

BIRDING SPOTS IN PANAMA CITY

There are several decent places to go birding in the city of Panama City. Here are a few with general directions. You will still need a map or GPS

Gulf Coast State College/FSU campus and Carl Gray Park. These 2 schools are located at the foot of the Hathaway Bridge. The FSU campus is on the bay and Carl Gray Park is adjacent. This is a good spot to scan the shoreline and bay for ducks, shorebirds and smaller birds in the trees. There are small ponds on the GCSC campus that can be good for wintering ducks and possibly a snipe.

Oaks by the Bay in St. Andrews, at the end of Beck Ave. This is a nice small park with oak trees and a boardwalk leading to the bay where you can scan the shoreline and bay. It is also a good area to see and photograph the sunset.

Doctors' Pond/Audubon Nature Preserve - Located on State Avenue, off 23rd St. right behind WalMart. Park along the road. A short boardwalk leads to a covered pavillion where you can scan the marsh for sparrows and other birds. Wood ducks have nested here. A ¼ mile trail leads from the pavillion going north. May be wet at times. This trail may not be passable due to storm damage.

Panama City Garden Club, on Garden Club Drive, off Balboa Ave. between 11th St. and Beach Drive. A walking path meanders through the area through woods and ponds, which can be good during spring months and at other times too. Note: most trees there have been blown down by hurricane winds. Hopefully, these will be restored in the future.

Lynn Haven Recreational Complex, located in the city of Lynn Haven, off Hwy 77. Turn east onto Hwy 390 and drive a few miles to the sign indicating the park. There is a pond to the left as you enter the park. Unusual species are sometimes seen here, including snow geese and vermilion flycatcher in the winter. There is also a scenic boardwalk where you can see wetlands birds. Note: due to hurricane damage, nearly all the trees there have been blown down.

Majette Park (formerly the Bay Dunes Golf Course), about 10 miles north off U.S. Hwy 231, on John Pitts Road. This old golf course, now a county park, has become a good birding destination because of varied habitat, including ponds and grassy areas. Golf cart trails now function as walking paths. Watch for bluebirds, sparrows, raptors and meadowlarks, among others.