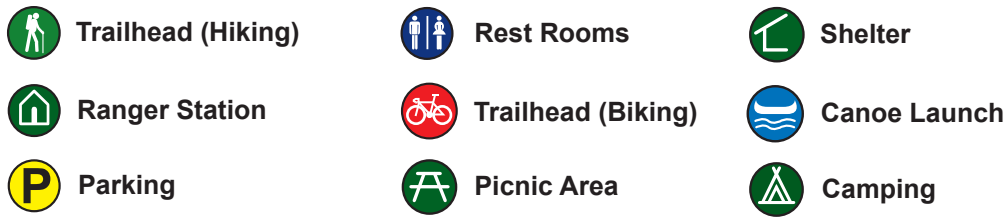
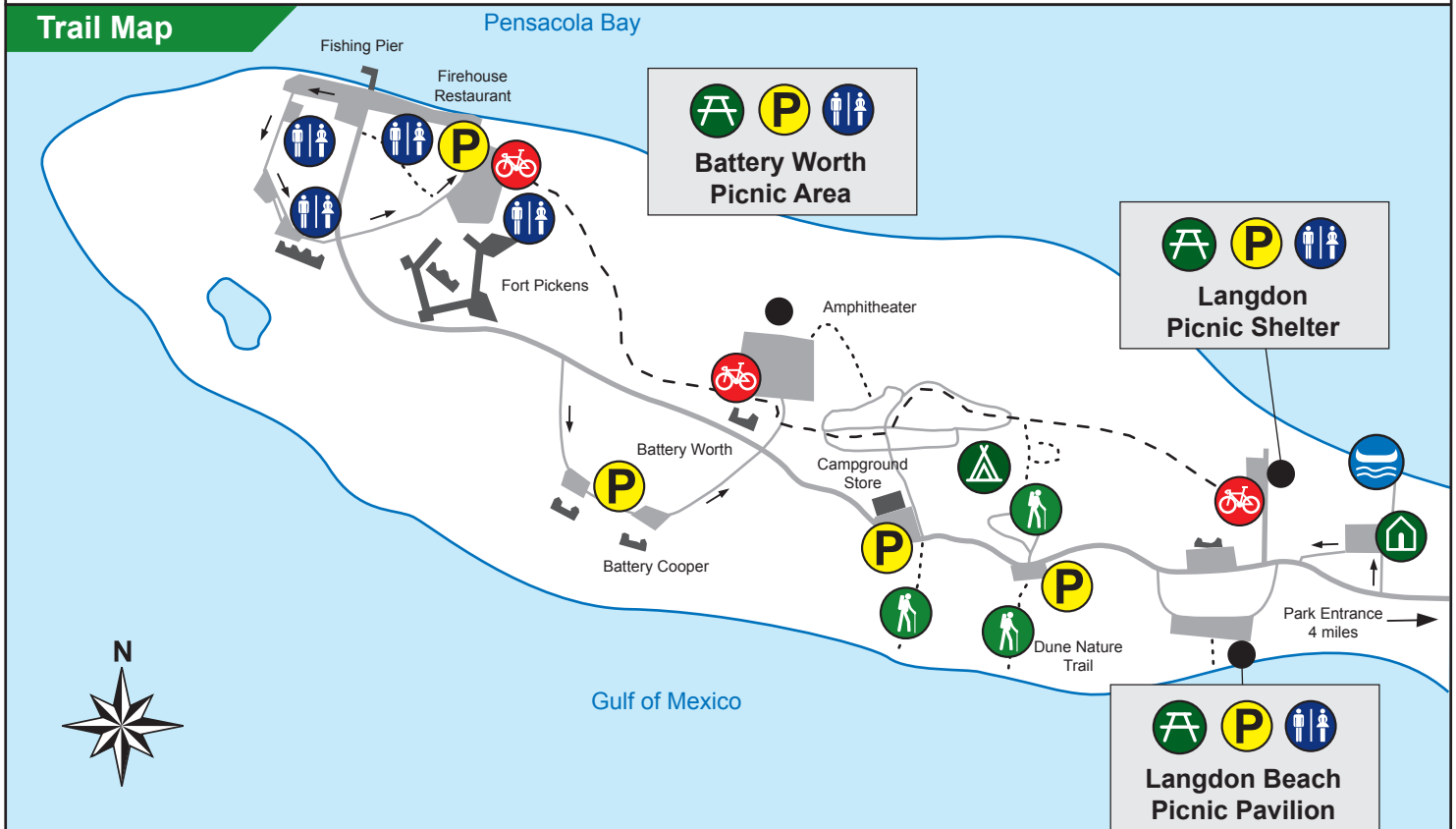


20. Fort Pickens Area (Gulf Islands National Seashore)

Legend



Trail Map



This map is not to be used as a primary form of navigation, intended for recreational use only.

Description

Fishing, Hiking, Biking, Camping, Swimming, Kayaking, Birding

Fort Pickens is the largest of four forts built to defend Pensacola Bay, Florida and its navy yard. The fort was begun in 1829, completed in 1834, and used until the 1940s. Following extensive repairs by the National Park Service, the fort was reopened in 1976. The perfect getaway for fishing, diving, and camping, this area also offers a memorable experience for hikers and bikers. Stroll along Blackbird Marsh and dune nature trails, and discover the variety of island life.

Landscape & Wildlife:

Birding: This migratory hotspot is not to be missed in spring, as tired migrants make landfall after long over-water flights. Batteries Langdon and Worth are both good stops for migrants; closely check flowering oaks. Please respect closed areas protecting nesting birds: beachfront here is prime for breeding snowy plovers and least terns spring through fall. Black terns are ubiquitous in summer and fall. By far, the fort and surrounding trails offer this site's most exciting birding. In open areas surrounding the fortifications, watch for sentinel flycatchers on any minor promontory. Grey kingbirds breed here and scissor-tailed flycatchers are occasional in winter. The trails on the fort's bayside can be extraordinary for migrant songbirds like Tennessee, Cape May, and magnolia warblers and more. Morning is not necessarily the best time to see these birds; long-term sighting logs from dedicated local birders indicate these migrants can make landfall in early afternoon; fallouts are exaggerated by early afternoon rain showers that ground migrants as soon as they reach land. Migrating raptors cruise the dune line in October and April.

Access/Directions: From Pensacola, take US 98 E approx. 4.5 miles to the South side of Gulf Breeze. Take SR 399 (Pensacola Beach Road/ Toll bridge) south across Santa Rosa Sound. Turn right (W) at Fort Pickens Road. The entrance is approx. 2 miles ahead.