

Pinellas

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1951.
- Acres: 394. Located in Pinellas County, FL.
- Location: the refuge is located off shore from St. Petersburg, FL, and is accessible only by boat.
- Administered by Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge.

Natural History

- Pinellas Refuge was established as a breeding ground for colonial bird species. Several islands comprise the refuge and include Indian, Tarpon, Mule, and Jackass keys. All the islands are within the St. Petersburg city limits.
- Species nesting on the island include brown pelicans, herons, egrets, cormorants and numerous other species. Tarpon Key once hosted the largest brown pelican rookery in the state of Florida.
- The flats surrounding the island are protected from motorized boating activity to protect the lush sea grass beds.
- The islands are currently closed year-round to all public use because of their small size and critical importance to coastal species.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Unstaffed.
- Managed as part of Chassahowitzka NWR Complex.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide nesting habitat for endangered brown pelicans and other water birds.
- Preserve and protect barrier island habitat.

Management Tools

- Law enforcement.
- Wildlife population surveys.
- Partnerships.
- Research.

Public Use Opportunities

Closed to all public use.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities exist for visitor center operations, manatee watch activities, and refuge maintenance projects.

Questions and Answers

Where is Pinellas National Wildlife Refuge located?

Pinellas NWR is located off shore from the town of St. Petersburg, Florida in Old Tampa Bay.

How do I get there?

The island is accessible only by boat, and public entry is prohibited.

Why is the refuge closed to public use?

Because of its small size and importance to wildlife.

What wildlife species use the island?

Pinellas NWR was established as a breeding ground for colonial bird species. Species nesting on the island include brown pelicans, herons, egrets, cormorants and numerous other species. Pinellas NWR hosts the largest brown pelican rookery in the state of Florida.