

# Davis Bayou Blueway

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gulf Islands National Seashore  
Mississippi District



Davis Bayou Blueway connects Davis, Stark, and Halstead Bayous into a 1.5 mile recreational waterway. Appropriate for beginning and experienced paddlers alike, the winding marsh exhibits rich plant and animal diversity while demonstrating the extremes of the salt marsh environment. Davis Bayou Blueway is federally protected within the boundaries of Gulf Islands National Seashore and provides a pristine example of the unique, productive, and vanishing salt marsh ecosystem.

Part of Mississippi Coastal Heritage Trail and the Southeast Coast Paddling Trail, the Davis Bayou Blueway was made possible through a partnership between the National Park Service, National Park Foundation, and Heritage Trails Partnership of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. For more information on the Heritage Trails Partnership, visit [www.gulfcoasttrails.org](http://www.gulfcoasttrails.org).

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## Know Before You Go

Gulf Islands National Seashore is open daily from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The visitor center is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with the exception of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Boats may launch for a fee of \$3. Annual boat launch passes are available for sale at the visitor center and Davis Bayou campground.

Davis Bayou campground is located near the boat launch area. Campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis for a fee of \$16 per night or \$8 with Interagency Senior and Access passes.

Recreational fishers in Mississippi are required to have a Mississippi state saltwater fishing license. All fishing regulations within the seashore correspond to state fishing

regulations. Commercial fishing is prohibited within Gulf Islands National Seashore waters.

Enjoy your time here, but stay safe while recreating! Know your marine forecast and consult tide tables before launching into the blueway; strong winds are dangerous for kayaking. Insects may be present year-round; consider wearing long sleeves or insect repellent. Much of the year temperatures can be very hot and direct sunlight can be intense; hats and sunscreen are recommended. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. Please note that marshy areas are very unstable for standing and walking.

Be aware that alligators are present in bayou waters. Never approach or feed them or any wildlife within Gulf Islands National Seashore. All federal laws apply.

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## The Marsh

The best way to experience the salt marsh is on the water. Quietly paddling the slow bayou waters promises fantastic wildlife viewing. Furthermore, boating allows one to view the bayou at water level. This perspective envelopes the visitor in a foreign world of five-foot tall marsh grasses, fluctuating winds and tides, and incredible plant diversity. Surrounding the edges of the marsh, one may observe the transitions from marsh to maritime forest, with vegetation ranging from live oaks to slash pine to saw palmetto and its corresponding wildlife.

A variety of animals make their home in Davis Bayou, including birds such as great blue herons, red-winged

blackbirds, and snowy egrets. Osprey and bald eagles feed on fish and create nests in treetops. Look for nest and food cavities bored by red-bellied woodpeckers in dead pines lining the marsh. Listen for clapper rails hidden amongst smooth cordgrass and black needlerush.

The marsh is home to mammals and reptiles as well. Raccoons feed on crabs and find fish in shallow pools at low tide. River otters play in the deeper channels where the bayou bends. The American alligator regulates its temperature by basking in the sun on the edges of the marsh. Salt marsh snakes and diamondback terrapins swim and feed in the fertile marsh waters year-round.

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## Leave No Trace

Plan ahead and prepare. Check the marine weather forecast, acquire needed maps and charts, and learn the rules of areas you visit. Help protect Gulf Islands National Seashore by leaving no trace of your visit.

Leave what you find. All plants, animals, and artifacts within Gulf Islands National Seashore are protected by law and may not be removed.

Respect wildlife. Observe and enjoy animals at a distance. Feeding or harassing animals is not allowed. Do not release live animals within park boundaries.

Dispose of waste properly. Please dispose of all trash and recyclables in the appropriate dumpster, or take it home with you.

To protect the vegetation, park cars and boat trailers on pavement; parking on the grass is not permitted.

Minimize campfire impacts. Fires must be contained in designated grills or fire rings.

Pets must be on a leash no more than six feet in length. Pet waste should be disposed of properly and pets should never be left unattended.

Please consider other visitors to Gulf Islands National Seashore when visiting. Respect and protect the park and its inhabitants by minimizing noise and disturbances. The park is yours to enjoy and protect. Thank you for visiting.

Visit [www.nps.gov/guis](http://www.nps.gov/guis) or call (228) 230-4100 for more information on Gulf Islands National Seashore.

