

# Seagrape Nature Trail

This 1,800-foot accessible nature trail leads to an observation platform from which visitors can see the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Intracoastal Waterway to the west.



## 1 The Journey Begins

The Palm Beach County Natural Areas System protects historic native ecosystems and their biological diversity. The natural areas are open to the public for passive recreation, environmental education, and scientific research. We solve the problem of saving the land and providing facilities for public use by carefully designing the parking lots and trails so that they have minimal impact on native ecosystems. The construction of public use facilities occurs in previously disturbed areas. This area was once covered with the nonnative Brazilian pepper. Department staff and volunteers restored the area by planting native species such as seagrape and gumbo limbo.

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## 2 Made in the Shade

This cool, shady oasis that greets visitors as they enter Juno Dunes is the maritime hammock. It is believed the word "hammock" comes from the Native American word *hammocka*, meaning "shady place." Most maritime hammocks occur on coastal dunes old enough to have stabilized so that prolonged tree growth can occur. Development of this habitat usually begins in the coastal swales between dunes, where higher soil moisture already exists. Common plants of the maritime hammock include seagrape, strangler fig, wild coffee, and snowberry.



Common Yellowthroat  
Photo by Herbert Clarke

## 3 Flights of Fancy

Juno Dunes is a "wildlife bed and breakfast" for migratory birds. Migration is the mass movement of animals from one region to another. Its origin is from the Latin word *migrare*, which means to go from one place to another. Florida is located midway along the Atlantic Flyway, a major migration route between Canada and South America. During the fall and spring migrations, many species of songbirds and birds of prey can be seen at the natural area.

## 4 A Tree That Bites

This tree has many names: Hercules'-club, southern pricklyash, and toothache tree. Its appearance suggests that it should be left alone - the leaves and trunk are covered with sharp prickles. The small circular cavities in the leaves contain aromatic oils. This is a distinguishing characteristic of plants in the citrus family. Another native citrus found at Juno Dunes is the wild lime.



## 5 Rare Sights

The Juno Dunes Natural Area is home to hundreds of plant and animal species. Some, like the saw palmetto, northern mockingbird, and common raccoon, are abundant throughout Florida. Others are not so fortunate - 20 plant species and 20 animal species recorded at the natural area are considered to be threatened, rare, or a species of special concern in Florida.

The leatherback is one of three protected sea turtle species (the other two species are the green and the loggerhead) that nest on the natural area's beach. It is the largest sea turtle, weighing in at more than 1,000 pounds. What may be more astonishing is that the leatherback reaches such a large size by eating relatively small animals - jellyfish.



The Florida scrub-jay, as its name suggests, lives only in Florida scrub habitat. In the spring and summer, they feed on insects; in the fall and winter, they feed on acorns produced by scrub oaks. Florida scrub-jays form extended family groups - the young from the previous year's clutch help raise the newly-hatched chicks. The development of scrub lands has led to a decrease in the number of Florida scrub-jays.



The largest Florida native airplant, the giant airplant, attaches itself to a rough-barked tree. Although the airplant appears to be parasitic, it only uses the tree as a place to grow. The giant airplant is a relative of the pineapple. It survives by collecting rain water in its leaf bases. This species is now threatened by the Mexican bromeliad weevil.

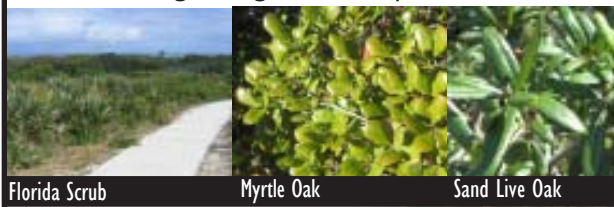
## 6 Beware the Poisonwood

This tree has toxic properties that can irritate the skin and cause a painful rash and blisters. The poisonwood is a member of the cashew family, which also includes poison ivy and mango. Like several other plants that are toxic to humans, the poisonwood does not appear to be harmful to wildlife. Many birds, including the white-crowned pigeon, feed on the plant's orange fruits.



## 7 High and Dry

It is hard to imagine that a dry, desert-like habitat exists in tropical South Florida. Florida scrub communities occur on sand ridges along former shorelines. The well-drained, nutrient-poor, sandy soil is a tough place for plants to thrive. Saw palmetto, myrtle oak, and sand live oak are common scrub plants. Their thick leaves and stunted growing habits help conserve water.



## 8 Is This Love?

Love vine is a native, leafless plant that can form dense mats over shrubs and trees. The vine grows root-like structures into its host plant that withdraw dissolved nutrients. The parasitic love vine can kill if it prevents sunlight from reaching the host plant's leaves. Birds eat the vine's fruits and spread the seeds in their droppings.



## 9 A Fine View

The observation platform sits atop an ancient dune ridge that is one of the highest natural features in Palm Beach County - approximately 44 feet above sea level. To the east are the beach and the Atlantic Ocean. To the west are the basin marshes of Juno Dunes. Just beyond the marshes and the buffer of tall trees is the Intracoastal Waterway.

# Juno Dunes Oceanfront Tract Trail System



The Juno Dunes Natural Area is located on U.S. Highway 1, north and south of Donald Ross Road, in Juno Beach and unincorporated Palm Beach County. This 578-acre natural area is the only remaining example of the Florida scrub ecosystem in Palm Beach County that extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Intracoastal Waterway. The 42-acre oceanfront tract is accessible through Loggerhead Park (1). The western section of the natural area is accessible from public use facilities located on the west side of U.S. Highway 1 just north of Donald Ross Road (2). There is a separate trail guide for this section.



Public use facilities include an accessible nature trail with an observation platform, a bicycle rack, a kiosk with educational exhibits, and a hiking trail. Restroom facilities and drinking water are available at Loggerhead Park, located just south of the natural area. Please use the designated nature and hiking trails as you explore the natural area. Do not feed the animals. When wild animals become dependent on handouts, they may lose their natural fear of humans and become aggressive and dangerous. Please dispose of your trash responsibly.

Coralbean  
(*Erythrina herbacea*)



Snowberry  
(*Chiococca alba*)



Silk Bay  
(*Persea borbonia* var. *humilis*)



Pricklypear  
(*Opuntia humifusa*)



Roughplant  
(*Rivina humilis*)



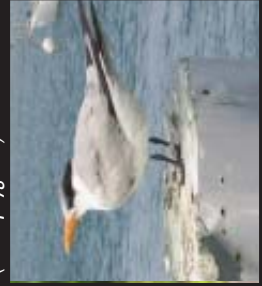
Marlberry  
(*Arcyria excallonioides*)



Moonflowers  
(*Iponoea alba*)



Royal tern  
(*Sterna maxima*)



Northern Mockingbird  
(*Mimus polyglottos*)



## Birds

Grackles  
(*Tibicen* sp.)



Northern Cardinal  
(*Cardinalis cardinalis*)



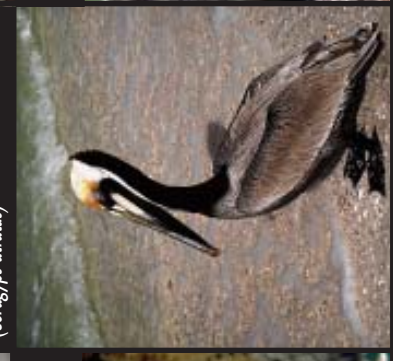
Halloween Pennant  
(*Callithemis eponina*)



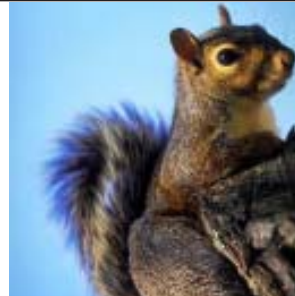
Red-tailed Hawk  
(*Buteo jamaicensis*)



Brown Pelican  
(*Pelecanus occidentalis*)



Eastern Gray Squirrel  
(*Sciurus carolinensis*)



Common Raccoon  
(*Procyon lotor*)



## Mammals

Gopher Tortoise  
(*Gopherus polyphemus*)



Eastern Racer  
(*Coluber constrictor*)

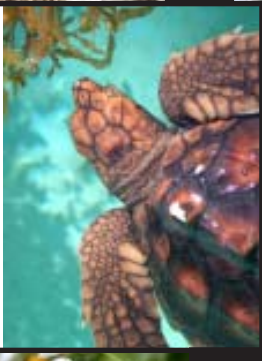


## Reptiles

Green Anole  
(*Anolis carolinensis*)



Loggerhead  
(*Caretta caretta*)



Great southern White  
(*Ascia monuste*)

## Insects

Queen  
(*Danaus gilpinus*)



# Juno Dunes Natural Area Trail Guide (Oceanfront Tract)



### Prohibited on the Site:

- Smoking
- Hunting
- Firearms
- Feeding wildlife
- Alcoholic beverages
- Pets or domestic animals
- Bicycles or motor vehicles
- Collecting plants or animals

Use only existing trails. This is a "no trash" area. All items taken in must be taken out. The natural area is open from sunrise to sunset, seven days a week, including holidays.

Toilets and drinking water are available at Loggerhead Park.

**In an emergency, call 911 or the Juno Beach Police Department at 561-746-6201.**

Welcome to one of Palm Beach County's natural treasures. The Juno Dunes Natural Area oceanfront tract is a 42-acre portion of the 578-acre natural area. It contains several plant communities, including beach/dune, coastal strand, maritime hammock, and scrub.

The earliest accounts of the natural area come from U.S. Army Topological Engineer reports made during the Second Seminole Indian War in the 1840s. During the late 1800s, the short-lived Celestial Railroad ran through the eastern portion of the natural area (oceanfront tract).

Major changes took place in the natural area during the 1960s. In response to a mosquito population explosion, the County's Mosquito Control Department dug ditches throughout the western portions of the natural area. Wetland water levels dropped, saltwater replaced freshwater, and the sawgrass marshes evolved into mangrove swamps.

In 1992 Palm Beach County purchased 148 acres from Juno Associates, Ltd. In 1995 the County purchased 334 acres from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Additional land purchases and lease agreements increased the size of the site to 578 acres by 1999.

This natural area is part of a countywide system of natural areas, protected to maintain the diversity of biological communities and species in Palm Beach County. The natural areas are open to the public for educational and passive recreational use such as hiking, bird watching, and nature photography.



The Juno Dunes oceanfront tract is home to hundreds of plant and animal species. The railroad vine is a common beach plant that plays an important part in the beach/dune habitat. Its sprawling stems trap and hold blowing sand, which builds up the fragile dunes.

### Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners



In accordance with the provisions of ADA, this brochure may be requested in an alternate format.

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**A Conservation and Recreation Lands Program, Florida Communities Trust Preservation 2000 Program, and Florida Inland Navigation District Project**