



Birding Hotspots

St. Johns County, Florida



Fort Matanzas National Monument (and Matanzas Inlet)

<p>Description:</p>  <p>MAP Fort Matanzas</p>  <p>MAP Matanzas Inlet</p>	<p>This National Monument has several prime birding spots.</p> <p>Today the Fort Matanzas National Monument protects nearly 300 gorgeous acres of Florida coastal environment containing dunes, marsh, maritime forest, and associated flora and fauna, including threatened and endangered species. There are actually two specific areas for birding.</p> <p>The Fort: first is at the Fort itself and the surrounding area. Start at the Visitor Center and pick up a map and bird list, then hike the nature trail's boardwalk through maritime hammock, watching for migratory warblers, vireos and tanagers. Most of the nature trail is wheelchair accessible. Great Horned Owls sometimes nest behind the visitor center. Take the short ferry ride (free) across the Matanzas River to the 1700s-era Spanish fort and scan the marshes for Wood Storks and Roseate Spoonbills.</p> <p>Matanzas Inlet: South of the Visitor Center are two beach accesses. Park on the west side of the road, just north of the Matanzas bridge, and walk south along the inlet's shore. Scope the river for wintering ducks like Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers, as well as Common Loons and Horned Grebes. This area is designated as Matanzas Inlet Critical Wildlife Area, and portions of the beach are closed from April to August for the protection of beach-nesting birds. On the ocean side, terns and gulls are abundant and look for Northern Gannets fishing offshore during the winter months. Black Skimmers and Least Terns can be found in the spring and summer and Piping Plovers from fall to spring. Painted Buntings may also be present in spring and summer.</p>
<p>Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail Site:</p>	<p>Yes. https://floridabirdingtrail.com/trail/trail-sections/east-section/fort-matanzas-national-monument/</p>
<p>Address:</p>	<p>8635 A1A South, St. Augustine, FL 32080</p>
<p>Phone Number:</p>	<p>904-471-0116</p>
<p>Fee:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Hours of Operation:</p>	<p>The Fort area is open 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Matanzas Inlet area is open dawn to dusk.</p>
<p>Handicap Accessibility:</p>	<p>Most of the nature trail is wheelchair accessible.</p>

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Website:	https://www.nps.gov/foma/index.htm
Facilities Available:	A free passenger ferry to the Fort at the Visitor Center dock in the mornings. Boarding passes are required (except Tuesdays).
Types of Habitat:	Beach, dune, marsh, and maritime forest.
Other Information:	Fort tours are available Wednesday through Monday.
Level of Difficulty:	Easy walking at the Fort area; a bit more difficult walking in the sand at Matanzas Inlet.
Species:	Over 215 species have been found, including various species of egrets and herons, Least Terns, Semipalmated Plovers, Bald Eagles, Roseate Spoonbills, Common Loons, Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers, various warblers, diving ducks, and shorebirds.
Checklist:	eBird: https://ebird.org/hotspot/L127304