

Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Website: <https://rookerybay.org/>

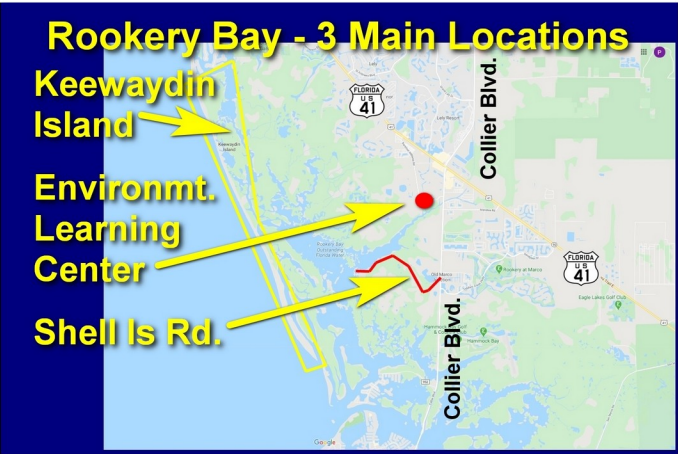
Comment: Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve stretches across 110,000 acres from Gordon Pass in Naples to the western Everglades of pristine mangrove forest, uplands, and protected waters.

Three main locations: Next slide.

Rookery Bay has several locations of interest to day-trippers:

- 1. Environmental Learning Center:** 300 Tower Rd, Naples. On Collier Blvd one mile south of US-41.
- 2. Shell Island Road (boardwalk, hiking trails, nature boat cruises):** Collier Blvd 3 miles south of US-41. West on Shell Is. Rd.
- 3. Keewaydin Island.** Also called Key Island. Can only get there by boat.

In addition to these, there is camping, fishing, geocaching, canoeing, kayaking.



1. Environmental Learning Center:

Admission: Adults \$8. Boat tours \$109.

When: Mon-Fri 9am to 4pm. Closed Sat-Sun.

Learning center: 16,500-square-foot educational, research and training facility with research laboratories, classrooms, auditorium, aquariums, visitor center, art gallery, cultural exhibits.

Observation bridge across Henderson Creek. Three half-mile walking trails.

2. Shell Island Road:

Briggs Boardwalk: Half-mile boardwalk. Small nature center. Self-guided tours dawn to dusk. Guided tours Jan-March

Nature trails: 4 trails each approximately ¼ mile long. Can be overgrown and muddy.

Boat tours: 3 hours. \$109.

Guided kayak tours: 2 hours. \$65 to \$75.

3. Keewaydin Island:

Barrier island. 8 miles long. No roads or cars. Wildlife sanctuary. Recreation: Swimming, fishing, walking, shelling, and boating. Accessible only by boat.

Commercial boat shuttle to/from Marco Island: \$22 each way (children \$12). www.hemingwaywatershuttle.com/.

Several boats offer lunch food for sale.

No bathroom facilities on the island.

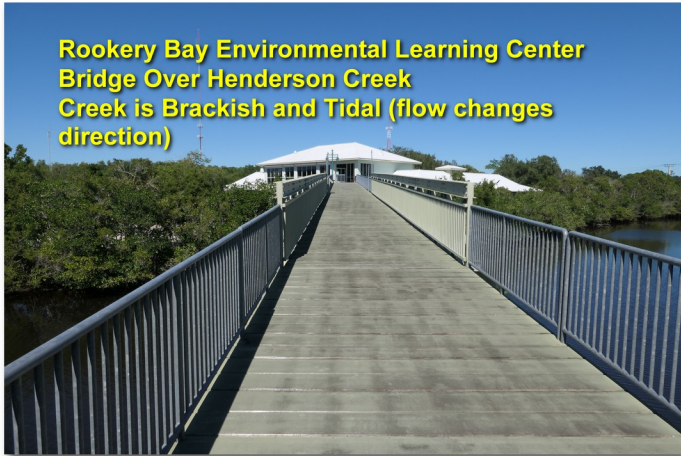




Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
Cross Bridge Over Henderson Creek to
Get to Walking Trails



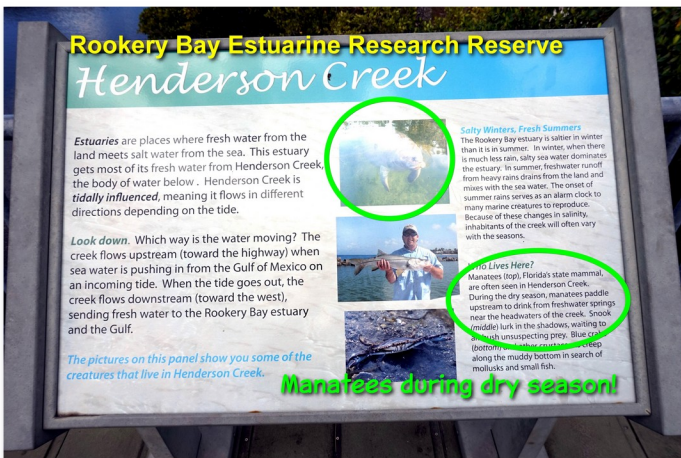
Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
Authentic Seminole Chickee



Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
Bridge Over Henderson Creek
Creek is Brackish and Tidal (flow changes
direction)



Rookery Bay Reserve
View of Henderson Creek from the Bridge



Rookery Bay Estuarine Research Reserve
Henderson Creek

Estuaries are places where fresh water from the land meets salt water from the sea. This estuary gets most of its fresh water from Henderson Creek, the body of water below. Henderson Creek is **tidally influenced**, meaning it flows in different directions depending on the tide.

Look down. Which way is the water moving? The creek flows upstream (toward the highway) when sea water is pushing in from the Gulf of Mexico on an incoming tide. When the tide goes out, the creek flows downstream (toward the west), sending fresh water to the Rookery Bay estuary and the Gulf.

The pictures on this panel show you some of the creatures that live in Henderson Creek.



Salty Winters, Fresh Summers
The Rookery Bay estuary is saltier in winter than it is in summer. In winter, when there is much less rain, salty sea water dominates the estuary. In summer, freshwater runoff from heavy rains drains from the land and mixes with the sea water. The onset of summer rains serves as an alarm clock to many marine creatures to reproduce. Because of these changes in salinity, inhabitants of the creek will often vary with the seasons.

Who Lives Here?
Manatees (top). Florida's state mammal, are often seen in Henderson Creek. During the dry season, manatees paddle upstream to drink from freshwater springs near the headwaters of the creek. Snook (middle) lurk in the shadows, waiting to ambush unsuspecting prey. Blue crabs (bottom) scurry along the muddy bottom in search of mollusks and small fish.

Manatees during dry season!



Three trails, each 1/2 mile long
Snail Trail has viewing platform on the Creek



Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
Snail Trail



Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
Snail Trail

