



FIELD CLOSED
NO
TRESPASSING



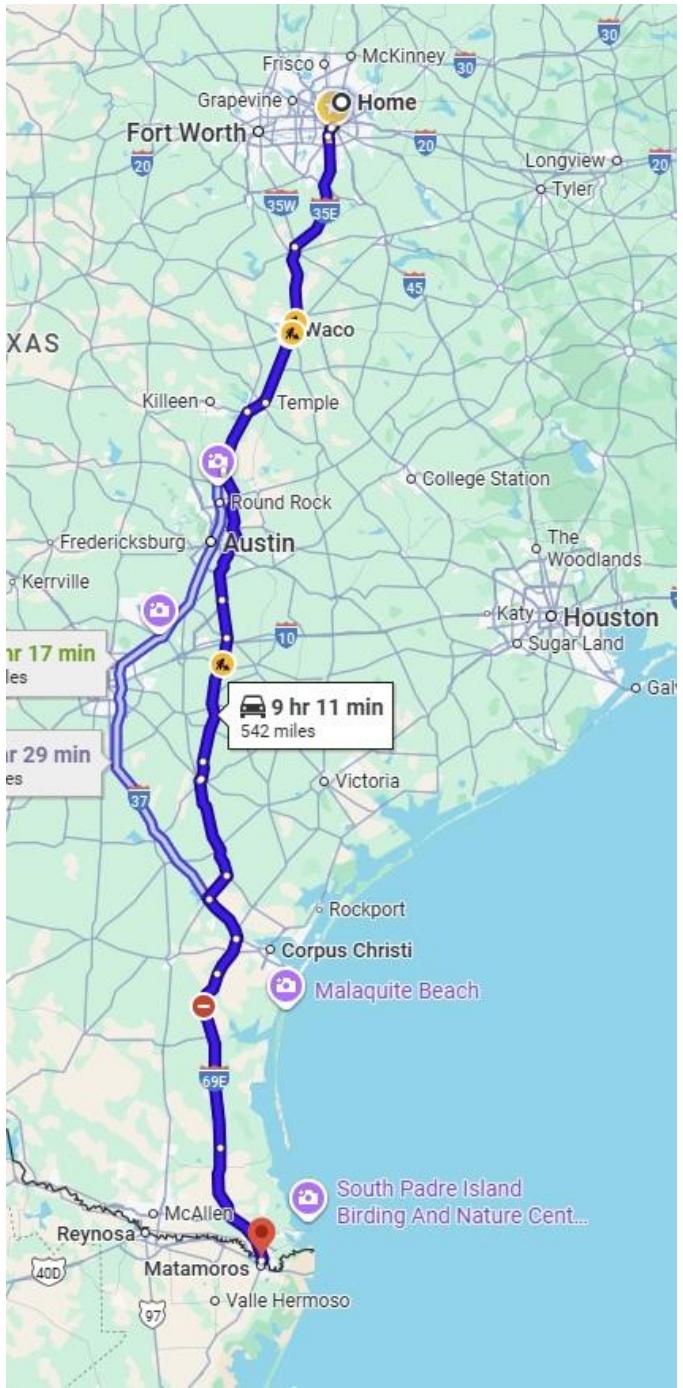
THE 2026 DCC SPRING FIELD TRIP

- THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY
- APRIL 2-6
- *BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES, BEACHES, BATTLEFIELDS, AND JUST MAYBE*
- *A BLASTOFF!*

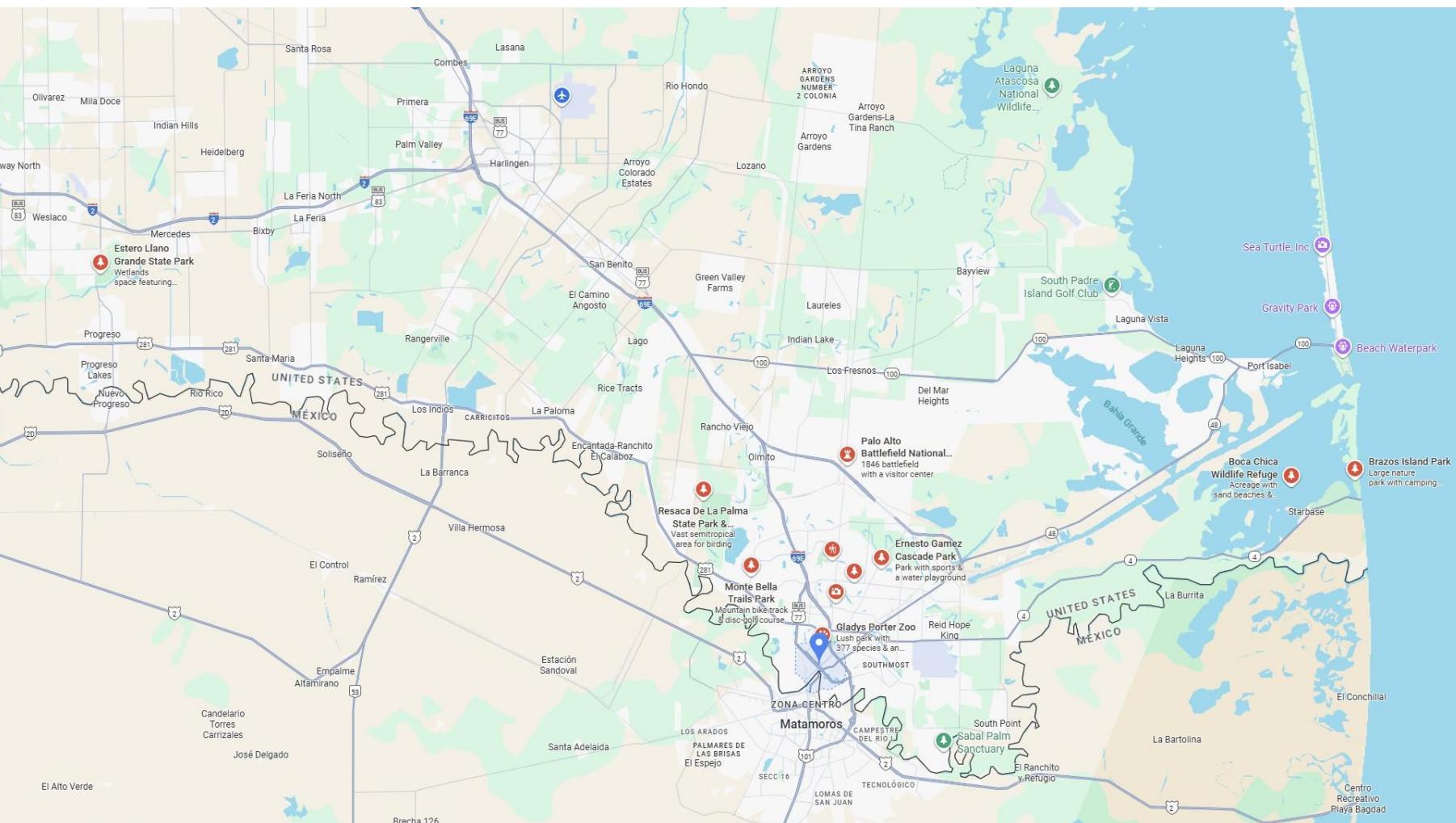
“THE VALLEY”



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Harlingen Airport

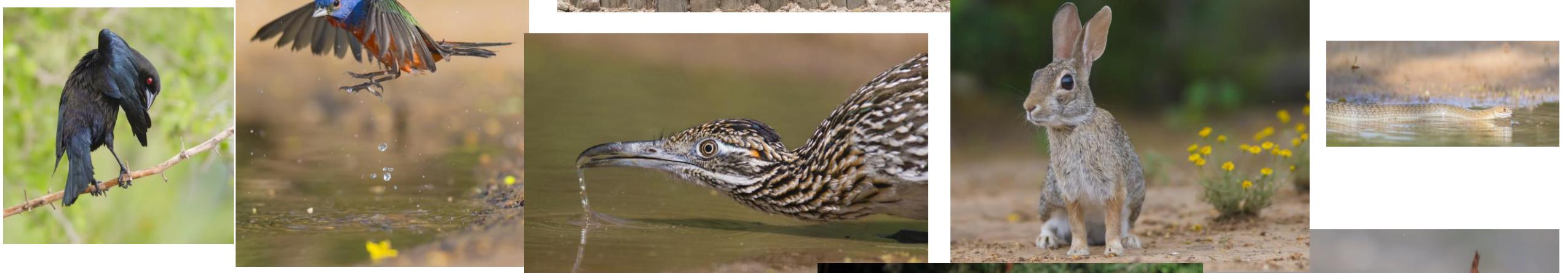


PRO TIP: PASSPORT (Janice Goetz)

Brownsville South
Padre Island
International Airport

The Ranch —
SANTA CLARA
RANCH

Wildlife
Photography &
Birding Ranch in
South Texas | Santa
Cruz Wildlife
Photography



LODGING

- THE 10 BEST Hotels in Brownsville, TX 2026 (from \$49) – Tripadvisor
- Search for accommodations in Brownsville - Google hotels
- The 10 Best Brownsville Hotels (From \$64)
- Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Brownsville by IHG on 1985 North Expressway 83 in Brownsville TX

TENTATIVE ITINERARY

(THANKS TO CHERY BRUMMETT)

- THURSDAY, APRIL 2nd: TRAVEL DALLAS TO BROWNSVILLE
 - FRIDAY, APRIL 3rd: SOUTH PADRE ISLAND
 - SATURDAY, APRIL 4th: HILDALGO COUNTY
 - SUNDAY, APRIL 5th: CAMERON COUNTRY
 - MONDAY, APRIL 6th: RETURN HOME

THURSDAY, APRIL 2nd

1. CHECK IN AT MOTEL
 1. HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS BROWNSVILLE
 2. DINNER AT A TACO JOINT (TBD, [Taco Trail New - Visit Brownsville Texas](#))
2. GOTO JOE & TONY OLIVEIRA PARK ([Facilities • Joe & Tony Oliveira Park](#))
 1. SKATE PARK?
 2. PARROTS AT DUSK (SUNSET IS AT 7:45, [Filming Wild Parrots In a City Park In Texas! - YouTube](#), [How the Rio Grande Valley Became Home to Flocks of Parrots](#))





© Julio Mulero



FRIDAY, APRIL 3rd

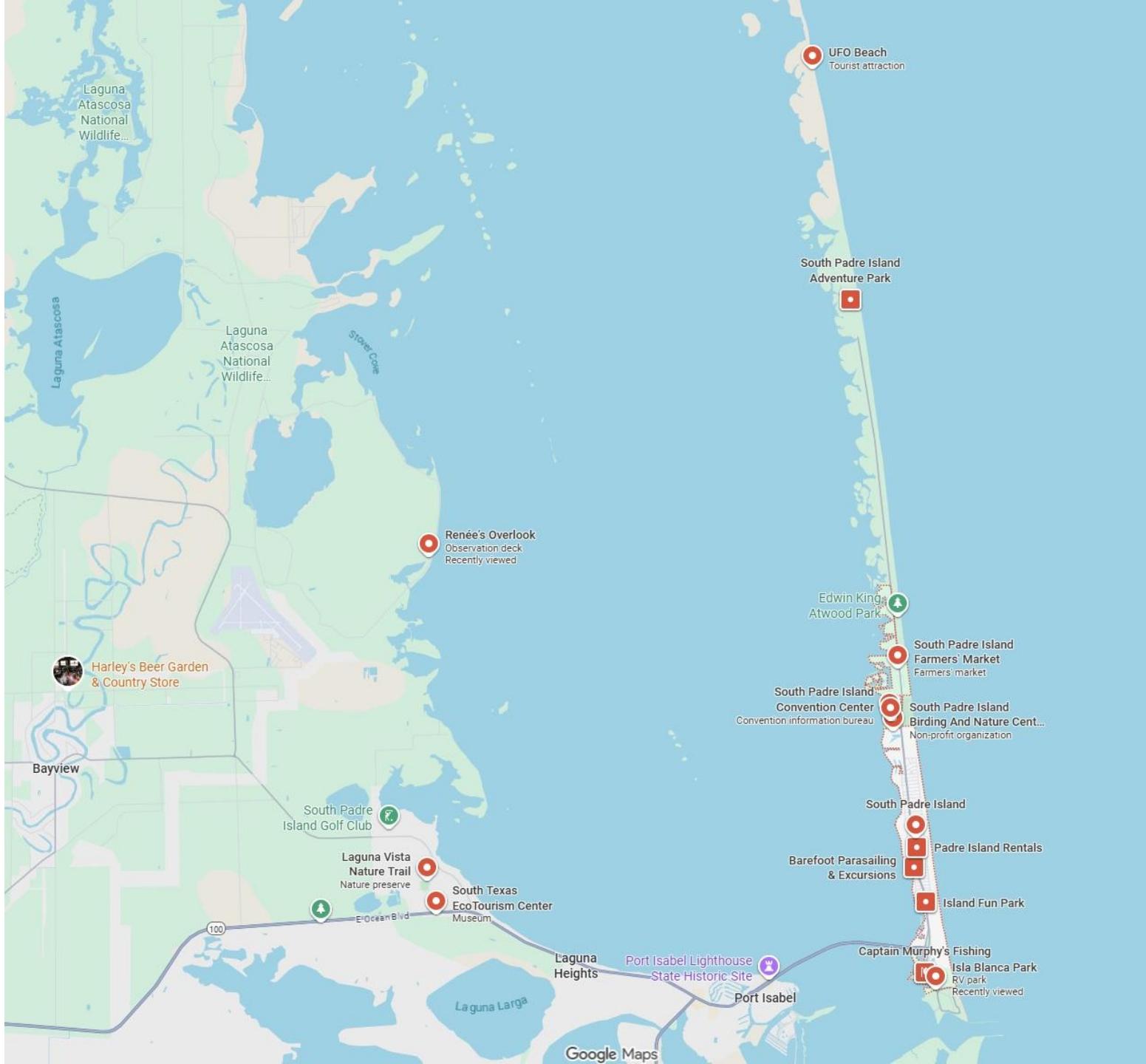
SOUTH PADRE
ISLAND

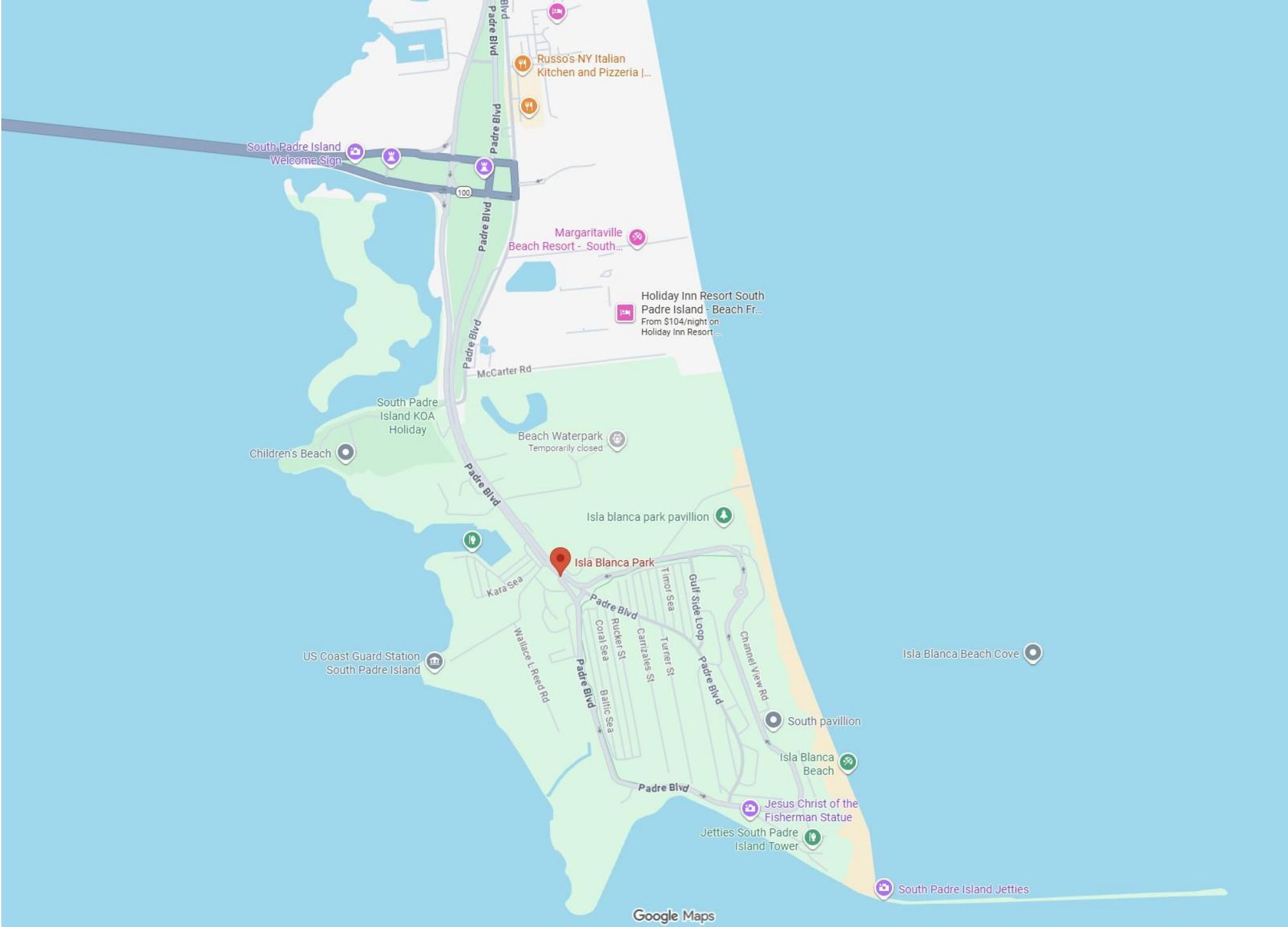


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SUGGESTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

- SUNRISE AT 7:17 AM-JETTY AT ISLA BLANCA PARK ([Isla Blanca Park - Cameron County](#))
- SOUTH TEXAS ECO TOURISM CENTER ([South Texas Ecotourism Center - Information - South Texas Ecotourism Center](#))
- PORT ISABEL ([Day Trip to Port Isabel](#)  [\(FULL EPISODE\) S10 E11](#))
- SOUTH PADRE BIRDING, NATURE CENTER, AND ALIGATOR SANCTUARY ([Home | spibirding.org](#))



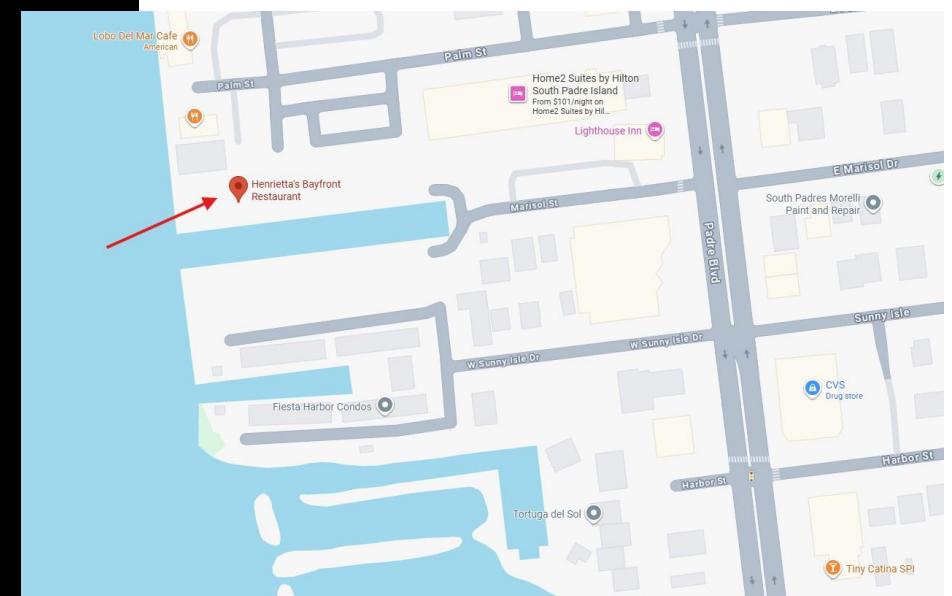


SUGGESTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

- LUNCH AT SOUTH PADRE ISLAND BREWING ([PI Brew Home](#) | [PI Brewing Company](#))
- LAGUNA MADRE NATURE TRAIL AT THE CONVENTION CENTER ([Laguna Madre Nature Trail](#))
- SEA TURTLE INC. ([HOME - Sea Turtle Inc.](#))
- SOUTH PADRE ISLAND BEACHES ([The 'UFO' That Washed Ashore On South Padre Island](#))
- DINNER AND FIREWORKS ([Fireworks every Friday at Henrietta's Bayfront Restaurant](#))
- (EASTER FIREWORKS-[Easter Day Fireworks](#))



Henrietta's Bayfront
Restaurant 1707 Laguna
Blvd. South Padre Island, TX
78597



SATURDAY, APRIL 4th



SUGGESTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

- BENTSEN-RIO GRANDE VALLEY STATE PARK (OPENS AT 7 AM [Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park — Texas Parks & Wildlife Department](#))
- NATIONAL BUTTERFLY CENTER ([National Butterfly Center](#))
- ESTERO LLANO GRANDE STATE PARK ([Estero Llano Grande State Park — Texas Parks & Wildlife Department](#))
- NANA'S TAQUERIA IN WESLACO ([NANA'S TAQUERIA - Home](#))
- SANTA ANA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ([Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#))
- MISSION BATS (ASK ABOUT THEM AT BUTTERFLY CENTER)

Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP

- **ADDRESS:** 2800 Bentsen Palm Dr., Mission, TX
[Google Maps Directions Link](#)
- **HOURS: Subject to change without notice**
 - Sundays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Mondays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Tuesdays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Wednesdays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Thursdays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Fridays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Saturdays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- **ADMISSION FEES: Subject to change without notice**
 - Adult: \$5 Daily
 - Group (10+ people): \$3 Daily
 - Child 12 Years and Under : Free
- **PHONE:** (956) 584-9156
- **TRAIL MAP LINKS:** [Park Map pdf](#)
- **AMENITIES:** Explore 7 miles of trail, including 3.5 miles of park road, on bike or foot. Bring your binoculars or rent a pair from the park store. You'll need them to fully appreciate the wildlife you'll see here.
- **ACCESSIBILITY:** The 1.8-mile Rio Grande Trail is wheelchair-accessible. Bikes aren't allowed on this trail. The park also offers Tram Tours.
- **WEBSITE LINK:** <https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/bentsen-rio-grande-valley>

Birders' Paradise
Down in the valley you'll find a birder's paradise. About 360 species of birds have been reported at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, along with butterflies, javelinas, bobcats and more!

Things to Do
Nature is the main attraction here.
[Look for birds](#) and other wildlife, get some exercise, and see the Rio Grande Valley in its near natural state. Stop by our Exhibit Hall to enjoy the bilingual (English/Spanish) exhibits.
To protect the natural environment, we do not allow cars in the park. Leave your car at headquarters and explore on [foot, bike](#) or take a [tram tour](#).
Reserve one of our [primitive campsites](#) (restrooms with showers are in the park). Book our 60-person [group hall](#) for your next gathering.

Look for birds
The park's woodlands and brushlands provide habitat for a wide variety of birds (and other wildlife). Look for them along our trails or at our viewing stations, water features and the two-story, wheelchair-accessible [Hawk Observation Tower](#).
About 360 bird species have been recorded in the park. These include subtropical species common in eastern Mexico, such as the Plain Chachalaca, Great Kiskadee and Altamira Oriole. The park is also a stopover for migratory birds, including Swainson's and Broad-winged hawks.
Thousands of hawks stream overhead in spring and fall as they migrate. You'll want to migrate to the Hawk Observation Tower for the best view - of the raptors, the tree canopy and Mexico.
Bring your binoculars or rent a pair from the park store. You'll need them to fully appreciate the wildlife you'll see here.
[Download our Bird Checklist | PDF](#).

The park is part of the World Birding Center.

National Butterfly Center

- **ADDRESS:** 3333 Butterfly Park, Mission TX
[Google Maps Directions Link](#)
- **HOURS:** Subject to change without notice
- Sundays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- Mondays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- Tuesdays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- Wednesdays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- Thursdays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- Fridays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- Saturdays - 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- **ADMISSION FEES:** Subject to change without notice
 - Adults: \$10.00
 - Children (5-12): \$5.00
 - Children Age 4 & Under: Free
 - Week pass: \$35.00
- **PHONE:** (956) 583-5400
- **TRAIL MAP LINKS:**
- **AMENITIES:**
- **ACCESSIBILITY:**
- **WEBSITE LINK:** <https://nationalbutterflycenter.org/>

BEFORE YOU VISIT

Before you visit the National Butterfly Center, here are a few things you should know:

- 1) We are NOT a national park, state park, or public property supported by taxpayer dollars. For this reason, your "park pass" is not valid here. We are a nonprofit organization that relies upon admission fees, programs, plant and gift shop sales, and donations to fund operations.
- 2) We are NOT a butterfly house. We are a 100-acre nature center planted for butterflies, so they are all outside and free-flying. Come prepared to walk earthen trails, deal with the weather and look for birds, butterflies and other wildlife in their native habitat.
- 3) Mother Nature controls the seasons, regulates the plants and determines the volume of butterflies in flight at any given time of year--NOT us. For this reason, drought, cold and cloudy weather, rain, high winds and other natural phenomena will affect the number of species and individual butterflies present.

Estero Llano Grande State Park

- **Birding**

- The park attracts a wide variety of birds, due to its habitats and its location; about 340 species have been documented here!
- Download our [Bird Checklist | PDF](#).
- Visit our [Nature page](#).
- We are part of the World Birding Center, a series of sites in the Lower Rio Grande Valley protecting wildlife habitat.
- **Indigo Blind:** Catch a glimpse of some of the park's more secretive birds at the Indigo Blind. It's tucked into an area of the park known as the Tropical Zone, among native trees and tropical non-native fruit trees planted by a previous owner. The blind is ADA accessible and includes a water feature. We fill a feeding station during winter months. Look for forest birds such as [Green Jays](#), [White-tipped Doves](#) and [Altamira Orioles](#).

- **Trails**

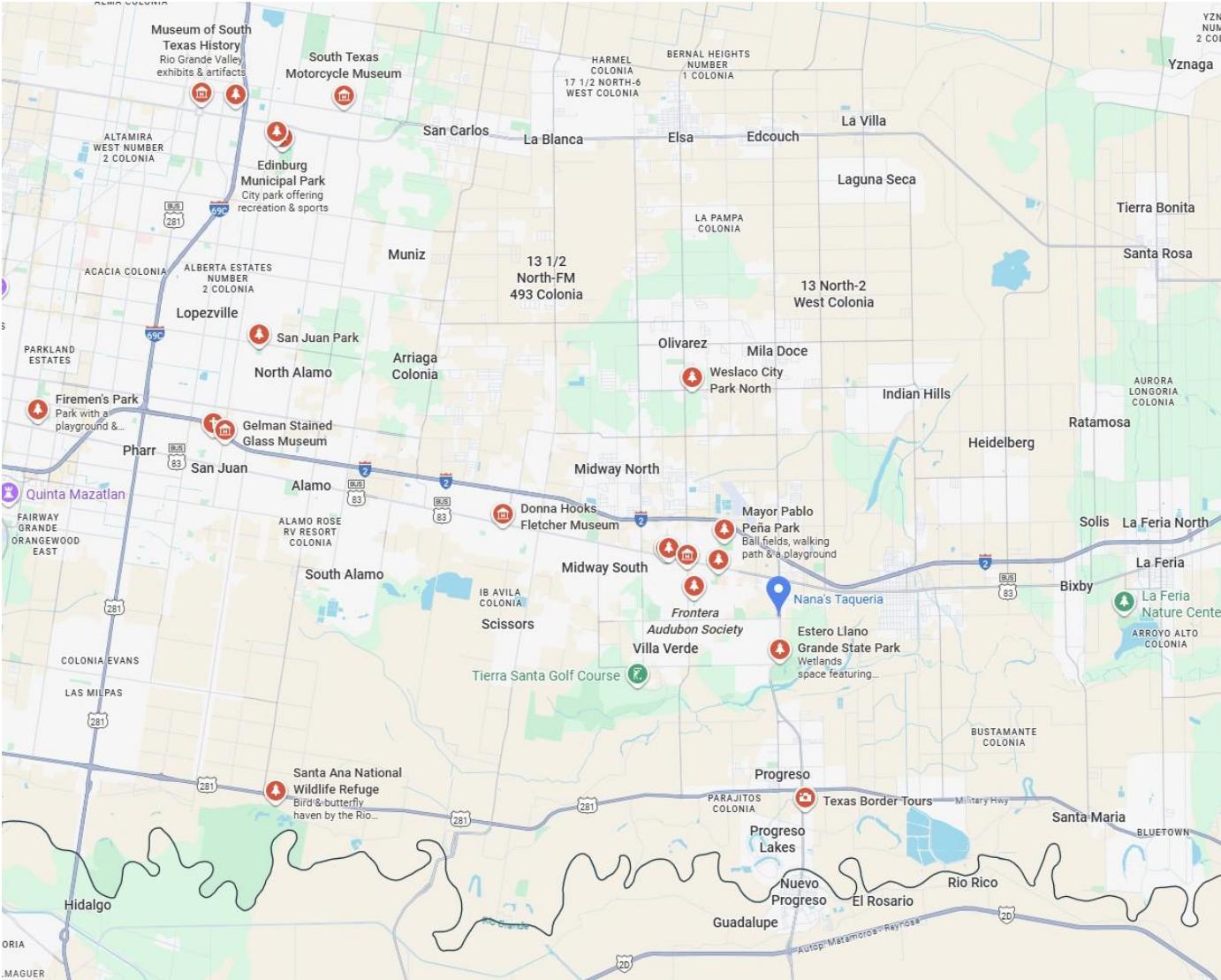
- Explore wetlands, ponds, woodlands and thorn scrub on more than [5 miles of trails](#). About 2 miles of trail are wheelchair accessible.
- We have several all-terrain wheelchairs for use in the park. Visit our [Accessibility Information page](#) for to learn more.
- [Be safe on the trails](#), no matter how you access them. Bring plenty of water and travel with a partner.

- **Nature watching**

- Nature takes center stage here. Walk the trails or sit quietly on a deck and take in the show!
- Alligator Lake is home to a few American alligators. Even if you don't see an alligator, you may see other animals as you walk through wetlands and brushy areas. Look for Common Pauraque, [White-tailed Kite](#) and our wetland birds. You might even see one of our resident [bobcats](#)!

NANA'S TAQUERIA IN WESLACO

Gelman Stained Glass Museum | Largest Stained Glass Window Collection in the United States



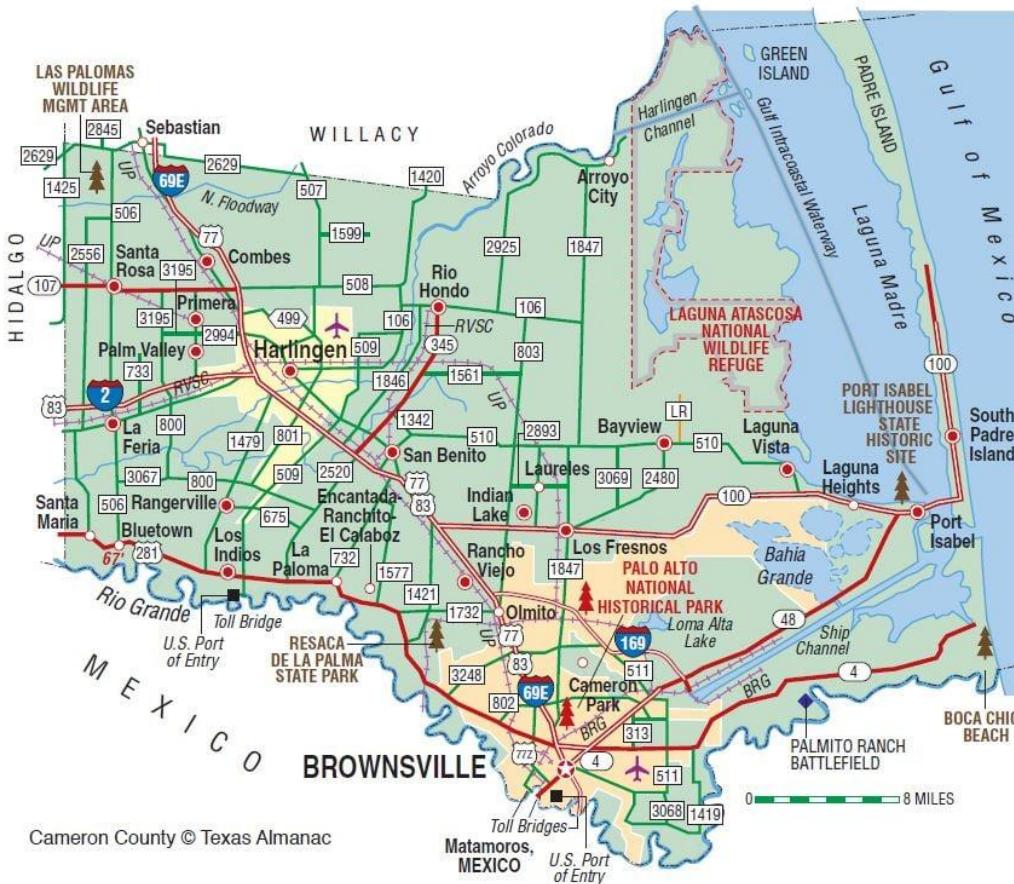
Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge

- **Our Species**
- Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge is home to resident species like green jays, chachalacas and great kiskadees, making it one of the top birding destinations in the world. Some of the rarest raptors at the refuge are the hook-billed kite and gray hawk. Spring warblers are abundant with more than 35 species seen, including golden-winged warbler, magnolia warbler, northern and tropical parula, American redstart, palm warbler and yellow-breasted chat. Zebra longwings, Julias, and Mexican bluewings are but a few of the more than 300 butterfly species can also be found on the refuge.

BAT WATCHING IN MISSION

- Bats are common in Mission, TX, especially the resourceful **Mexican free-tailed bat**, using highway culverts and palm trees as roosts, with notable sightings near the **Expressway 83 Conway Street exit**, forming significant, though often hidden, local populations alongside other Texas species like the Big Brown Bat and **Evening Bat**, offering pest control benefits.
- [Bats in Texas, including the Valley, facing population challenges | MyRGV.com](#)

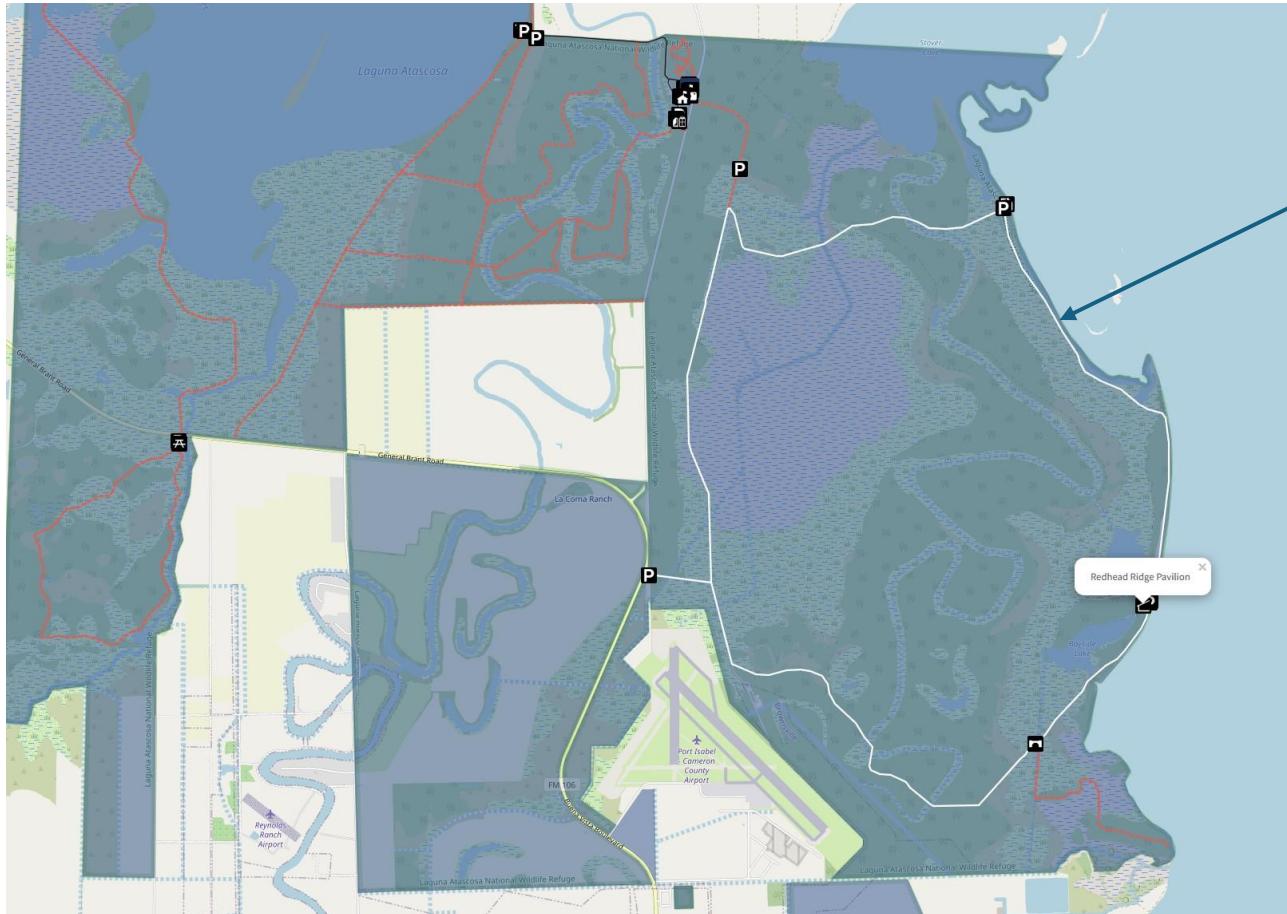
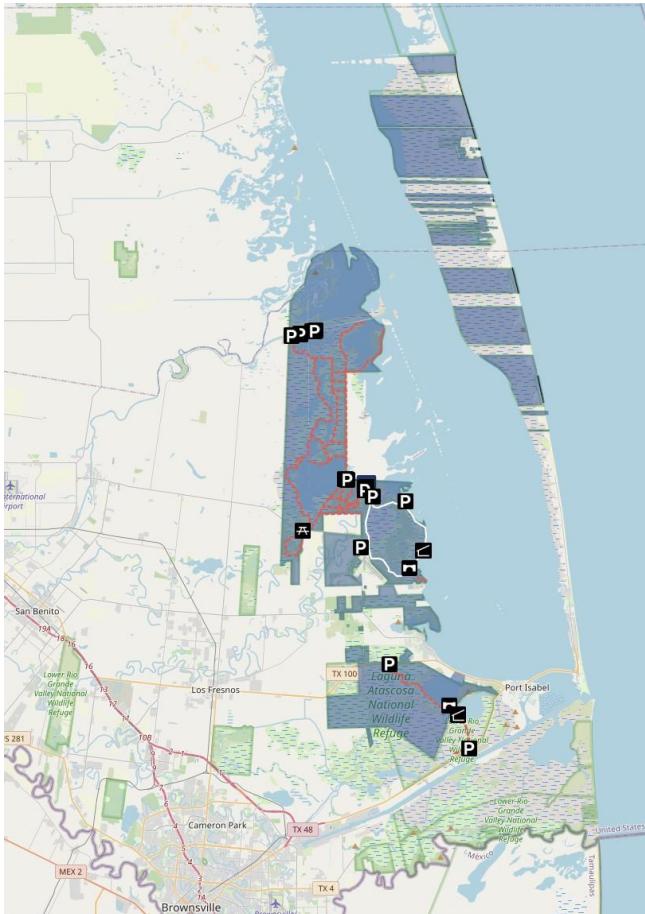
SUNDAY, APRIL 5th



SUGGESTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

- LAGUNA ATASCOSA NWR (SUNRISE OVER LAGUNA MADRE)
([Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#))
- LUNCH IN BROWNSVILLE (TBD)
- HISTORIC BROWNSVILLE ([Home | Brownsville Historical Association](#), [Historic Walking Tours - Visit Brownsville Texas](#), [Explore the Brownsville Historic Battlefield Trail \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#), [Home - Visit Brownsville Texas](#))
- BOCA CHICA BEACH AND STARBASE ([Boca Chica Beach - Visit Brownsville Texas](#))
- REMEMBER THE FIREWORKS ON SPI

LAGUNA ATASCOSA NWR



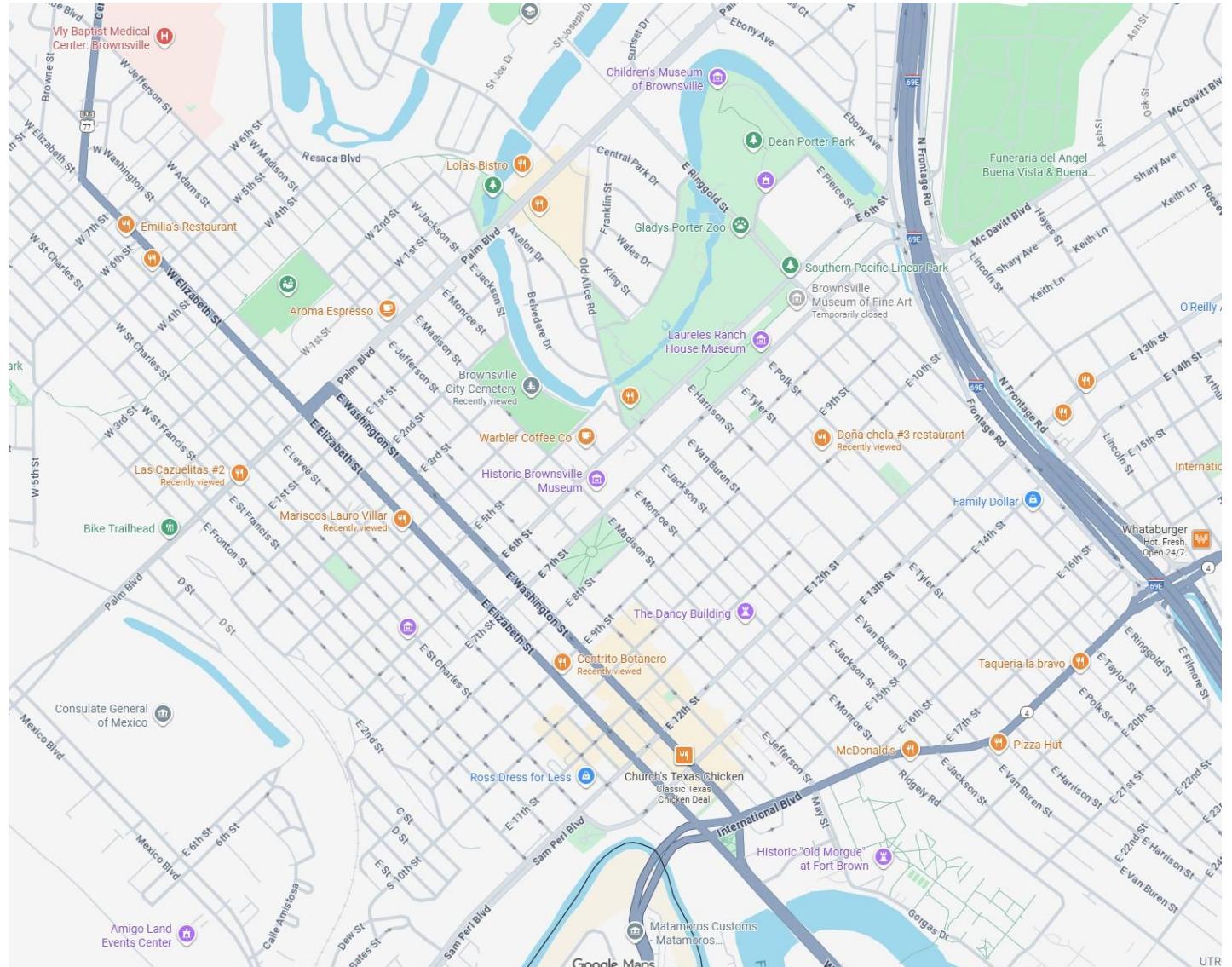
STEVE
THOMPSON
WILDLIFE
TRAIL (ROAD)

REDHEAD
PAVILION FOR
SUNRISE AT
7:15 AM

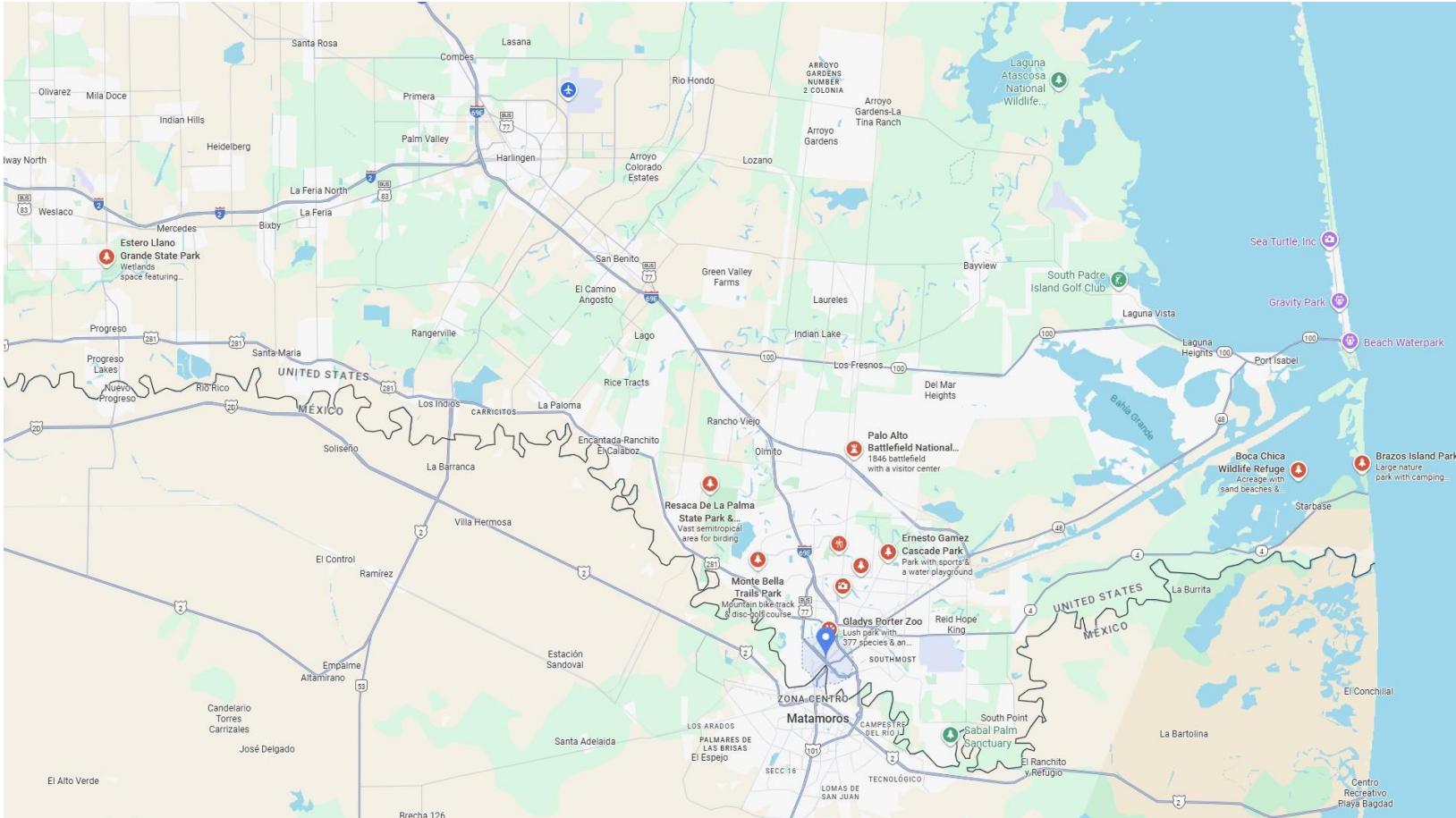
LAGUNA ATASCOSA NWR

- Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1946 to provide habitat for wintering waterfowl and other migratory birds, principally redhead ducks. Today, there is an expanded emphasis that includes endangered species conservation and management for shorebirds. The refuge is a premiere bird-watching destination with more recorded species of birds than any other refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The largest population of ocelots in the United States calls the refuge home, making it the center for conservation and recovery efforts for this endangered cat.
- Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge encompasses more than 120,000 acres, a portion of which are open to the public for wildlife related activities like wildlife watching, hunting, fishing, photography and environmental education.

DOWNTOWN



BOCA CHICA BEACH AND STARBASE



ASK MIKE EVANS ABOUT
ROCKET LAUNCH.



Easter Day Fireworks

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)[ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

Dates: April 5, 2026

Price: Free!

Time: 9:15 PM

📍 211 W Whiting St South Padre Island , TX 78597

✉️ info@sopadre.com

📞 (956) 761-3000



FINALLY....

- [Session 204: South Texas: A Photographer's Paradise with Chery Brummett](#)
- **Some of my favorite restaurants on the island:**
- **Nautico Island Grill**- Fresh salads, sandwiches, burgers, seafood, pastas, and classic Tex-Mex.
LongBoard Bar and Grill- Waterfront outdoor seating overlooking Laguna Madre Bay, with great views · live music · tropical drinks · good food. Great at sunset!
- **Viva**- Waterfront outdoor seating · cocktails · Vegan options- Great at sunset!
Padre Island Brewing Co-
Craft beer, burgers · steaks · seafood.
Ceviche Ceviche- Best ceviche ever! Custom-made in front of you to order. A takeout meal! Other locations are in Harlingen and Port Isabel.

Other favorites in Port Isabel:

- **Los Tortuga's Seafood Market** - Fresh seafood/Mexican restaurant, and market.
Joe's Oyster Bar - a local favorite - offers a more casual dinner atmosphere, with a fresh market and a great fresh seafood restaurant. Not fancy but excellent food.
My favorite is crab fingers! -can be pricey though.