

Nature and History

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park is a rehabilitation center for injured and orphaned West Indian manatees, which reside in the freshwater spring while re-acclimating to a natural environment before being released to the wild.

The centerpiece of this park is a first-magnitude freshwater spring, which produces millions of gallons of fresh, crystal-clear water every hour. The spring outflow creates the Homosassa River.

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park offers visitors a rare opportunity to observe Florida's native wildlife in natural settings. Visitors may stroll along paved trails and boardwalks to see manatees, black bear, Florida panther, cougar, red wolves, bobcats, Key deer, alligators, gray fox and otters at close range. Many varieties of birds, from colorful wood ducks and roseate spoonbills to majestic birds of prey, herons, egrets and whooping cranes also make Homosassa Springs their home.

Most of the birds and animals living at Homosassa Springs cannot survive in the wild. The park provides these animals with a habitat and diet that is as natural as possible.

A huge spring, from which millions of gallons of fresh, clear water bubble every hour, is the centerpiece of this park and the headwaters of the Homosassa River. Saltwater and freshwater fish are attracted to this large, natural spring with its comfortable, year-round temperature of 72 degrees. Thirty-four varieties of fish have been identified in the spring.

One of the most interesting encounters at this natural attraction is the floating observatory where you can go under water to view the thousands of fish and Florida's endangered manatees. Homosassa Springs is one of the only places in the world where manatees may be observed at close range 365 days a year.

Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

FloridaStateParks.org

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park

4150 South Suncoast Blvd.

Homosassa, FL 34446-1168

Recorded Information : (352) 628-2311

Park Office: (352) 628-5343

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 9 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., 365 days a year. Ticket counters close at 4 p.m.
- An admission fee is required.
- Please do not feed the animals. They are on special diets. Do not tease the animals or throw anything into their habitats.
- Do not place children on railings or fences. Children under 12 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.
- This is a non-swimming, non-fishing park.
- Proper attire, including shirts and shoes, is required in the park at all times.
- Pets are not permitted, with exception of service animals. Kennels are provided free at the Visitor Center.
- Fireworks, intoxicants and hunting are prohibited.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the visitor center.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

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Florida state park**



**Ellie Schiller
Homosassa Springs
Wildlife State Park**
West Central
Florida

A Showcase for Florida's Wildlife



*...the Real Florida*SM

National Gold Medal Winner

Florida State Parks - "America's First Two-Time Winner"



**FLORIDA
State Parks**
*...the Real Florida*SM



Created on 09/09

Real Fun in ...the Real FloridaSM

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park showcases some of Florida's loveliest landscape surrounding the headwaters of the Homosassa River. The 210-acre park is home to native Florida wildlife and one of the only places you can see a West Indian manatee up close 365 days a year.

The **Visitor Center**/main entrance on U.S. 19 includes a ticket counter, Manatee Education Center, boat docks, gift shop and restrooms. Another ticket counter, gift shop and restrooms are located at the West Entrance on Fishbowl Drive where visitors may dine at the Wildside Café.

Visitors may travel on **pontoon boats** along Pepper Creek from the Visitor Center to the West Entrance. Trams provide alternate transportation.

The Fish Bowl **underwater observatory** allows visitors to see endangered West Indian manatees and thousands of fish in the crystal-clear freshwater spring. **Educational programs** on the manatees, Florida wildlife, alligators and the park's hippopotamus are presented daily. The **Children's Education Center** offers a variety of **hands-on activities** for young people.

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park provides visitors the opportunity to see Florida's wildlife in a natural setting along 1.1 miles of **paved trails and boardwalks**. Birdwatchers enjoy exploring **Pepper Creek Trail**, a .75-mile wheelchair-accessible trail.

Photo B.Garvin



Directions

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park is located in Homosassa Springs, 75 miles north of Tampa on U.S. 19 and 90 miles northwest of Orlando.