats just west of here, particularly in September and October. Lastly, be on the lookout for two western species: Western Kingbird and Ash-throated Flycatcher, both of which turn up frequently during winter, but also during spring and fall migration.

Also during the winter months, the roadside scrub holds large numbers of songbirds including Carolina and House wrens, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Orange-crowned Warbler, Northern Cardinal, and sparrows such as Chipping, Field, Savannah, Song, Lincoln's, Swamp, White-throated, and White-crowned.

The thousands of Snow, Ross's, and White-fronted geese attracted by the rice fields during the winter months provide the most spectacular winter feature along Maree Michel Road.

## Intersection of LA 14/Meridian Line Road

Site 3–10



**Site access:** Free

**GPS coordinates:** N 30.00762; W 92.41199

**Site contact:** Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission;  
337-898-6600

**Directions:** From the intersection of I 10 and LA 26/ Exit 64 in Jennings, go south on LA 26 for 1.0 mile to US 90/ Shankland Ave. Turn left and go east on US 90 for 11.3 miles to LA 91/ S. Crocker St. Go right (south) on LA 91 for 11.3 miles to LA 14/ Main St. Turn left (east) for 7.2 miles to its intersection with Meridian Line Road. Since LA 14 is too busy to pull off, turn left (north) onto Meridian Line Road.

**Description:** The 1-mile segment of Meridian Line Road that connects LA 14 and Maree Michel Road traverses agricultural fields overflowing with good birds. In summer, look for Great and Cattle egrets, along with White and White-faced ibis. During spring migration, look also for Yellow-crowned Night-Heron and Great Blue, Little Blue, and Tricolored herons.

During winter, and spring and fall migration scores of shorebirds occupy these wet agricultural fields. Look for Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Dunlin, and Long-billed Dowitcher. Spring migration is a great time for Black-bellied, American Golden, and Semipalmated plovers, along with Stilt Sandpiper and Short-billed Dowitcher.

In winter, look for Snow, Ross's, and Greater White-fronted geese and Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, and other "puddle" ducks. Red-tailed Hawks often hunt from utility pole perches along the roadway, and Northern Harriers patrol low over the fields.

In winter and migration periods, check the row of hackberry trees lining the east side of Meridian Line Road for flycatchers and many species of neotropical/ neararctic songbirds.

Located 0.25 miles west of Meridian Line Road on LA 14 is the Coastal Prairie Restoration Area, accessible via Hair Rd., a gravel road that is rarely used except by farm traffic. This 241 acre site is part of a special program with the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with the purpose of returning this area to its original prairie status.



Wetlands function as a natural tertiary water treatment system by screening out and capturing harmful pollutants. Wetlands also recharge groundwater aquifers that are used for drinking water and irrigation.





## Convention and Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce

Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission  
PO Box 1106  
Abbeville, LA 70511  
Phone: 337-898-6600  
www.vermilion.org

Lafayette Convention & Visitors  
Commission  
1400 N.W. Evangeline Thwy.  
Lafayette, LA 70501  
Phone: 337-232-3737  
Toll Free Consumer: 800-346-1958  
www.lafayettetravel.com

Cameron Parish Chamber of Commerce  
PO Box 1248  
Cameron, LA 70631  
Phone: 318-775-5222  
<http://user.camtel.net/cameron/public/index.html>

Cameron Parish Tourist Commission  
433 Marshal Street  
Cameron, LA 70631  
Phone: 337-775-5222  
Fax: 337-775-5754  
www.cameronparish.net

Greater Jennings Chamber of  
Commerce  
414 North Cary Avenue  
Jennings, LA 70546  
Phone: 337-824-0933

Jeff Davis Parish Tourist Commission  
100 Rue de l'Acadie  
Jennings, LA 70546  
Phone: 337-821-5521  
Toll Free Consumer: 800-264-5521  
www.jeffdavis.org

Lake Arthur Chamber of Commerce  
PO Box 217  
Lake Arthur, LA 70549  
Phone: 337-774-3675

Atchafalaya Welcome Center  
1934 Atchafalaya River Highway  
Breaux Bridge, LA 70517  
337-228-1094



## Jean Lafitte Scenic Byway

This byway derived its name from the famed, Jean Lafitte, known for his piracy in the Gulf of Mexico and lauded for his heroism in the Battle of New Orleans. Jean Lafitte Scenic Byway begins in Lafayette and connects the historic towns of Abbeville, Erath, Kaplan and Gueydan with the larger communities of Jennings and New Iberia. Towards the Gulf of Mexico, the byway traverses coastal marshes around Pecan Island where many Cajuns still keep their fishing and duck camps. This region introduces visitors to “cheniers,” a type of coastal woodland dominated by coast live oak, situated atop ancient “stranded” Holocene beach ridges. This byway allows visitors to get a true taste of Cajun culture, whether it’s through the local restaurants showcasing Cajun foods, the beautifully constructed area architecture, or the various museums and heritage centers.