

## Alabama Gulf Ecological Management Site (GEMS)

The GEMS Program was established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Gulf of Mexico Program and five gulf states to advance conservation efforts of coastal areas that represent unique habitats for fish, wildlife and other natural resources of particular significance.

# Orange Beach Maritime Forest and Gulf State Park

## Description

- The Orange Beach Maritime Forest and Gulf State Park GEM site stretches over 6,700 acres of land, predominately covered by maritime forest habitat.
- The site includes over 600 acres of forest that borders the Gulf State Park to the north, a large pitcher plant bog, cypress swamps, wetlands and 2.5 miles of white sand beaches on four preserved stretches.
- Gulf State Park was designated in 1939 and is Alabama's southernmost state park.

Photo by Billy Pope/ADCNR

## Protected and Managed Lands

**Orange Beach Maritime Forest (591 acres)** is located on the western side of Gulf State Park.

**Gulf State Park (6,150 acres)** is located in Orange Beach and Gulf Shores, Alabama.

Photo by Billy Pope/ADCNR



# Orange Beach Maritime Forest and Gulf State Park

## Location

Alabama,  
Baldwin County

## Relative Size

The GEM site is  
approximately  
6,741 acres.



- Bon Secour NWR
- Lillian Swamp
- Lower Perdido Bay
- North Mississippi Sound
- Mobile Tensaw
- OB Maritime Forest-GSP
- Perdido River Corridor
- Weeks Bay NERR

Photo by Kelly Reetz at Gulf State Park



Monarch Butterflies

Photo by Share the Beach Program



Loggerhead Turtle

Photo by Kelly Reetz at Gulf State Park



Great Horned Owls

## Orange Beach Maritime Forest and Gulf State Park Facts:

- Habitats include: Maritime live oak forests, wet longleaf pine savannas, coastal freshwater wetlands, intertidal marshes and flats, beaches and dunes, cypress swamps, a large pitcher plant bog and 900 acres of freshwater lakes.
- The beaches of Gulf State Park provide critical habitat for the threatened loggerhead sea turtles that come ashore to nest from May to October.
- Orange Beach contains Alabama's last remaining "intact" maritime forest.
- The Orange Beach Maritime Forest wetlands function as flood control for the adjacent low lying coastal community and as habitat for migratory bird and butterfly species.
- The Gulf Coast was a popular area for fishing and gathering food during prehistoric times. Potshards and oyster shells have been found throughout the Orange Beach Maritime Forest, suggesting the presence of Native Americans in the area at one time.

Photo at Gulf State Park

