

For the Naturalist

Covering one third of Louisiana, the Atchafalaya Basin Swamp is the largest overflow swamp in the United States. A land of ancient moss-draped oaks and old growth cypress, the mysterious Atchafalaya swamp is home to an abundance of wildlife, including rare and endangered species such as the Louisiana black bear and the American bald eagle.

The Cajun Coast is laced by a network of bayous and waterways which provide easy access to the swamp for nature lovers, wildlife photographers, and birders. To help the visitor explore this treasured ecological wonder, Cajun Jack's Swamp Tours in Patterson offers guided swamp tours into the basin. If you'd prefer to explore the waterways on your own, pick up a paddle trail guide or visit our website www.cajuncoastpaddle.com for recommended trails.

In Morgan City, there are two areas of preserved natural swampland open to the public. The Brownell Memorial Park & Carillon Tower is a 9.5-acre park in a natural setting next to Lake Palourde. Founded as a non-denominational devotional park, admission is free. A 106-foot tall carillon tower containing 61 bronze bells graces the park and plays two selections every 30 minutes.

The Cajun Coast is located in the Mississippi flyway for migratory birds, seasonally increasing the number of species the dedicated birdwatcher can enjoy. The Atchafalaya hardwood swamp, nearby coastal marsh, and ample farmland provide ecological niches that are home to more than 200 species, from the spectacular roseate spoonbill to the comical anhinga to the humble brown thrasher. The rich variety of avian life will thrill veteran birdwatchers and intrigue beginners. Pick up an America's Wetlands birding guide to help you navigate the birding trail or join us in February for the annual Eagle Expo, the celebration of the American Bald Eagle. Presentations, photography seminars and guided tours highlight the event.
