REELFOOT LAKE TENNESSEE OFFICIAL VISITORS GUIDE



REELFOOT LAKE - TENNESSEE

> reelfoottourism.com 731.253.2007

REELFOOT LAKE NORTHWEST TENNESSEE

REEL LAKE

Tennessee's only large natural lake.

REEL FISHING

Crappie, bluegill, bass, catfish and more.

REEL WATERFOWL HUNTING

Premier hunting located in the Mississippi Flyway.

REEL BIRDINGEagle, osprey, egret, heron, ducks

white pelican, and more.

REEL ACTIVITIES

Canoe, kayak, bicycle, hike, and camp.

REEL SCENERY

Natural sites and wildlife for ultimate photography and scenic drives.

REEL UNIQUE

Great River Road, Carl Perkins' boyhood home, Kentucky Bend, Reelfoot Lake State Park, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge, Mississippi River, and over 90 eagle nests.

EXPLORE INSIDEightarrow

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All information in this publication has been compiled carefully to ensure accuracy at the time of publication. The Reelfoot Lake Tourism Council and Lunar Cow Publishing do not guarantee the accuracy of all information furnished and are not responsible for errors or omissions. Please contact the Reelfoot Lake Tourism Council with any errors or corrections.





REELFOOT LAKE: THEN AND NOW

Now a picturesque and serene setting, Reelfoot Lake was born violently in the throes of the powerful New Madrid earthquakes of 1811-1812. A great fissure opened between the Mississippi River and nearby cypress bottoms. The mighty river flowed backwards for three days, overrunning its banks, filling the lowland cypress bottoms and forming Reelfoot Lake.

Local Native American lore tells us that the lake originated when a tribal chief who was born with a deformed foot and aptly named "Reelfoot" kidnapped a princess from a neighboring tribe and hustled her off to his lowland hideout. According to legend, the Great Spirit stomped its foot in anger, rolling the earth like a blanket. The Father of the Waters raised the big river over its banks, covering Reelfoot's homeland. The water flowed into the imprint left by the Great Spirit's foot, forming our beautiful lake.

Since its auspicious beginnings, northwestern Tennessee's Reelfoot Lake has become one of the richest and most unique ecosystems in the region. Throughout the year, it offers endless opportunities for hunting, fishing, vacationing and birding.

The lake covers approximately 15,500 acres and hosts an abundance of wildlife and beautiful scenery. Thousands of deer, turkey, dove, quail and numerous small animals make the lake's unique environment their home. Approximately 50 species of fish thrive in Reelfoot Lake, including largemouth bass, catfish, bream, bluegill and crappie. The shallow cypress waters are recognized as one of the world's greatest natural fish hatcheries.

Reelfoot is also the winter home for hundreds of American bald eagles. With over 90 nests in the area, tourists come here by the thousands to see eagles nest and nurture their young. As one of the largest bird sanctuaries in the USA, the lake provides a natural habitat for all types of waterfowl and has become a prime destination for bird watchers and naturalists.

Located in the center of the Mississippi Flyway, over 290 species of birds have been sighted around the lake, including egrets, loons, cormorants, gulls and blue herons. Lots of osprey and Mississippi kites also nest in the area.

Artists and photographers come to paint and photograph Reelfoot Lake and enjoy its picturesque, tranquil surroundings and beauty. During the summer months, American lotus covers hundreds of acres on the east side of the lake, complementing the many pretty flowers, lily pads and other flora that make it peaceful and scenic.

In the words of Irvin S. Cobb, "Reelfoot Lake is an afterthought of creation. It is the newest and biggest thing on this hemisphere. It is the best game and fish country and natural or artificial creation that is left in the South today."

Reelfoot Lake is designated as a National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service and U.S. Department of the Interior.

Annually, thousands of visitors discover Reelfoot Lake for the first time. Many return again and again to enjoy its pristine waters, colorful scenery and relaxing atmosphere.

Reelfoot Lake is located in the northwest corner of Tennessee just five miles from the Mississippi River. It is within a day's drive of many major cities, including Memphis, St. Louis, Knoxville, Nashville, Little Rock, Indianapolis, Cincinnati and Chicago.

As one of Tennessee's most valuable treasures, it is a perfect place for hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, biking, canoeing, kayaking and quided pontoon tours.

Frontiersman Davy Crockett camped at Bluebank Bayou in the early 1830s, calling this area his "favorite hunting grounds," having killed 103 bears in a single year. Landmarks bearing his name include Crockett Chapel Methodist Church, the town of Crockett Mills and Crockett County. Crockett camped at Reelfoot Lake, and his cabin is about an hour drive from Reelfoot Lake.

Reelfoot Lake was a filming site for three movie productions: the 1957 drama *Raintree County*, the 1967 Oscar-winner *In the Heat of the Night*, and 1998's *U.S. Marshals*.



Reelfoot Lake has long been a paradise for all outdoors enthusiasts. Once a dense, lowland hardwood forest, the 15,500-acre lake was formed by the great New Madrid earthquakes of 1811-1812. The flooded trees died in the new impoundment and were broken off at water level to create a lakebed filled with rock-hard stumps cured by continual submersion. Now the stumps dictate the slow-and-easy pace that dominates this natural marvel.

The shallow, cypress-filled waters are recognized as one of the world's greatest natural fish hatcheries. Among the 50 species of fish that call Reelfoot Lake home are largemouth bass, catfish, bluegill and crappie. During the summer months, American lotus covers hundreds of acres on the north and east side of the lake. Anglers can catch fish in shady cathedrals of stately trees or on open water and shorelines. Largemouth bass can often be seen exploding through the lilies as they chase minnows and other food fish. Bald cypress trees grow alone and in clusters throughout Reelfoot's 11-mile length. Canals and ditches connect the lake's four major sections, leading boaters through shady areas of lush marshland, with an average depth of 51/2 feet - although the deepest is 18 feet.

There are numerous public boat ramps and fishing piers around the lake. Fishing guides can be hired to help newcomers navigate the lake and learn more about the hotspots. During the peak months, it is not uncommon for fishermen to return with their daily limit.

Visitors can take a stroll along the boardwalk behind the Reelfoot Lake State Park Visitor Center. Reelfoot Lake offers a variety of seasonal activities, including naturalist-guided pontoon boat cruises to experience the serenity of Reelfoot Lake, bald eagle and waterfowl tours, and deepswamp canoe floats. A variety of outdoor activities includes summer naturalist

programs, birding, photography, nature trails, observation towers, weekly flea markets, and guided hunting and fishing trips. An area at the lake called the Washout is used for swimming, and jet and water skiing. There are also several campgrounds around the lake to choose from.

Reelfoot Lake is situated along the Mississippi Flyway and is a favorite destination for duck and goose hunters. Each year, the lake attracts over 150,000 ducks and geese. They can usually be seen on the north end of the lake in the late afternoon. Duck and goose hunts are offered in field, open water or pothole hunting. Duck hunting packages or guides are available upon request.

The Reelfoot Lake area offers expert guide services for hunting and fishing, with guides who have grown up on this lake and know right where to take you.

With over 90 eagle nests in the Reelfoot Lake area, majestic eagles are sighted year-round soaring high above or plunging into the water with talons spread to capture a meal. The winter months at Reelfoot Lake feature one of the largest populations of bald eagles outside of Alaska. Eagles migrate in from the colder northern climates to take advantage of Northwest Tennessee's relatively mild winters. In January and February, guided tours to nesting and migration areas are offered to observe the bald eagle, our national symbol. The annual Eagle Festival offers a variety of special programs, including Birds of Prey, bus and pontoon tours, and photography tours.

Along with eagle watchers, birdwatchers flock to Reelfoot Lake throughout the year. Among the 57 Tennessee state parks, Reelfoot Lake State Park holds the top spot for most bird species recorded with 290. Osprey soar over shorelines and patrol their huge stick nest, being especially active during nesting season. White pelicans

migrate by the thousands each year, and the Pelican Festival is celebrated in October with special events and tours. With lots of natural areas and observation towers, birders will enjoy tranquil spaces to observe many species, including herons, egrets, shorebirds, rails, bittern, hawks, warblers, songbirds, hummingbirds, ducks, geese, and many others.

Another fall attraction is the Reelfoot Lake Arts and Crafts Festival, held the first weekend in October. Along with the Arts and Crafts Festival are hundreds of miles of yard sales. The crisp October air is filled with the sweet smell of mums, pumpkins, and kettle corn and the sounds of old-time music. Visitors sit on bales of straw eating funnel cakes and drinking homemade lemonade, while others are in line at the famous restaurants ordering deep-fried golden brown catfish filets, mouthwatering hush puppies, white beans, country ham, crunchy fried chicken and other traditional foods. The Reelfoot Lake Tourism Council is here to assist in finding a place to stay and suggest exciting activities to do.

SEASONS & EVENTS

YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES

- » Fishing, hunting, hiking, scenic drives, camping, birding, and pontoon cruises.
- » Kayaking, canoeing, photography, enjoy boardwalks and observation towers.
- » Visit the nature center, museums, and Carl Perkins' boyhood home.



SPRING

- » Crappie, bluegill, catfish, bass fishing, and fishing tournaments.
- » Deep-swamp canoe trips, pontoon cruises.
- » Migratory birds and ospreys arrive.
- » Eagle nesting and raising eaglets.

SUMMER

- » Pontoon cruises, including sunrise and sunset photography tours, canoe trips.
- » Memorial Day and July 4th weekend fireworks and concert.

- » Osprey Festival.
- » Birdwatching for osprey, eagle, sandpiper, tern, egret, and heron.
- » Hike shady trails and enjoy drives along the Mississippi River and around the lake.

FALL

- » Fall fishing for crappie, bluegill, bass, and catfish; Wood Duck/Teal and 2-Day Early Duck Hunt.
- » Arts & Crafts Festival, White Pelican Festival.
- » Reelfoot Lake Outdoor Expo, annual Reelfoot Lake Callmakers & Collectors Association's Waterfowl Festival.
- » Pontoon and canoe trips, including fall colors and pelican watching.
- » Eagles, white pelicans, and waterfowl migrate to Reelfoot Lake.

WINTER

- » Duck hunting, eagle- and waterfowlwatching tours.
- » Eagle Festival in February.





FISHING

Outstanding angling opportunities with more than 56 species of fish fill Reelfoot's fertile waters. Crappie, bluegill, bass and channel catfish dominate as the catch of choice. There are numerous public boat ramps and fishing piers conveniently located around the lake.

DUCK HUNTING

In the fall, migratory birds visit Reelfoot Lake, filling the area with sporting species that attract waterfowl hunters from afar. Reelfoot Lake is situated along the Mississippi Flyway and is a favorite destination for duck and goose hunters. Each year, the lake attracts over 150,000 ducks and geese. Duck and goose hunts are offered in field, open water or pothole hunting.

GUIDE SERVICES

Fishing and hunting guides, many of whom are Reelfoot-raised with years of experience, can be hired; or, many resorts offer packages that include guide service.

CAMPING

See amenities on pages 10-11 for available camping and RV hookups.

CANOEING/ KAYAKING

Bring your own and launch from public boat ramps or rent from area businesses. See page 10 for tours.

NATURE WALKS

Hiking trails, boardwalks and piers are located around the lake. Guided hikes are offered throughout the year.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Reelfoot Lake is a photographer's dream in any season! Sunrise, sunset, full moon, ice castles, spring flowers, brilliant fall colors, birds and wildlife are just a few reasons to bring your equipment to catch your best shot!

BIRDING

Birding is very popular on Reelfoot Lake because we are located along the Mississippi Flyway. Reelfoot Lake has an abundance of species that can be observed throughout the year. There are over 290 species in the Reelfoot Lake area. They include shorebirds, warblers, songbirds, herons, egrets, rails, bittern, osprey and many others. We have a large population of resident and wintermigrating American bald eagles. The white pelicans migrate by the thousands and return each spring and fall.

PICNIC

Lakeside parks offer over 200 picnic sites, some with grills. Also, there are pavilions to rent for family reunions, weddings and gatherings.

AIRPARK RUNWAY

The state park airpark area has a day-use runway with tiedowns. Fuel is not available.



MEETING ROOMS

Reelfoot Lake is ideal for business meetings, banquets, reunions and company picnics. Enhance your events by meeting at Reelfoot Lake and let your guests experience the beauty, history, scenery and wildlife of our area.

EAGLES

Reelfoot Lake features one of the largest populations of American bald eagles outside of Alaska with over 90 resident-nesting pairs and 150-200 migratory eagles. The state park tour map directs you to nesting and viewing areas, or guided tours are available January through February.

FESTIVALS

There are a variety of festivals throughout the year, with the Arts and Crafts Festival, Pelican Festival, Osprey Festival and Eagle Festival among the favorites. There are also fireworks and concerts for Memorial Day and 4th of July weekend.

FISHING TOURNAMENTS

There are fishing tournaments going on at Reelfoot Lake: crappie, bluegill, bass, catfish and carp (bow fishing), just to name a few.

OUTDOOR CLASS

Students will experience a one-of-a-kind field day when they visit. School groups can call the Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife) at 731.538.2481 and Reelfoot Lake State Park at 731.253.9652. Choose from introduction to water safety and paddling, birds of prey, pontoon tours, reptiles, duck decoy painting, history of Reelfoot Lake, duck calling and ID, water quality with dip nets and exploration, and more! Reelfoot Lake has been used for environmental education for decades by a number of colleges and universities, pre K-12 schools, and state and federal agencies.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The Reelfoot Lake area was once the site of a large prehistoric village. Indian mounds are present around the lake, and many artifacts have been found and preserved. The state park museum displays many artifacts.

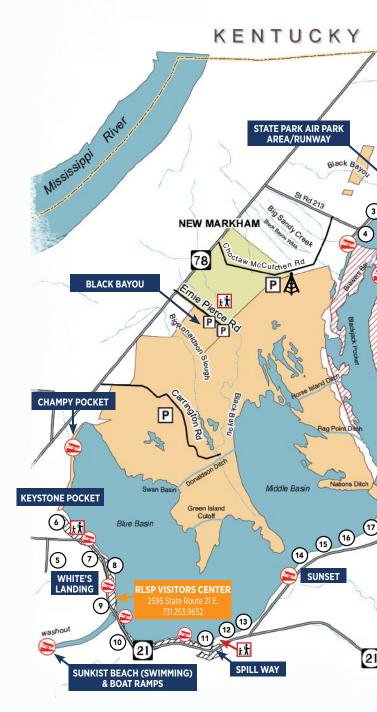
MUSEUMS

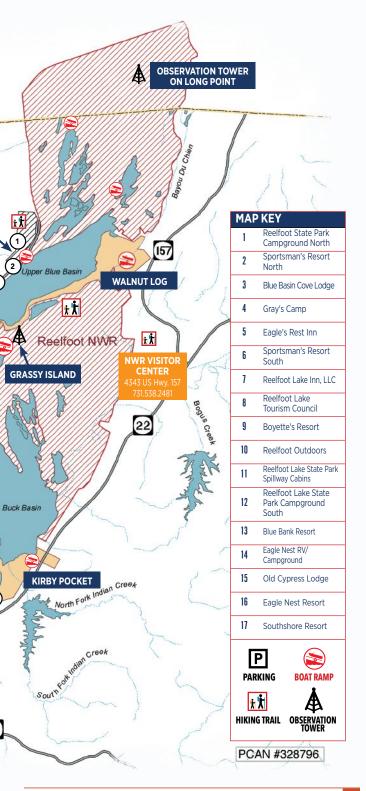
The state park visitor center has a wealth of information and local artifacts about Reelfoot Lake. The Emmett Lewis Memorial Heritage Center and Museum is rich in history and displays. Among the unique antiques and displays, you will find artifacts and information about the nearby Civil War Trail and Island No. 10. The boyhood home and CP Express train car of Carl Perkins, the King of Rockabilly, can be seen in Tiptonville.





EXPLORE REELFOOT LAKE



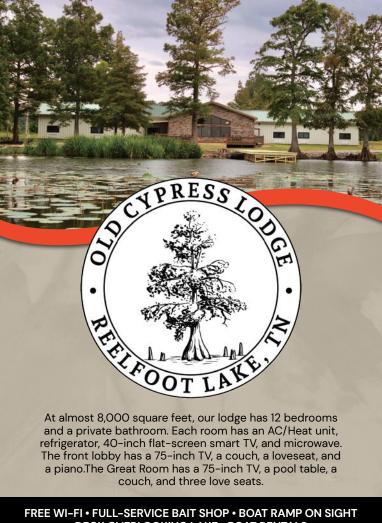


WHERE TO STAY

MAP KEY	VC = AT REELFOOT LAKE STATE PARK VISITORS CENTER SEE MAP ON PAGE 8 FOR LOCATIONS	BAIT & TACKLE	BOAT RAMP	BOAT RENTAL	CABINS	CAMPGROUND	CANOE/KAYAK TOUR OR RENTAL	BREAKFAST INCLUDED	
1	Reelfoot State Park Campground North 3120 State Route 213 • 731.538.3356 tnstateparks.com/parks/reelfoot-lake		*			*			
2	Sportsman's Resort North 100 Sportsmans Resort Ln. • 731.253.6581 reelfootlake.com	*	*	*	*	*			
3	Blue Basin Cove Lodge 100 Blue Basin Rd. • 731.253.9064 bluebasincovelodge.com	*	*	*					
4	Gray's Camp 40 Gray's Camp Ln. • 731.253.7813 reelfoot.com/grayscamp	*	*	*	*				
5	Eagle's Rest Inn 365 Sunkist Beach Rd. • 731.377.6004 Like us on Facebook							*	
6	Sportsman's Resort South 60 Wagon Wheel Loop • 731.253.6581 reelfootlake.com	*	*	*	*	*			
1	Reelfoot Lake Inn, LLC 1520 State Route 21 E. • 731.253.6845 ReelfootLakeInnsMotel.com								
8	Reelfoot Lake Tourism Council 1605 State Route 21 E. • 731.253.2007 reelfoottourism.com		*						
9	Boyette's Resort 30 Boyette Rd. • 731.253.6523 • 888.465.6523 lakereelfoot.net				*				
10	Reelfoot Outdoors 3330 State Route 21 E. • 731.253.3203 reelfoot-outdoors.com	*							
11	Reelfoot Lake State Park Spillway Cabins 4555 State Route 21 E. tnstateparks.com/parks/reelfoot-lake				*				
12	Reelfoot State Park Campground South 6810 W. Hwy. 21 • 731.538.3356 tnstateparks.com/parks/reelfoot-lake		*			*	*		
13	Blue Bank Resort 813 Lake Dr. • 731.253.6878 • 877.258.3226 bluebankresort.com	*	*	*	*		*		
14	Eagle Nest RV/Campground 1389 Lake Dr., Hornbeak 731.538.2143 • 731.446.9492 eaglenestresort.com	*	*	*	*	*			
15	Old Cypress Lodge 1685 Lake Dr., Hornbeak 731.446.0432 • oldcypresslodge.com	*	*	*		*	*		
16	Eagle Nest Resort 256 W. Lakeview Dr., Samburg 731.538.2143 • 731.446.9492 eaglenestresort.com	*	*	*	*	*			
17	Southshore Resort 601 E. Lakeview Dr., Samburg 731.538.2467 • southshoreresort-reelfoot.com	*	*	*	*		*		

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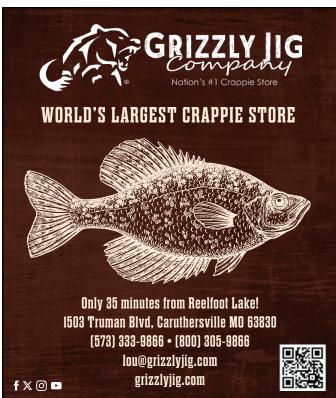








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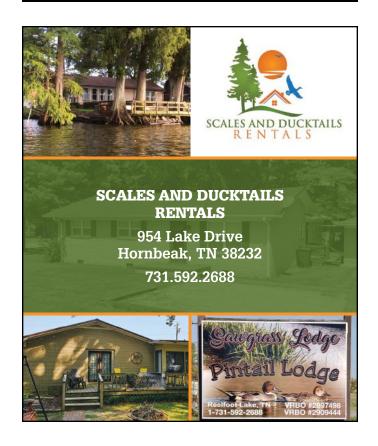








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SOUTHSHORE

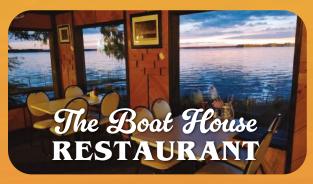
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