

This trail passes through varied habitats, and because of this, it is possible to see an abundance of birds, butterflies and other wildlife, including the American alligator, turkey, feral hogs and armadillos.

Just past Gate 28 the trail is wide and grassy. It passes through a disturbed upland habitat with a history of frequent logging activity. This section of the trail is excellent for bird watching, especially in the oaks branching over the trail. The mixed deciduous trees, pines, wild blueberries, blackberries and wild flowers attract both birds and butterflies. Birds frequently spotted during the spring are yellow-throated warblers, black-and-white warblers, swallowtail kites, Carolina red-bellied woodpeckers, white-eyed vireos, tufted titmouses, ruby-crowned kinglets, northern parulas, chickadees, hermit thrush and blue-grey gnatcatchers. By mid-March swallowtail kites can be seen soaring overhead in this area. Several pairs of swallowtail kites nest in the Refuge, and this trail is believed to be near one of the sites

In ¼ mile, take a right turn at the fork to an area that was last logged in 2013 and the logged clearing replanted to long-leaf pine and wire-grass. This open area is a good place to spot butterflies. The most common one seen here are the palamedes swallowtail, spicebush swallowtail, and black swallowtail butterflies. .

A few yards past the open area the trail will pass over freshwater swamp. Here the vegetation changes to plants more adapted to a wet habitat. Coastal plains willow, swamp dogwood, dahoon holly, American elm, swamp bay, wax myrtle, red cedar and Walter viburnum grow along the edge of the trail. Further into the swamp are the bald cypress trees, red maples, pop ash and other trees adapted to a life in constant or near constant water.

At the next intersection, keep to the left. This area is slightly higher and drier. Armadillos are frequently seen digging or looking for food on the trail edge. In about ¼ mile on your right is Pond 5. If you approach quietly you may see an alligator sunning on the far bank. Before the land was acquired by the Refuge, Pond 5 was dug to build the elevated logging roads through the areas of freshwater swamps. The sides of the pond were cut steeply to deter mosquitoes, though if you are here during the summer months you may not believe it!

After Pond 5 keep to the left and in less than ¼ mile you will pass through locked gate 23. Turn left onto Nature Drive, the main road through the refuge, and continue a further ½ mile or so along the road that passes through freshwater swamp. Wild blue flag irises bloom in March in the shallow water; arrowroot, pickerel weed and spatter-dock start blooming around April and often there are enough flowers blooming in the ditches and road edges to attract butterflies. One of the most colorful butterflies sometimes seen along this stretch of road is the red-spotted purple butterfly.

Leave the Nature Drive and enter locked gate 24 to the left. This last section of the trail is ¾ mile long and passes through recently logged and thinned woodland. This is another wonderful area to sight birds and be attracted to the wildflowers growing in the open area and the birds are easier to spot here. Toward the end of the trail be aware to keep to your right and follow the oak lined trail to complete the loop.

Trail guide by Donna Thalacker, member,  
Friends of the Refuges.

Map developed by Daniel Barrand,  
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## Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges

# Turkey Foot Loop Trail



This flat, loop trail is 2.17 miles long and is one of the best trails in the refuge for seeing birds and butterflies, especially during the spring. The trail is named by refuge staff who refer to this area as "turkey foot" because the three gates at the end of the road form a turkey foot.

To reach the trailhead, drive to the end of Pond 4 Road. Pond 4 Road is in the southern half of the Refuge's Nature Drive, on the east side of the road and is well sign posted. Park at the end of Pond 4 Road and enter the trail through closed and locked gate 28 to the left.

Caution: Be aware that this is a wildlife refuge and while on this trail, though rare, you might encounter alligators and snakes. Ticks are common on grassy areas and poison ivy vines grow on many of the trees along the trail. Stay on the trail, watch where you place your feet and check for ticks when you leave the woods. Follow the orange blazed trees which are present at each trail junction. During the hunting season, wear bright colored clothing while on the trail.



Question Mark Butterfly



Fetterbush



Blue Butterwort



Spicebush Butterfly



Rock Rose



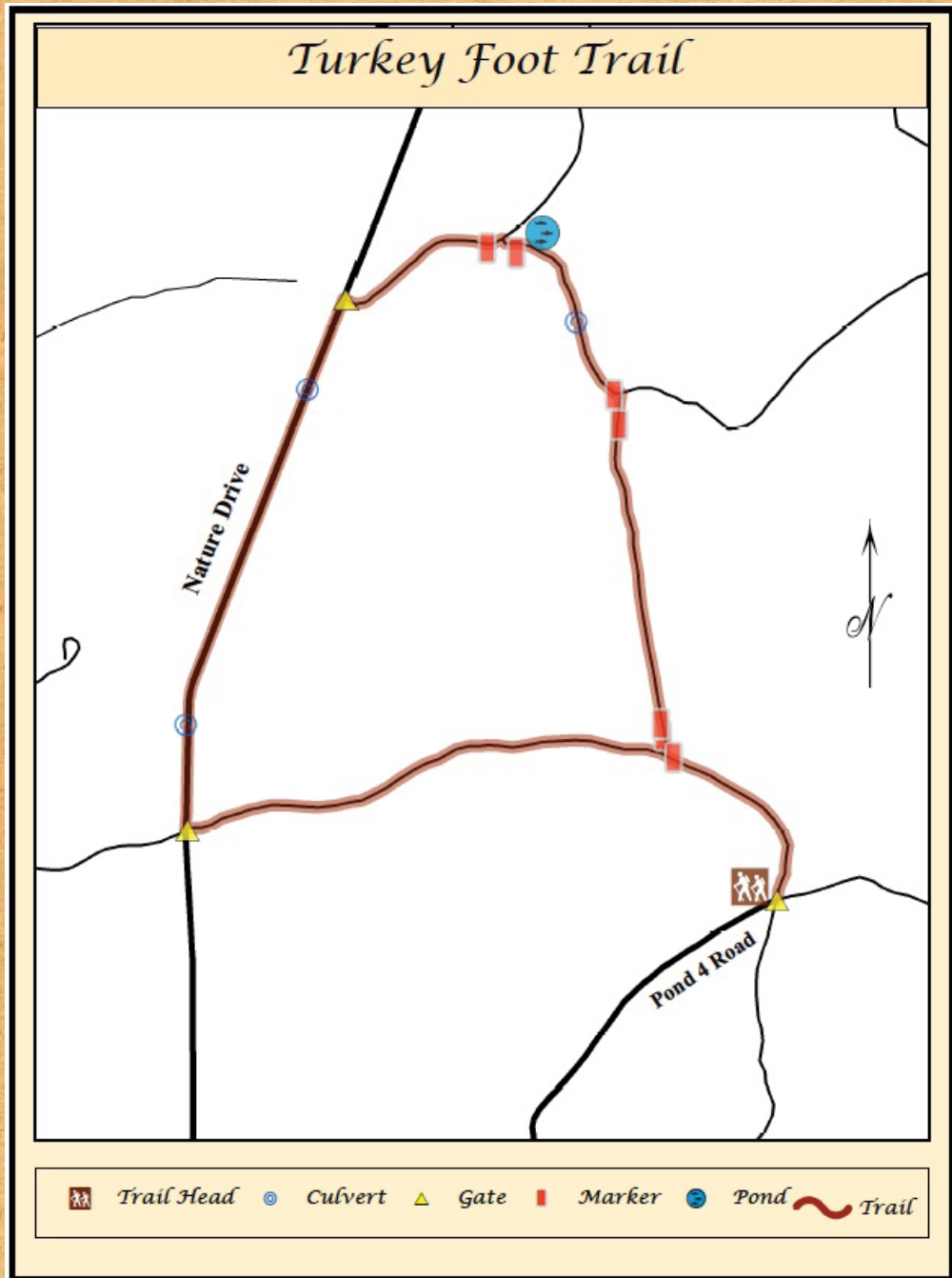
Star Rush



Lyre Leaf Sage



Bog Bachelors Button



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 information and downloadable GPS files.