

Venice Area Audubon Rookery

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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CLAUDIA DANIELS
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Spending an afternoon appreciating nature can be a favorite means of relaxation for many people, which is perhaps why birdwatching ranks as one of the top 10 pastimes globally. A multigenerational activity that is gaining popularity with younger participants—especially now that numerous apps have made it even easier to identify birds—it can be a wonderful hobby to share with your loved ones of all ages.

Want to find an ideal spot to enjoy viewing many of the species of birds that make their homes in the Suncoast at various times throughout the year? Then you may be delighted to discover that a prime spot for birdwatching, one that is internationally known to bird photographers, is located in south Venice. Tucked away in a secluded location that isn't far from two major roadways, the Venice Area Audubon Rookery welcomes visitors to come and catch sight of scores of feathered friends from dawn to dusk every day of the year.

This month is excellent for planning a visit because from January through April, the Venice Area Audubon Society (VAAS) occasionally staffs the Rookery with volunteers who bring extra binoculars, bird field guides and a spotting scope that all guests are welcome to use. If you want to take pictures or to see as many birds as possible, the VAAS recommends that the optimal times for you to plan a visit are in the early morning or late afternoon, and that the best vantage point at sunset is found on the west side, across from the pavilion. If you would like to extend your stay and enjoy a meal while you appreciate your surroundings, please feel free to pack a lunch or bring a picnic, but for safety reasons, be advised that fires are not permitted.

Given how close the shaded pavilion benches are to the Rookery's island, which is set in the center of a deep lake, guests may not even need to use binoculars to clearly see the birds as they frolic. Since some visitors may prefer walking, care was taken to remove any invasive plants

