



Talbot Islands Real Florida Guide

Note: Colored numbers correspond with numbers on the map and represent destinations for each day. **Red** = Day 1, **Green** = Day 2 and **Blue** = Day 3.



With more than five miles of beautiful, white sandy beaches, Little Talbot Island is an excellent place to make your base camp while you explore this beautiful coastline, rich in history and culture. We welcome you to visit all six of the Florida State Parks and other interesting destinations which collectively comprise Talbot Islands State Parks: Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park, Amelia Island State Park, Fort

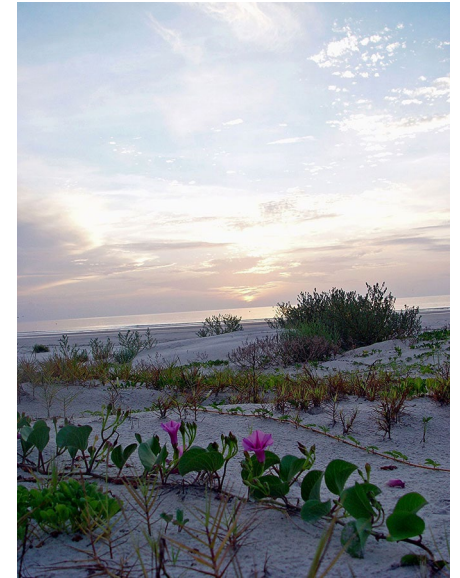
George Island Cultural State Park, Yellow Bluff Fort Historic State Park, Little Talbot Island State Park, Big Talbot Island State Park and George Crady Bridge Fishing Pier State Park. This itinerary is also encompassed within a larger area known as the [Timucuan Trail](#) if you wish to expand your options and lengthen of your trip.

While enjoying your exploration try [geocaching](#) (or geo seeking), a popular pastime in many state parks. Hidden treasures are sought by participants using smartphones or handheld GPS receivers. See the website www.geocaching.com for locations of local treasures all over the world, and for more information on the sport.

Day 1



[Little Talbot Island State Park \(1\)](#) is one of the few remaining undeveloped barrier islands in Northeast Florida with over five miles of pristine shoreline along the Atlantic Ocean. Maritime forests, desert-like dunes and undisturbed salt marshes on the western side of the island allow for hours of nature study and relaxation. Visitors can fish, surf, search for seashells, or watch birds while basking in the Florida sun. The diverse habitats in the park host a wealth of wildlife for viewing, including river otters, marsh rabbits, bobcats and a variety of native and migratory birds.



Surrounding surf and tidal streams present excellent fishing for bluefish, striped bass, redfish, flounder, mullet and sheepshead. Other popular park activities include hiking, kayaking, beachcombing, and picnicking. A campground is nestled along the estuary side of the island, with 40 sites available for tents, pop-ups, camp trailers, and RVs (30' max length). Each campsite has electricity, water, picnic table, and a fire ring. Bring a kayak or canoe and explore Myrtle Creek by launching right from the campground. Kayak rentals and guided paddle tours are available at [Kayak Amelia](#) (904) 251-0016.

Day 2

Located on one of Northeast Florida's unique sea islands, [Big Talbot Island State Park \(2\)](#) is a natural preserve providing a premier location for nature study, bird-watching and photography. Explore the diverse island habitats by hiking Blackrock Trail to the shoreline, the Shoreline Trail to Nassau Sound and Boneyard Beach, Big Pine Trail to the marsh or Old Kings Highway Trail and Jones Cut Trail through the maritime forest.



Launch a boat from the north end of the island to fish and tour the salt marsh or rent a kayak and take a guided paddle tour with Kayak Amelia. Kayak tours require advanced reservation.

Visit the Bluffs and enjoy a picnic at one of the pavilions overlooking the water or take a quick stroll down the trail to Boneyard Beach for tremendous photo opportunities. The unique

beach is famous for the salt-washed skeletons of live oak and cedar trees that once grew near the shore.

Big Talbot is a bicyclist's paradise. Miles of paved and unpaved trails provide opportunities to take in the shady maritime hammock forests and stunning vistas of the salt marsh or bike from park to park. The newly completed paved multi-use path starts just north of Simpson's Creek at the Big Pine trailhead parking area and ends at the Bluffs. This segment of the [Timucuan Trail \(3\)](#) provides users with almost three miles of paved trail winding through maritime forest. The next segment currently under construction will link the Bluffs via paved trail and boardwalk to the [George Crady Fishing Pier Bridge State Park](#). This connects to the northern [Amelia Island Trail](#) that spans six miles and ends at [Peters Point Beach Front Park](#), a Nassau County park. When completed, this link will provide cyclists with 11 miles of paved trail.





An easy drive from Jacksonville or Fernandina Beach, [Amelia Island State Park \(4\)](#) protects over 200 acres of unspoiled wilderness along the southern tip of Amelia Island. Beautiful beaches, salt marshes and coastal maritime forests provide visitors a glimpse of the original Florida. This park is one of the few locations on the east coast that offers horseback riding on the beach and riding tours along the shoreline. Visitors can stroll along the beach, look for shells and sharks teeth or watch the wildlife. For horseback tour reservations, contact [Kelly Seahorse Ranch](#) at (904) 491-5166. Tours are given four times daily.

Fishermen can surf fish along the shoreline of Amelia Island State Park or they can wet their lines from the one-mile long [George Crady Bridge Fishing Pier State Park \(5\)](#) which spans Nassau Sound. The pier can also be accessed at the southern end by parking at the boat ramp parking lot.

[Amelia Island \(6\)](#) is a pleasant place to explore with excellent dining options, walking tours, trolley rides, and horse-drawn carriage tours of the historic district.



[Fort Clinch State Park \(7\)](#) is situated on Florida's northernmost barrier island -- Amelia Island. It borders the St. Mary's River which shapes the boundary between Florida and Georgia. Gorgeous [Cumberland Island National Seashore](#) is part of the vista looking northward. Fort Clinch provides exceptional recreational activities immersed among beautiful natural communities, as well as wildlife viewing, historic attractions and unparalleled living history interpretive programs.



Shelling and shark-tooth hunting are popular activities near the pier and along the St. Mary's Inlet. Enjoy miles of bicycling on the historic oak-canopy drive, or hiking & biking the six-mile multi-use trail.

Visit historic Fort Clinch and step back to the year 1864, as soldiers reenact life during the Civil War. Explore the many rooms, galleries and grounds of the fort as you learn how the soldiers worked and lived each day. Today, park staff provide living history interpretations of the life of a Union soldier, a 1st New York Volunteer Engineer, who garrisoned the fort during the Civil War. Fort Clinch is open 365 days a year from 9am-5pm. An additional entry fee is required. On the first weekend of every month, the park holds a garrison of many soldiers who demonstrate skills such as carpentry, masonry, cooking, blacksmithing, small arms demonstrations and cannon firing as well as interpreting the use of many of the buildings such as the quartermaster, infirmary and jailhouse.

Maritime hammocks, with large Spanish moss-draped live oaks, are prevalent throughout the park and provide a beautiful backdrop. Coastal grasslands meet these hammocks and stretch along the shore behind dunes on the Atlantic Ocean and Cumberland Sound. These unique communities provide refuge to a wide variety of wildlife including gopher tortoises, deer, raccoons, bobcats and numerous species of birds and reptiles including American alligator, and painted buntings are frequently seen at the park.

Fort Clinch is also a Gateway on the [Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail](#). Binoculars can be checked out for free for a day with a driver's license or major credit card at Fort's Visitor Center. Or stop by and pick up a copy of the Trail's guide booklets and get tips on successful wildlife viewing.





[Willow Pond Nature Trail](#) winds around a series of freshwater ponds that offer prime habitat for alligators and turtles. Egan's Creek Marsh borders the west boundary of the park, providing a saltwater estuary for an abundance of marine life. The salt marsh offers scenic vistas and views of many species of wading birds while the beaches provide a critical foraging and nesting habitat for colonial shorebirds and sea turtles. Please respect posted areas and keep your distance from wildlife!

Day 3

Enjoy exploring the rich layers of this region's history on a loop tour of Fort George Island Cultural State Park, Kingsley Plantation, Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve, Yellow Bluff Fort Historic State Park, and Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park.

Native Americans feasted at [Fort George Island Cultural State Park \(8\)](#). Colonists built the fort and the "Smart Set" of the 1920s came for vacations. A site of human occupation for over 5,000 years, Fort George Island was named for a 1736 fort built to defend the southern flank of Georgia when it was a colony. Today's visitors come for boating, fishing, off-road bicycling, and hiking. A key attraction is the restored Ribault Club. Once an exclusive resort, it is now a visitor center with meeting space available for special functions. Behind the club, small boats, canoes, and kayaks can be launched on the tidal waters.

For an eco-friendly experience you won't soon





forget, sign up for a guided tour of Fort George Island on a cross terrain Segway with Kayak Amelia. The tours depart from the historic [Ribault Club](#) and visit the [Kingsley Plantation \(9\)](#) while traveling along more than two to four miles of maritime forest, abundant with plant and animal life. No experience necessary, but advance reservations are required at (904) 251-0016.

Return to A1A and proceed to the [St Johns River Ferry \(10\)](#) with rides available every half hour to the historic town of Mayport, renowned for local seafood and a major U.S. Navy base. Visit the [Timucuan Preserve Visitors Center \(11\)](#) at the [Fort Caroline National Memorial](#). Enjoy the exhibit "Where the Waters Meet", showcasing how humans have interacted with northeast Florida's rich environment for thousands of years.

Leaving the Timucuan Preserve head west and cross the St. Johns River on I-295 for your next stop, [Yellow Bluff Fort Historic State Park \(12\)](#). Located near the mouth of the St. Johns, the fort was an important military position during the Civil War, allowing access to the inland areas of Florida's east coast. There was never an actual fort on Yellow Bluff, but an encampment that was fortified and equipped with large guns for protection. Constructed in 1862, the site was occupied by both Confederate and Union troops during the Civil War and-at its peak-housed over 250 soldiers. The site has a T-shaped earthworks and covers about 1.3 acres and is located on the Yellow Bluff peninsula on the north side of the St. Johns River (on New Berlin Road).

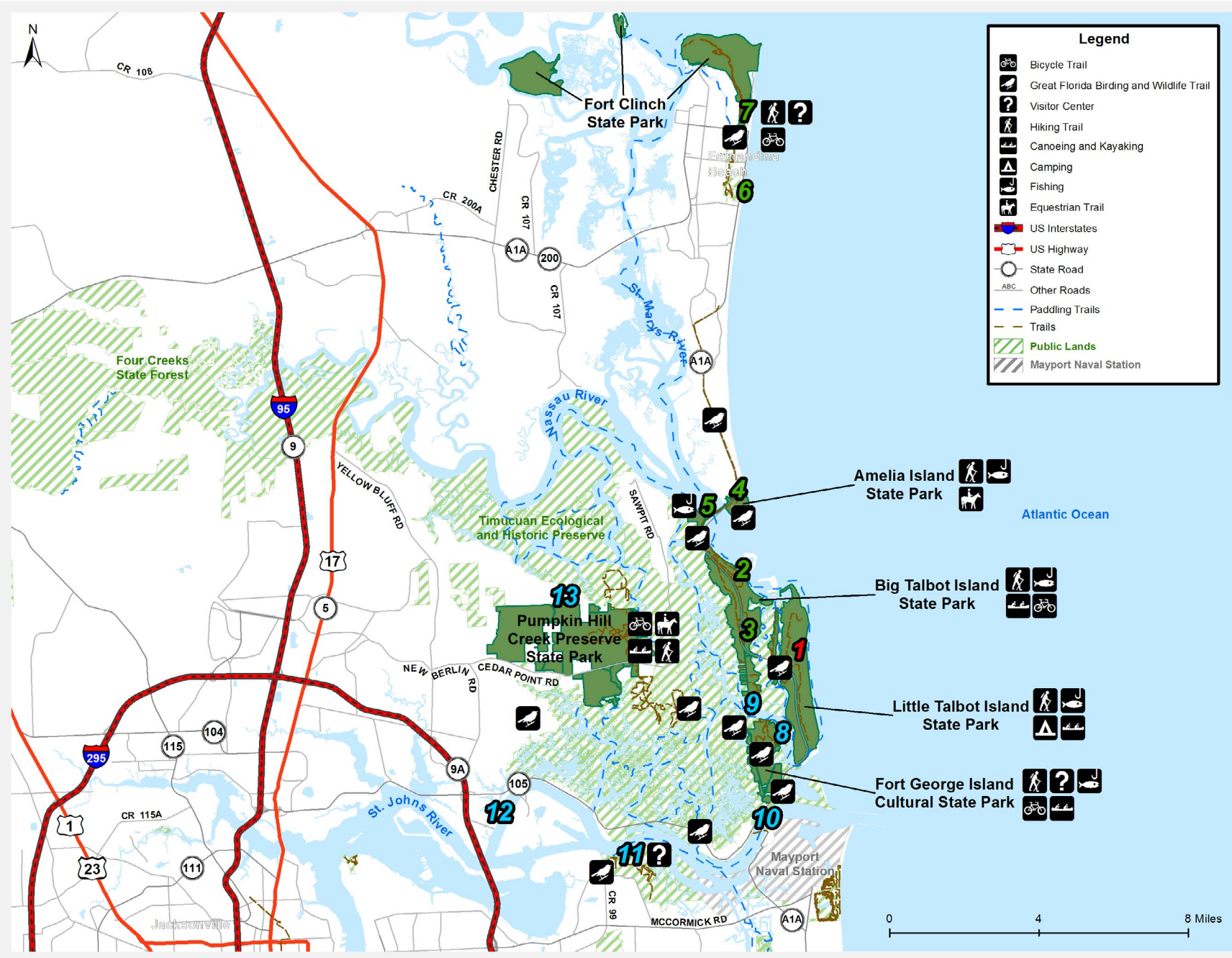
[Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park \(13\)](#) protects one of the largest contiguous areas of coastal uplands remaining in Duval County. The uplands protect the water quality of the Nassau and St. Johns Rivers, ensuring the survival of aquatic plants and animals, and providing an important refuge for birds. Wildlife is abundant and ranges



from the threatened American alligator to the endangered wood stork. Equestrians, hikers and off-road bicyclists can explore five miles of sandy multi-use trails that wind through the park's many different natural communities. The park has a canoe/kayak launch accessible by a 500-foot portage to the marshes. From Yellow Bluff head north on New Berlin Road, then east on Cedar Point Drive. Turn north on Pumpkin Hill Road. Trailhead parking is approximately one mile on the left.

Return to Little Talbot Island to complete your tour or look [here](#) for other destinations to visit in the Jacksonville area.





Legend	
	Bicycle Trail
	Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail
	Visitor Center
	Hiking Trail
	Canoeing and Kayaking
	Camping
	Fishing
	Equestrian Trail
	US Interstates
	US Highway
	State Road
	Other Roads
	Padding Trails
	Trails
	Public Lands
	Mayport Naval Station

