

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.

Weeks Bay

National Estuarine Research Reserve

Description

- The Weeks Bay NERR is the nation's 16th National Estuarine Research Reserve, established in 1986 to preserve a representative portion of Mobile Bay's estuarine habitat for research and education.
- The Reserve comprises 6,525 acres of estuarine lowland swamp, marsh, forested wetlands and water bottoms in both freshwater and brackish water habitats.
- Weeks Bay receives waters from the Magnolia and Fish rivers and is connected by an inlet to Mobile Bay.
- Weeks Bay is approximately 1,718 acres in size and has an average depth of five feet.



Protected and Managed Lands

Forever Wild Land Trust Tracts:

- **The Turkey Branch Tract (20 acres)** is located northwest of Weeks Bay.
- **The Worcester Tract (49 acres)** is located north of Weeks Bay along Fish River, west of Underwood Road.
- **The Harris Tract (64 acres)** is located on Fish River, adjacent and north of the Worcester Tract.
- **The Riverlands Tract (90 acres)** is located on Fish River, north of Harris Tract.

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Tracts:

- **Viewpoint Park (two acres)** is located at the mouth of Weeks Bay.
- **The Lott Tract (three acres)** is located at the mouth of Weeks Bay, just north of Viewpoint Park.
- **The Meador Tract (four acres)** is located along Fish River and is the most northern tract in the Weeks Bay NERR.
- **Fish River Marina (22 acres)** is located along Fish River, south of U.S. HWY 98.
- **The Safe Harbor Tract (81 acres)** is located along Fish River, north of the Damson Tract.
- **The Ogburn Tract (158 acres)** is located directly south of the Foley tract extending approximately to the south of the Magnolia River.
- **The Foley Tract (178 acres)** is located on the northeast side of Weeks Bay, on the eastern shore of Fish River.
- **The Damson Tract (360 acres)** is located south of U.S. Hwy. 98 and extends along the western shore of Weeks Bay.
- **The Swift Tract (615 acres)** is located approximately 1.5 miles south of the mouth of Weeks Bay.

Weeks Bay

National Estuarine Research Reserve

Location

Alabama,
Baldwin County

Relative Size

The GEM site is
approximately
6,525 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 Marlene Cashen



White Topped Pitcher Plants

Photo by Marlene Cashen



Brown Pelican

Weeks Bay NERR Facts:

- Habitats include: Freshwater and saltwater marshes, tidal flats, submerged aquatic vegetation, oyster reefs, tupelo and cypress swamps, tidal flats, upland and bottomland forests, riparian buffers, pine savannas, maritime forests, longleaf pines and a pitcher plant bog.
- Weeks Bay contains exceptional biological productivity and diversity and is home to unique plant habitats including rare stands of Atlantic white cedar, pitcher plant bogs and cypress swamps.
- Nearly 350 species of resident and migratory birds use the NERR for breeding, nesting, feeding, or wintering habitat.
- The Alabama Department of Environmental Management designated Weeks Bay as an Outstanding National Resource Water.
- The NERR provides habitat for the endangered Alabama red-bellied turtle and West Indian manatee.



Photo by Angela Underwood

