

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

Directions to the ANWR: **From the north** take State Highway 35 to highway 239 and turn left (east); 239 is 1.5 miles south of the light in Tivoli. Stay on 239 and it will pass through Austwell and intersect with 2040. Turn left on 2040 and Hoppers Landing is approximately 3.5 miles from the Landing. Follow 2040 to the refuge (about 6.3 miles). **From the south:** Take highway 35 to 774 and turn right (east); 774 is 13.3 miles from the Copano Bay Bridge. 774 will twist and turn for 9 miles, passing through farmland. Turn right on 2040 and it will take you to Hoppers Landing and the refuge.

Observation Tower/Boardwalk. The Observation Tower is a popular tourist attraction for obvious reasons, and it gives the angler the chance to get the “lay of the land” before heading out. The tower has a good view of not only San Antonio Bay but also the east end of Mustang Lake. Unless you are wade fishing, be sure to bring a cart for the kayak because it is a long walk to the water using the Boardwalk.

This is the southern end of the auto loop and it gives the angler a chance to fish not only the shoreline with guts in some areas and sand flats in other areas, but also cuts and channels that drain the marsh surrounding Mustang Lake. The shoreline around the cuts can be great places to look for red fish and flounder on an outgoing tide. It is possible to paddle to Mustang Lake but just keep in mind that the channels are narrow and there are a lot of alligators around. There is a reef almost a half mile due north of the launch site.

St. Charles Bay

Big Tree launch area. The best place to launch into St. Charles Bay is about a half mile from the Big Tree. **Directions:** From 35, turn east onto Park Road 13 and after a short distance, PR 13 will take a left to go to the Big Tree; turning right which take you to the state park. Turn right on Twelfth Street and follow it to the bay. Lamar Beach Road will parallel the St. Charles Bay shoreline and then loop back to the park entrance. Park on the gravel shoulder next to the bay where 12th street makes a curve and becomes Lamar Beach Road.

The bay bottom is mainly sand and grass with thin patches of mud. Paddle north and look for sloughs, cuts, or channels draining a large marsh. Outside the marsh there is a wide flat. Another option is to paddle across St. Charles Bay and fish the ANWR shoreline. A lot of people believe that this shoreline is one of the best places to fish for flounder in the mid coast region.

Goose Island State Park

Directions: Look for a Park Road 13 sign on the east side of the highway, two tenths of a mile before the bridge. Turn and follow the signs to the ranger station at the park entrance. Visitors are required to have either a day pass or a camping permit, however with the yearly pass, it is not necessary to stop and check in. Follow the signs to the boat launch, bait house, bayside camp sites, and the pier. The park is open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. for day visitors and the phone number is 361-729-2858.

The lighted pier at the state park gives a person several options: fish from the pier, wade the shell reef, or launch a kayak. Look on my website for a more detailed look at Goose Island State Park.

Copano Bay Bridge/Pier

South End of LBJ Causeway (Copano Bay Bridge). There are several options for launching into Copano Bay on the Fulton/Rockport end of LBJ Causeway. A power boat ramp is located on the west side of bridge, next to the pier, however the best place to launch a kayak is on a small shell beach adjacent to the ramp.

Launch/Wading spots on 1781

The Navigation District built a great park in Rockport on the south shore of Copano Bay along 1781, 2.6 miles from highway 35. **Directions:** From 35, turn onto 1781 and look for a sign on the right side that says Airport Park (see figure 70). This is a small park and there may be room for five to seven cars so get there early. The shoreline all along this part of Copano Bay is mainly hard sand with scattered shell. Fifteen yards from shore, there is a large reef or island that is almost always exposed. During the summer, this stretch of shoreline has clear water whenever the wind is from the southeast, south, or southwest.

Port Bay Road.

Directions: In Rockport, turn west on 1069 (Market Street) and after 4 miles, look for the Port Bay Road sign on the right. This road is paved for 0.7 mile and unpaved for 0.7 mile and the condition of the unpaved part varies with the weather.

Aransas Pass Kayak Park

Directions: The kayak park is next to the Aransas Aquatic Center. From Rockport, take 35 into Aransas Pass, and when it intersects 361 at the HEB Grocery, continue going straight on 361. After 1.2 miles turn left on Johnson Avenue. This road will end at the aquatic center and the kayak park in the far right corner. Drop your kayak off, park, and walk back to launch into a short canal.

After paddling out of the canal, there is a marsh area with a reef along the ICW. Some people will fish this area, however by crossing the ICW and going around the island directly across from the park, you will enter a grass with sand potholes, called Ransom Flats. This part of Redfish Bay is deeper and probably clearer than B&R Flats. When the LHL and B&R Flats are inaccessible due to very low tides, there will be fishable water in this area.

Fish Pass Jetties

Directions: There are two possible routes to get to the Fish Pass Jetties. If you have the state park yearly pass or if you do not mind paying the daily fee, go to Mustang Island State Park and hang a left once into the park. This road will take you to the beach but well north of the general parking area and the pier. I have never had any trouble with soft sand getting to the jetties. The state park is 13.3 miles from PA and 4.8 miles from CC. Taking the second route doesn't cost anything to park next to the north Fish Pass Jetty. Turn towards the beach at Beach Access Road 2, and then turn right (south) to get to the north jetty. Access Road 2 is 10.7 miles from PA and 7.4 miles from CC. After turning onto the beach, it is about two miles to the north jetty.

Dimmit Pier

Directions: Take either NAS Dr. or go east on Waldron from SPID and turn right on Jester St. Follow Jester St to Dimmit Pier. At first glance, the area doesn't look like very much, but if you go to Google Earth and zoom in on the pier, there is a cornucopia of structure in the bay to fish. The Google program is a great tool if the location is close to a large city, but it leaves a lot to be desired in many places. This area however shows cuts, channels, grass, potholes, and sand islands in detail on the satellite image.

Indian Point and Pier

Directions: From Corpus, take I-181 north, go over the Nueces Bay Causeway, and look for the Indian Point Pier Exit signs. If you are interested in fishing close to the causeway, take the Moore St. Exit and make a U-turn so that you are back on I-181 going southbound. Look for the Indian Point Exit. This will take you to the turnaround under the causeway. Anyone coming from the north on I-181 should take the Indian Point Pier Exit after leaving Portland and take the U-turn under the causeway.

There are many places to park under the causeway or close to the cove that borders the pier. The shore around the causeway is mainly sand with a lot of crushed shell, rocks, and broken concrete. The shallow cove is sand with scattered oysters shell and small grass beds. It is possible to wade a hundred yards or more out from the

shoreline.

The pier is 1000 feet long with a T-head at the end. Being situated at the confluence of Corpus Christi Bay and Nueces Bay should make for spectacular fishing under the lights at night. Since it is not extremely long, most of the pier will allow you to fish the guts and sandbars around the shore, so if you like speckled trout fishing, this should be a great venue. If you can get a long enough cast from the end of the pier you may be able to get your lure or bait close to the Indian Point Reef.