



Port Aransas & Mustang Island
Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau

PORT ARANSAS & MUSTANG ISLAND AREA FACTS

LOCATION

Mustang Island is an 18 mile (29 km) long barrier island on the Gulf Coast of Texas. The island is oriented northeast-southwest, with the Gulf of Mexico on the east and south, and Corpus Christi Bay on the north and west. At the northern end of Mustang Island lies Port Aransas, the only town on the island. Port Aransas is located at the entrance to the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. The Port of Corpus Christi is the fifth largest port in the U.S. in total tonnage. Port Aransas is approximately 30 miles (48 km) northeast of Corpus Christi, 175 miles (282 km) southeast of San Antonio, 200 miles (322 km) south of Austin, 200 miles (322 km) southwest of Houston, and 380 miles (612 km) south of Dallas.

CLIMATE

The island's annual average temperature is a mild 71.5°F (21.9°C). The annual average rainfall is 31.92 inches (81.08 cm), and the prevailing wind is southeasterly.

POPULATION

Port Aransas has approximately 3,480 permanent residents (2010 census) and over 5 million visitors annually.

GOVERNMENT

City Council: 6 members and mayor.

Police department: 17 officers

Fire department: 24 volunteers

County Constable: 7 full-time

GETTING HERE

- Driving – Take Interstate 37 to Corpus Christi, then U.S. Highway 181 through Portland, to State Highway 361 through Aransas Pass, to the free ferry. Or, take Interstate 37 to Corpus Christi, right onto State Highway 358, and left onto State Highway 361 to Port Aransas.
- Flying – Corpus Christi International Airport is approximately 45 minutes from Port Aransas. Air service providers include American Airlines, Southwest and United. All providers offer daily, nonstop flights to Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth international airports.

San Antonio International Airport is only 2 hours and 40 minutes from Port Aransas. Ten airlines offer hundreds of daily domestic and international flights.

Private and corporate planes can land in Port Aransas at Mustang Beach Airport's 3,500 ft. lighted runway.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Port Aransas & Mustang Island has over 5,000 accommodation units for all lifestyles and budgets, including beachfront resorts, hotels, fully furnished condominiums, luxurious vacation homes, charming cottages, and full-service RV parks.

MARINAS

1 public and 1 private. Public marina offers 6 boat launching ramps.

PARKS

- Port Aransas Community Park – 6 lane, 25 meter outdoor heated swimming pool, 2 baseball fields, t-ball field, soccer field, jogging trail/exercise course, playground and picnic area, sand volleyball court, basketball court, putting green, skateboard park, dog park, and observation tower.
- Roberts Point Park – Pavilion, amphitheatre, observation tower, bulkhead with walkway, rock jetties, basketball and bocce courts, playground and picnic area, and a fishing pier.
- I.B. Magee Beach Park – Camping, showers, RV spaces, and an educational wetland area.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Joan & Scott Holt Paradise Pond – This freshwater pond is a haven for resident and migratory birds.
- Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center – A boardwalk extending into a marsh provides a perfect vantage point for discovering the hundreds of bird species found on the island. Every Wednesday at 9 a.m. there is a free, guided public tour.
- Little Chapel on the Dunes – Built in the 1930's by Aline Carter (Poet Laureate of Texas 1947-1949), this charming chapel sits on the highest vantage point in Port Aransas.
- Lydia Ann Lighthouse – Privately owned and operated, the lighthouse has been in existence since the 1800's. It is the only lighthouse on the Texas Gulf Coast with 24-hour caretakers. It is not open to the public, but visitors may view it from the water.
- Mustang Island State Park – Situated on 5 miles of coastline, with water & electric and primitive camp sites.
- Old Gun Bunker – Location where cannons were located during WWII to protect the ship channel.

- Port Aransas Nature Preserve – This 1,217 acre preserve encompasses over 3 miles of hiking and bicycle trails, a pavilion, boardwalks over wetland flats, covered seating areas, and two overlook towers.
- Port Aransas Wetlands Park – The wetland lies on a natural tidal flat and attracts a number of resident and migratory birds.
- San Jose Island – Also referred to as St. Jo’s Island, this privately owned island is located across the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. Vehicles are not allowed on the island’s 21 miles of undisturbed beach, providing excellent opportunities for beachcombing and surf fishing.
- South Jetty – Granite jetties form the pathway to the Gulf of Mexico. Ideal location for fishing and watching dolphins and sea turtles.
- The Tarpon Inn – Reported to be haunted, this historic hotel has survived a series of disasters and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Over 7,000 tarpon scales adorn the lobby walls, including one by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who fished in Port Aransas in 1937.
- The University of Texas Marine Science Institute Wetlands Education Center – Visitors will discover the value of wetlands at this educational resource, which offers indoor and outdoor interpretive exhibits. The site features an extensive boardwalk system and several observation platforms for viewing resident and migratory birds. Free guided tours are offered each Tuesday and Thursday. The indoor Estuary Explorium provides a unique opportunity to learn about local estuaries through interactive exhibits.

RECREATION & ACTIVITIES

- Beach/watersports – Parasailing, sandcastle building lessons, kiteboarding, surfing, swimming, sailing, kayaking, paddleboarding, jet skiing, windsurfing, boating, fishing, and beachcombing.
- Nature-related activities – Five nature preserves feature hiking and bike trails, birding sites, boardwalks and wildlife observation areas; dolphin watching trips.
- Adventure activities – skydiving and helicopter tours.
- Golf carts – Cruise around town and the beach in brightly colored golf carts.
- Pirate adventures – Families can ride aboard a 70' pirate ship with sword fighting pirates, or defend a dolphin watching boat against a pirate attack.

BEACH

The beach at Mustang Island covers 18 miles of uninterrupted public shoreline and is open to vehicles. Pets are welcome, but they must remain leashed. Camping and bonfires are permitted. A parking permit for a minimal fee is required.

FISHING

Known as the “Fishing Capital of Texas”, Port Aransas boasts the best in all areas of the sport. Anglers can take an off-shore excursion, fish the bays and channels, and cast a line in the surf or from one of the four, lighted public piers. Fishing tournaments abound during the summer, with one nearly every weekend, ranging from kids to women only and billfish to redfish tournaments.

BIRDING

Texas is the number one state for birding in the U.S. Located in the heart of the Central Flyway, Port Aransas and Mustang Island are a birder’s paradise. Hundreds of species of resident birds and thousands of migrants can be found here. With six sites on the Great Texas Birding Trail, Mustang Island is the optimal spot for bird watching.

GOLFING

Palmilla Beach Resort & Golf Club is the only links-style course in Texas. Located along the Gulf of Mexico, this 18-hole, Par 71, Arnold Palmer Signature course is a challenge for even the most expert golfer, with the steady gulf breeze, strategically arranged fairways, fast and true greens, and native coastal grasses waiting to catch missed shots.

SHOPPING

Numerous unique shops, galleries and boutiques appeal to the casual browser and shopaholic.

DINING

Local restaurants feature fresh, local seafood, including “cook your catch” and authentic Italian and Mexican fare, bar-b-que, burgers and pizza.

ARTS & CULTURE

- Choose from numerous settings to view works of island art, ranging from casual home studios to galleries and interior decorators. The Port Aransas Art Center is a local hub for artists and is host to numerous year-round events.
- The Port Aransas Museum features exhibits that showcase early island living to the present day.
- Farley Boat Works showcases the history of boat building in Port Aransas and offers a working boat shop, where visitors can watch or participate in building a boat.
- The Port Aransas Community Theatre offers year-round performances including comedies, dramas and musicals.
- Sunset Sounds concerts are held the second Friday of each month, April through October, and feature area musicians.

EVENTS

- Whooping Crane Festival – This annual event fosters awareness of the endangered Whooping Cranes that winter at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Festival events include world-renowned speakers, guided boat trips, workshops, bus tours, and a nature-related trade show. www.whoopingcranefestival.org
- Texas SandFest – The Annual Texas SandFest is the largest master sand sculpting competition in the U.S. The three-day event attracts master sand sculptors from around the world. Each year, more than 100,000 people attend this popular festival. www.texassandfest.org
- Deep Sea Roundup – This family-friendly event is the oldest saltwater fishing tournament on the Texas Gulf Coast. www.deepsearoundup.com
- Harvest Moon Regatta – The largest point-to-point sailing regatta in U.S. coastal waters. Sailors travel 150 nautical miles from Galveston Island to Port Aransas during this annual event. www.harvestmoonregatta.com