



A GUIDE TO THE

BIRDS & PLANTS

of

BUFFALO BAYOU PARK







Buffalo Bayou Park invites visitors to explore a deeper relationship between nature and the city. Restoring the native landscape and the terrain's diversity and balance has transformed this iconic site into a more resilient and self-sustaining state.

Careful preservation of the bayou corridor's natural assets has increased the park's capacity to host a diverse collection of wildlife, while giving visitors a place to learn about and enjoy the Houston region's rich ecology. The park provides habitat for more than one hundred species of birds as well as a host of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, including alligators, snakes, turtles, rabbits, and even bobcats.

We hope this guide serves as a tool that you can use to escape the city's intensity and to experience the wonders of the natural world. Enjoy your visit!

SONGS OF THE BAYOU

B I R D S O F T H E P A R K



Buffalo Bayou Park's 160 acres provide both permanent habitat and a welcome pit stop for a plethora of birds—and bird-watching enthusiasts.

Glenn Olsen, a local guide and owner of GO Birding Ecotours, shares his thoughts on the delights of birdwatching in the park:

The green ribbon of trees and shrubs that line Buffalo Bayou from Shepherd Drive to Sabine Street form an oasis for many birds within Houston's urban core. Some birds, such as Mockingbirds, Cardinals, and Blue Jays, have adapted to living in neighborhoods, but most of our native birds still need a space with trees, shrubs, vines, and grasses. And for the many species that migrate through the Houston area, Buffalo Bayou Park is a temporary home and rest stop. During the spring migration, one might find the strikingly attractive Black and White Warbler, the small Tennessee Warbler, a bright red Summer Tanager, or a stunning Rose Breasted Grosbeak.

Spring, however, is not the only time to look for birds in the park. All year long you can see Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Carolina Wrens, and Chickadees. Along the edges of the water, stalking fish and frogs, look for tall Great Blue Herons, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, and the snow white Great and Snowy Egrets.

During fall migration, many species of birds use Buffalo Bayou Park as a rest stop. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, the fidgeting Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Yellow-rumped Warblers find food in trees and shrubs. High overhead, you may see an Osprey searching for fish in the bayou. Mississippi Kites feed on insects as they migrate south. In the bramble and grass patches, look for White-throated and other wintering Sparrows. The wandering American Goldfinches and Cedar Waxwings can be seen for the few minutes when they stop to feed during the fall.

And if you are lucky, you may hear the deep sonorous hooting of a Great Horned Owl.



(not shown at scale)

- 1 ACADIAN FLYCATCHER
- 2 AMERICAN GOLDFINCH
- 3 AMERICAN PIPIT
- 4 AMERICAN REDSTART
- 5 AMERICAN ROBIN
- 6 BALTIMORE ORIOLE
- 7 BARN SWALLOW*
- 8 BELTED KINGFISHER
- 9 BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK*
- 10 BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON
- 11 BLUE JAY
- 12 BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER
- 13 BLUE-HEADED VIREO
- 14 BROAD-WINGED HAWK
- 15 BROWN CREEPER*
- 16 BROWN THRASHER
- 17 BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD
- 18 CAROLINA CHICKADEE*
- 19 CAROLINA WREN
- 20 CAVE SWALLOW*
- 21 CEDAR WAXWING
- 22 CHIMNEY SWIFT*
- 23 CHIRPING SPARROW
- 24 COMMON GRACKLE
- 25 COMMON Nighthawk*
- 26 COMMON YELLOWTHROAT
- 27 COOPER'S HAWK
- 28 DOUBLE CRESTED CORMORANT*
- 29 EASTERN PHOEBE
- 30 EASTERN SCREECH OWL

* shown in grayscale

- 31 EASTERN WOOD PEWEE
- 32 EUROPEAN STARLING
- 33 GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET
- 34 GREAT BLUE HERON
- 35 GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER
- 36 GREAT EGRET
- 37 HERMIT THRUSH
- 38 HOUSE FINCH
- 39 HOUSE SPARROW
- 40 HOUSE WREN
- 41 INCA DOVE*
- 42 INDIGO BUNTING
- 43 KILLDEER
- 44 LARK SPARROW
- 45 LINCOLN'S SPARROW
- 46 LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE
- 47 MALLARD
- 48 MOURNING DOVE*
- 49 NEOTROPIC CORMORANT*
- 50 NORTHERN CARDINAL
- 51 NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD
- 52 NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH
- 53 ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER
- 54 ORCHARD ORIOLE
- 55 OSPREY*
- 56 PEREGRINE FALCON
- 57 PILEATED WOODPECKER
- 58 PINE SISKIN
- 59 PINE WARBLER
- 60 RED SHOULDERED HAWK



* shown in grayscale



- 61 RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER
- 62 RED-TAILED HAWK
- 63 RED-EYED VIREO
- 64 RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
- 65 ROCK PIGEON*
- 66 ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK
- 67 SCARLET TANAGER
- 68 SEDGE WREN
- 69 SHARP-SHINNED HAWK
- 70 SNOWY EGRET
- 71 SONG SPARROW
- 72 SUMMER TANAGER
- 73 SWAINSON'S HAWK
- 74 SWAINSON'S THRUSH
- 75 SWAMP SPARROW
- 76 TENNESSEE WARBLER
- 77 TUFTED TITMOUSE*
- 78 TURKEY VULTURE*
- 79 WARBLING VIREO
- 80 WHITE-EYED VIREO
- 81 WHITE-THROATED SPARROW
- 82 WHITE-WINGED DOVE*
- 83 WILSON'S SNIPE
- 84 WILSON'S WARBLER
- 85 WINTER WREN
- 86 WORM-EATING WARBLER
- 87 YELLOW WARBLER
- 88 YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER
- 89 YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

* shown in grayscale

GOING NATIVE

TREES AND PLANTS OF THE PARK



Reintroducing and amplifying the plant species historically found along Houston's historic waterway have enhanced the sense of seasonality experienced by Buffalo Bayou Park visitors.

In spring and summer, wildflower meadows and prairies pop up all over the park, resulting in a blanket of color covering more than 17 acres. Cypress trees yield brilliant fall color, while other trees lose leaves during winter, offering elegant bare-branch silhouettes. Redbud trees signal the dawn of springtime with pink blooms bursting forth before their green foliage. Mexican plum and Sweetbay magnolia also provide a remarkable seasonal "rainbow." All the while, familiar evergreens such as Loblolly pines, provide consistent greenery year-round, with their deep hue giving contrast to the color statements of the other species.

While Buffalo Bayou Park contains expansive natural areas, several gardens, found at major destinations throughout the park, feature perennials traditionally found in Houston residential gardens. These spaces are popular spots for quiet reflection and relaxation.

Through a rigorous conservation program where Buffalo Bayou Partnership staff and volunteers routinely remove invasive species and replenish plants and trees, it is assured that Buffalo Bayou Park's diverse landscape will continue to be enjoyed by park visitors and wildlife alike.



WILDFLOWERS

- 1 **MEXICAN HAT**
(*Ratibida columnifera*)
- 2 **BLACK-EYED SUSAN**
(*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- 3 **PLAINS COREOPSIS**
(*Coreopsis tinctoria*)
- 4 **TEXAS BLUEBONNET**
(*Lupinus texensis*)
- 5 **EVENING PRIMROSE**
(*Oenothera speciosa*)
- 6 **WINECUP**
(*Callirhoe involucrata*)
- 7 **RATTLESNAKE MASTER**
(*Eryngium yuccifolium*)
- 8 **SCARLET SAGE**
(*Salvia coccinea*)
- 9 **INDIAN BLANKET**
(*Gaillardia pulchella*)

(not pictured)

- LEMON MINT**
(*Monarda citriodora*)
- CLASPING CONEFLOWER**
(*Dracopis amplexicaulis*)
- TEXAS CONEFLOWER**
(*Rudbeckia texana*)
- PURPLE PRAIRIE CLOVER**
(*Dalea purpurea*)
- ROSINWEED**
(*Silphium gracile*)



1



4



3



6



5



2



7

T R E E S

1 **BALD CYPRESS**
(*Taxodium distichum*)

2 **COTTONWOOD**
(*Populus deltoids*)

3 **SOUTHERN WAX MYRTLE**
(*Myrica cerifera*)

4 **LIVE OAK**
(*Quercus virginiana*)

5 **WHITE OAK**
(*Quercus alba*)

6 **LOBLOLLY PINE**
(*Pinus taeda*)

7 **EASTERN REDBUD**
(*Cercis canadensis*)

(not pictured)

MEXICAN SYCAMORE
(*Platanus mexicana*)

NUTTALL RED OAK
(*Quercus nuttallii*)

AMERICAN SYCAMORE
(*Platanus occidentalis*)

DRUMMOND RED MAPLE
(*Acer rubrum* vr. *drummondii*)

MEXICAN PLUM
(*Prunus mexicana*)






GRASSES AND SHRUBS

- 1 **AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY**
(*Callicarpa americana*)
- 2 **TURK'S CAP**
(*Malvaviscus drummondii*)
- 3 **LITTLE BLUESTEM**
(*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
- 4 **PURPLE THREE-AWN GRASS**
(*Aristida purpurea*)
- 5 **BROWNSEED PASPALUM**
(*Paspalum plicatulum*)
- 6 **SILVER BLUESTEM**
(*Bothriochloa saccharoides*)
- 7 **PURPLETOP**
(*Tridens flavus*)
- 8 **VIRGINIA WILD RYE**
(*Elymus virginicus*)

(not pictured)

GULF MUHLY
(*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)

KNOTROOT BRISTLEGRASS
(*Setaria geniculata*)



Buffalo Bayou Park is the 160-acre greenspace that lies just west of downtown Houston. Enhancement of the park was a collaboration of BBP, the Kinder Foundation, the City of Houston through Houston Parks & Recreation Department and Harris County Flood Control District. Buffalo Bayou Park includes beautiful gardens and native landscaping; hike and bike trails; paddle craft and bike rentals; the go-to dog park in the city; public art; a creative nature play area; two visitor centers; and gathering places for visitors to picnic, relax and enjoy outdoor activities. Buffalo Bayou Partnership maintains and operates the park with annual funding provided by the Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) #3.



Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP) is the non-profit organization revitalizing and transforming Buffalo Bayou, Houston's most significant natural resource.

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