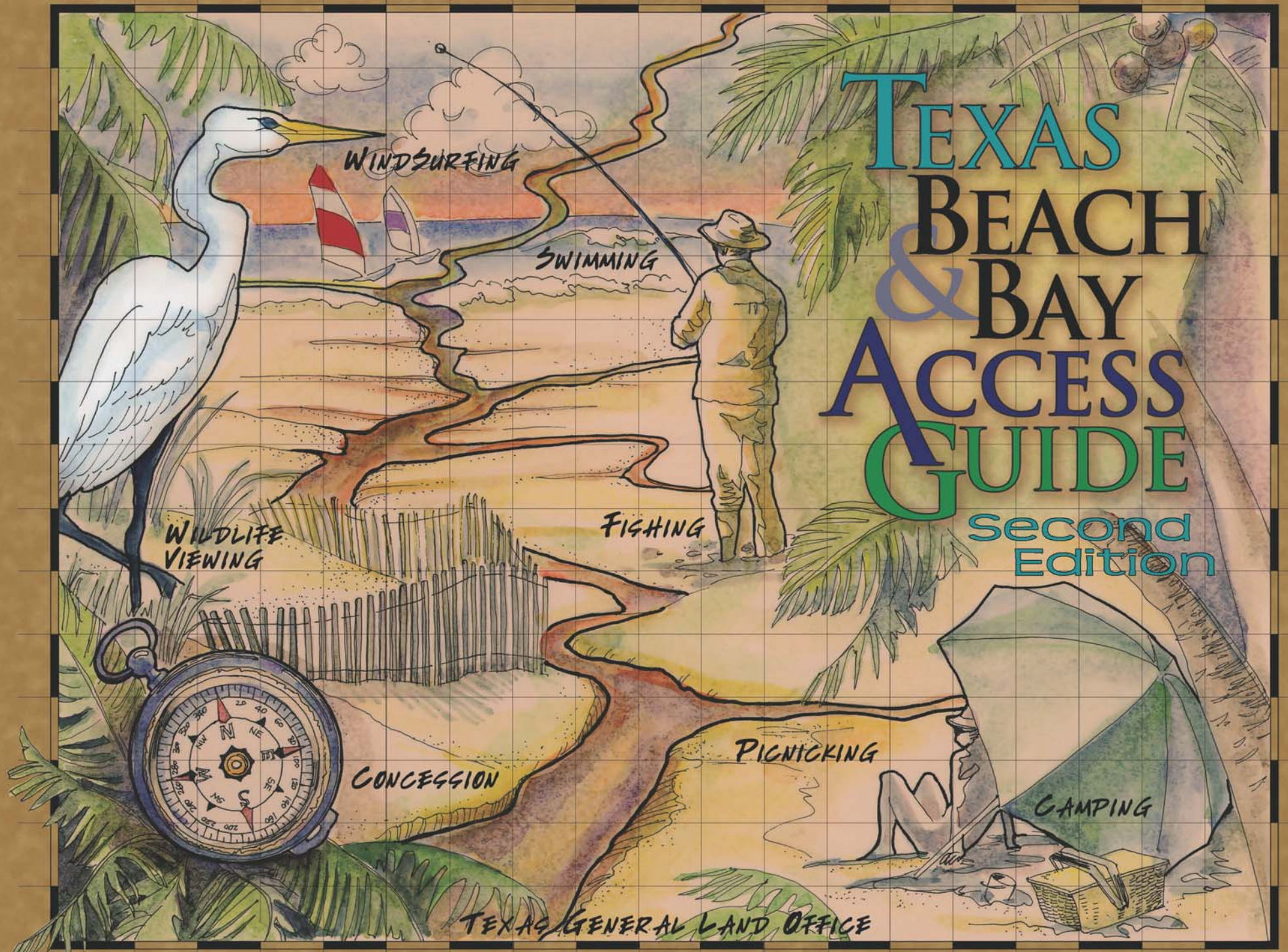


# TEXAS BEACH & BAY ACCESS GUIDE

Second  
Edition



WINDSURFING

SWIMMING

WILDLIFE  
VIEWING

FISHING

CONCESSION

PICNICKING

CAMPING

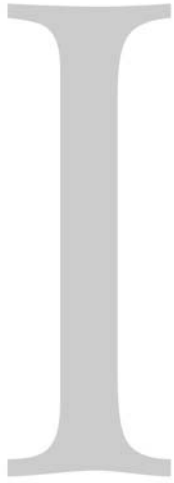
TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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# INTRODUCTION

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It's no wonder that coastal communities are the most densely populated and fastest growing areas in the country. The opportunities and resources that originally lured Native Americans and settlers continue to attract people to the coast today. Throughout the year, tourists travel to the shore to enjoy recreational activities and visit locales with relaxed surroundings. Coastal residents and tourists seek out beaches and bays for fishing, swimming, wildlife viewing, picnicking, camping, boating, and other activities. Tourism is big business in Texas, and coastal communities rely on their beaches and bays to attract tourists, who spend billions of dollars each year. As a result, ensuring public access to the shoreline is of central importance to a coastal community's ecotourism economy.

With a diversity of plants, wildlife, and ecoregions along its 367 miles of Gulf shoreline and 3,300 miles of bay shoreline, the Texas coast has plentiful natural resources. Texas coastal communities continue a coastal historic heritage with an active economy. Whether the coastal traveler is interested in fishing, birding, beachcombing, or simply sight-seeing, the Texas coast has something to offer everyone.

## TEXAS COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In 1991, the Texas Legislature passed the Coastal Coordination Act, establishing a comprehensive state coastal management program. This act paved the way to more effective and efficient use of public funds and to better management of Texas coastal resources. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) formally approved the Texas Coastal Management Program (CMP) on January 10, 1997, making Texas the 30th state to have a federally approved coastal program. The Texas CMP, which provides for the protection of 16 coastal natural resource areas, is designed to manage and use coastal resources wisely while safeguarding economic prosperity.

The Coastal Coordination Council oversees the coastal program. The Council is composed of seven state agency representatives, four governor-appointed public members, and the Texas A&M Sea Grant College Program. Its mission is to uphold the goals and policies of the Texas CMP, to provide general oversight, and to coordinate policies with regard to coastal erosion, wetland protection, water quality, dune protection, and shoreline access. The Council is charged with enhancing public access to Texas beaches and bays and seeks to achieve this goal by awarding funding to coastal communities for shoreline access projects through its grants program.

# II

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

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The Texas Beach and Bay Access Guide is designed to help the user locate a variety of public access sites, National Wildlife Refuges, and Wildlife Management Areas along the Texas coast. The public access sites may provide either direct or indirect access to the coast or bay. This guide highlights the five areas that make up the Texas coast: Southeast Texas, Houston-Galveston, the Golden Crescent, the Coastal Bend, and the Lower Rio Grande Valley. A brief historical overview of each coastal county with information on population, land area, and the local economy along with a brief description of the primary recreational activities is provided. Included are nearly 360 access points to Texas bays and the Gulf of Mexico within 16 of the 18 coastal counties.

Each section includes location maps and grids showing available activities and facilities. The maps show the general location of marinas, county/state/federal parks, boat ramps, and areas of recreational interest. The grids provide information about available activities such as fishing, swimming, wildlife viewing, picnicking, camping, and windsurfing along with available facilities such as boat ramps, boat docks, piers, restrooms, showers, electricity and lighting, fresh water, concessions, fees, access for the mobility impaired, Gulf access, and access to bays, rivers, and lakes.

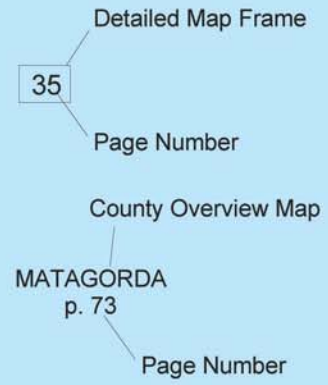
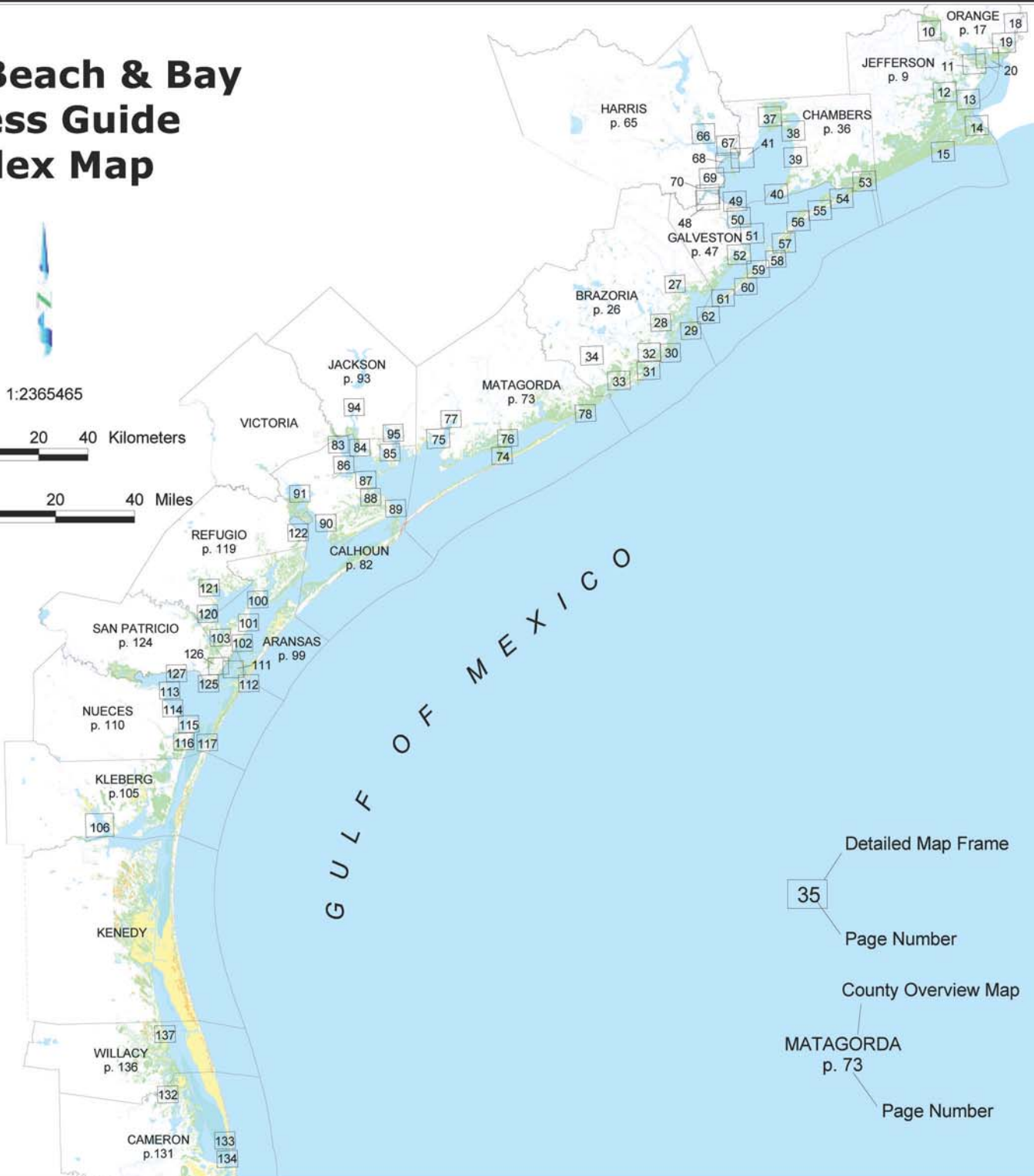
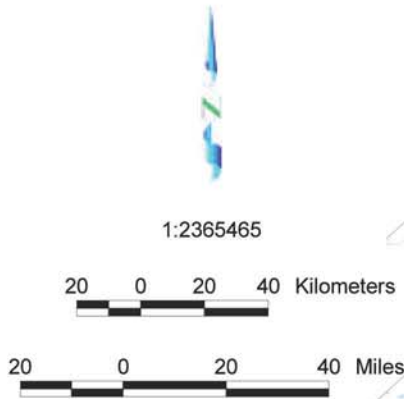
The Texas Open Beaches Act (OBA) guarantees the public access to and use of the beaches fronting the Gulf of Mexico that are accessible by public road or common carrier ferry. The OBA applies to the Gulf beaches in the following counties: Jefferson, Chambers, Galveston, Brazoria, Matagorda, Nueces, Kleberg, Willacy and Cameron. Access to these beaches varies and the amenities provided change seasonally; however, all open beaches should be well marked with signs. Some beaches are pedestrian only, and parking is provided. Other beaches are open to vehicular use. Some federal, state and local entities charge a fee to access the beach and use the amenities. This guide does not identify all Gulf beach access points, as they are numerous in all jurisdictions; however, the Gulf beach public parks are identified.

Although the information provided is intended to be the most current available, some changes may have occurred after the research was completed and prior to publication. Also, some facilities may close during winter months, and the available activities and facilities may vary considerably from one location to the next.

The Texas General Land Office makes no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy or completeness of the information depicted in this guide or the data from which it was produced. The maps are not suitable for navigational purposes and do not purport to depict or establish boundaries between private and public land.

# Texas Beach & Bay Access Guide

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# III

## BEACH AND BAY PUBLIC ACCESS SITES