



"Adopt the pace of nature:  
her secret is patience."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson



Bald Eagle

"Everybody needs beauty  
as well as bread, places  
to play in and pray in,  
where nature may heal  
and give strength  
to body and soul."

– John Muir

Swallowtail Butterfly



"I go to nature  
to be soothed and  
healed, and to have my  
senses put in order."

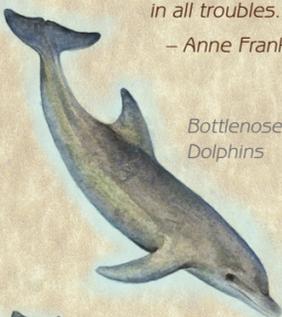
– John Burroughs



Brown Pelican

"I firmly believe that  
nature brings solace  
in all troubles."

– Anne Frank



Bottlenose Dolphins



"Nature will  
not be admired by proxy."

– Winston Churchill

"Swift or smooth, broad  
as the Hudson or narrow  
enough to scrape your  
gunwales, every river is a  
world of its own, unique  
in pattern and personality.  
Each mile on a river will  
take you further from  
home than a hundred  
miles on a road."

– Bob Marshall



Great Blue Heron

"The human spirit needs  
places where nature has  
not been rearranged by  
the hand of man."

– Author Unknown



Seahorse

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# Jacksonville TIMUCUAN TRAIL WATERWAY Paddling Guide

## KAYAKING QUIETLY IN THE MIDST OF PRISTINE NATURE

We connect with our spirituality in many ways, as Bobby Kennedy, Jr. reminds us – through art, literature, music, and our dealings with others – but nowhere with such clarity, texture and richness as through nature.

When we paddle our kayaks through the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve we are as close to pristine Mother Earth as possible. On a good day the only sounds we'll hear are those of nature. Most of the time the only sights we'll see are undisturbed natural wilderness. These sights and sounds would be familiar to the Timucua - Mocama, who were here long before Europeans arrived at "the New World."

A quiet, mindful kayaker is graced with an unmediated experience of the natural world. Try remaining totally silent for a couple of hours as you glide through the waters of the Preserve – with your senses wide open to take in the dance of life in the marsh – the "phoooo" of dolphins coming up for air; an osprey circling high overhead; the iridescent blue of a redfish "tailing" in the shallows near the marsh. Try, for a couple of hours, to take this all in without immediately putting words to your experience, without a running commentary on what you are doing – just allow your senses to gather in the various sights, sounds, and smells of the area as you feel the marsh breeze blow across, your arms pulling the kayak through the water. You are in the midst of the pristine interplay of water, light, wildlife, marsh and land.

Later, you can reflect on your trip and contemplate that you had almost the exact same experience as did the native Timucua – Mocama. Rachel Carson reminded us we have the same experience when we stand by the waters, sensing the ebb and flow of the tides, feeling the breath of a mist moving over the salt marsh, watching the flight of the birds that have swept up and down the area for untold thousands of years. Such is "to have knowledge of things that are as nearly eternal as any earthly life can be."

## THIS AREA IS RICH IN HUMAN HISTORY

Historians love this area because of all the great characters and stories that have arisen here.

Saturiwa was the powerful chief of the Mocama who dealt with the French when they first landed in what we now call the Mayport area in 1562. Saturiwa patiently waited on the north bank of the newly named "River of May" until the French came to pay their respects to the chief.

Jean Ribault captained the original French expedition which led to the settlement of Ft. Caroline in 1564. Ribault left a stone pillar monument marked with the French King Charles IX's coat of arms after his first visit in 1562. A life-size exhibit stands high on a bluff on National Park Service property, and shows what the outpost might have looked like based on historical descriptions. He was later brutally beheaded by the Spanish leader Pedro Menendez in the area we call Matanzas.

Anna Kingsley, born in West Africa in 1793, was purchased as a slave and taken to this area by Zephania Kingsley, who later married Anna and had 4 children with her. Anna and Zephania established the Kingsley plantation on Ft. George Island, which the tall, strong and beautiful Anna ran for many years. The National Park Service now owns the plantation. It is a wonderful kayak destination and offers perhaps the most beautiful panoramic view of the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve.

Charles Bennett, our local Congressman from 1948 through 1992, known in Washington as "Mr. Clean," did not miss a single roll-call vote in over 40 years. Bennett fought persistently to establish both the Ft. Caroline National Memorial in 1953 and the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve in 1988 – our 46,000 acre sanctuary. A man of modest means, he invested a great deal of his own money in these projects and in buying artifacts for the museum at Ft. Caroline. Charlie Bennett was a statesman, a scholar, a benefactor, and a true Southern gentleman.

John Delaney, mayor of Jacksonville from 1995 to 2003, established the "Preservation Project," which preserved over 82 square miles for passive parks inside the city limits. The inspiration for the Preservation Project was an epiphany Delaney experienced while fishing with friends up on Sisters Creek in 1998 – Delaney has been a great political environmental leader protecting our special places including the Preserve and the St. Johns River.

Mark Middlebrook, John Delaney's senior Preservation Project advisor, led the formation of Timucuan Trail State and National Parks, which pulls together city, state, federal and private forces to greatly enhance the Preserve – including the complete renovation of the Ribault Clubhouse, which hosts another great kayaking spot next to Ft. George Inlet.

## TAKING THE ONE SEAT IN BIG SKY COUNTRY

Famed Florida naturalist Herb Hiller commented that in establishing the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Charlie Bennett understood "endlessness." With no buildings or natural undulations to obstruct the view, especially when out in the middle of the Preserve's waterways in a kayak, this is truly "big sky" country. Here, in our kayak, we take the one seat in the space in which all things arise and pass, where we can quietly witness the full dance of life:

seasons come and go  
weather formations come and go  
tides come and go  
all kinds of wildlife come and go  
centuries come and go  
even civilizations come and go.

But as you sit silently in your kayak, scanning the waters, the clouds and the horizon – resting in awareness – you meet in this present moment the spirit of all which has gone before and that which will continue to dance in this special place, the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve.



Captain Russell and Janet Thelmer  
[www.fishinginjaxisland.com](http://www.fishinginjaxisland.com)

## POPULAR SPORT FISH

**HABITAT:** Channel edges on sandy bottoms near tidal passes and docks.

**FISHING:** Use live shrimp, sand fleas, sardines, pinfish or

**TIPS:** jigs bounced slowly along the bottom as you drift.

**SEASON:** All year.

**SIZE:** Minimum 12", 10 fish per person per day allowed.

### FLOUNDER



**HABITAT:** Near docks and pilings, deeper holes in seagrass beds, oyster

beds and channels during the warmest and coolest months.

**FISHING:** Use live shrimp fished on bottom or free-lined, soft-

**TIPS:** bodied jigs bounced slowly along bottom, or small gold spoons.

**SEASON:** All year.

**SIZE:** Not less than 18" or more than 27", 1 fish per person per day allowed.

### REDFISH (RED DRUM)



**HABITAT:** Near bridges, docks, seawalls, pilings or any underwater structure.

**FISHING:** Use live shrimp, sand fleas, or small crabs on small hook.

**TIPS:** Fish just off the bottom and on first tug, strike hard.

**SEASON:** All year.

**SIZE:** Minimum 12", 15 fish per person per day allowed.

### SHEEPHEAD



**HABITAT:** Canals, tidal creeks, and other deep, warm waters in cool months; near

tidal passes, mangrove fringe and along the beaches in warmer weather.

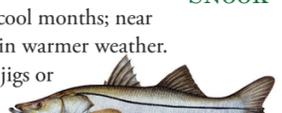
**FISHING:** Use live shrimp, small mullet, live pigfish, sardines, jigs or

**TIPS:** minnow-like lures, either free-lined or on a bobber.

**SEASON:** Closed December 1-February 28 and May 1-August 31.

**SIZE:** Not less than 28" or more than 33", 1 fish per person per day.

### SNOOK



**HABITAT:** Seagrass beds during moderate water temperatures,

deeper waters during warmer and cooler months.

**FISHING:** Use live shrimp, pigfish, soft-bodied jigs or

**TIPS:** minnow-like lures, either free-lined or on a bobber.

**SEASON:** Closed November-December.

**SIZE:** Not less than 15" or more than 20", 4 fish per person

per day, only 1 fish per person may be more than 20".

### SPOTTED SEATROUT



Fish illustrations by Diane Rome Peebles.  
Provided by the Florida Fish & Wildlife  
Conservation Commission

Please note that fishing regulations change frequently; check with authorities for current size limits and closed seasons by visiting [www.myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/](http://www.myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/)

This paddling guide is brought to you by the Public Trust Environmental Legal Institute of Florida, Inc. (Public Trust), in partnership with the City of Jacksonville, Visit Jacksonville and Adventure Kayak Florida and Kayak Amelia.

The mission of the Public Trust is the zealous protection of the Preservation Project properties as well as other federal and state protected lands and waters, and the promotion of the use and enjoyment of these natural areas. More extensive information about the trails, history and ecology of this area, accessible parks, areas to visit, interesting features, critters, tides, printable maps, and links to partner and other websites may be found at:

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

Copies of this guide may be requested from the Public Trust or its partners (or via the website).

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THIS RULER IS TO SCALE. PLEASE CHECK LENGTH OF YOUR CATCH.