















## Choctawhatchee Blueway Guide

### **The Waterway**

The Choctawhatchee River is a journey into the heart of wild Florida where wildlife far outnumbers humans. This river is170 miles long, beginning in Alabama with about 88 miles in Florida. It is possible to extend your adventure northward by launching in Alabama. Expect to encounter few people or boats except near a few popular springs. The designated portion of this river is roughly a 64-mile stretch between SR 2 near the Alabama border to Cowford Landing on Hwy 20. The Choctawhatchee flood plain provides habitat for an array of native wildlife, with several endangered plant and animal species, including the federally threatened Gulf Sturgeon. There have been rumors of the believed-to-be-extinct ivory-billed woodpecker hidden among the primordial wetlands. The Choctawhatchee winds through a broad flood plain dotted with old growth hardwood forests and a few sparkling springs whose clear waters mingle with the tea-colored flow of the majestic river.

### The Paddling Experience

Paddlers must check weather forecasts and water levels carefully as the Choctawhatchee's flow will fluctuate with seasonal rainfall, and sudden rises may result from heavy rains. The river is mostly undeveloped and primitive camping options are limited the first 25 miles or so to exposed sand bars that may not be available if water levels are high. The best levels for paddling (and camping) are less than 10 feet at the <u>USGS Water Gage near Pittman</u>. The river is generally suitable for paddling during drought conditions but may not be navigable for power boats on the upper section. There is little to no development along the river for those seeking immersion in wilderness. Many of the access points are very isolated so consider arranging shuttling and secure parking with a local outfitter. It is possible to paddle the river to its mouth at the Choctawhatchee Bay, however this section can become confusing to navigate. Use detailed maps or hire a guide.

#### **Access Points**

#1, Start of the trail, East Pittman Creek Landing, east side of river

Access is located in a park on a small bluff overlooking the Choctawhatchee River. Directions: just south of the Hwy 2 bridge on the east side of the river.

#2, Mile 2.6, Curry Ferry Ramp, east side of the river.

Long, steep single lane concrete boat ramp. Very shallow at low river levels. Directions: Turn west from Hwy

#3, Mile 6.7, Baker Landing Ramp (aka Warehouse Landing), west side of the river Single concrete boat ramp. Very shallow at low river levels. Directions: From Hwy 179A, go east 1.5 miles on Baker Landing Lane.

#4, Mile 12.0, Cerro Gordo Landing, west side of the river, Directions: from CR 179A turn east on Buck Rogers Road (CR 162) and follow paved road to the river.

179 onto the south entrance of Curry Ferry Rd marked with boat ramp sign, 0.9 miles to ramp.





### Choctawhatchee Blueway Guide

#5, Mile 18.4, Ward Landing, east side of river,

Single concrete boat ramp. Directions: From Hwy 179, turn south on Boat Ramp Rd, go 0.6 miles to first dirt road to the right, turn and follow to the end.

#6, Mile 21, US 90, (Caryville Landing), east side of river

Single lane concrete boat ramp with lots of parking, small picnic area a hundred yards east of the ramp. Directions: east side of the Hwy 90 bridge.

#7, Mile 32, Berrian Lake Landing, west side of river

Single lane concrete boat ramp on short slough just west of the Choctawhatchee River. Directions: Turn off CR 181C onto Coon Bottom Road which turns into Berrian Lake Rd. Turn east on Landing Road.

#8, Mile 34, Cedar Log Landing (new), west side of river

Directions: Turn off Hwy 181 onto Cedar Log Lake Rd, look for "Cow Lake" sign. Keep right when the road forks and ends at the river.

#9, Mile 35, Billy Lee Landing (Douglas Ferry Landing), east side of river 4

Two wide single lane concrete boat ramps. Northern ramp has a lot of shoaling and is usable only by handlaunch boats. Southern one is more suitable. Directions: From CR 284 (River Rd.) turn west on Douglas Ferry Rd, follow gravel road 1.7 miles to boat ramp.

#10, Mile 39, Morrison Springs, west side of river

This popular swimming and scuba diving area can be packed with visitors on weekends and in summer. Improved boat ramp is located south of the main Morrison Springs. Open sunrise to sunset, no fee. Directions: From Interstate 10, take Exit 96 onto Highway 81 South. Go about 6 miles, turn left on Highway 181-A. Go 1.5 miles, turn right onto Morrison Springs Road.

#11, Mile 43.5, Commanders (River) Landing, west side of river

Small county park with improved boat ramp. Directions: Turn east on River Rd at flashing light on Hwy 81. Go 2.5 miles to end of the road.

#12, Mile 49, Jenkins Landing, east side of river

Small county park with improved boat ramp. Directions: From SR 79 turn west on CR 284 (Millers Ferry Rd), then west on Choctaw Rd, follow to end of the road.

Seven Runs side trip to Dead River Landing, west side of river



The charming, shallow 2.3 mile Seven Runs Creek begins at small county park northwest side of the bridge on CR 81 and ends near slough at Dead River Landing. It is a short distance to the Choctawhatchee. Dead River Landing offers camping by reservations only, RV sites, picnicking, portable restrooms, improved boat launch. Directions: From SR 81 turn east on Dead River Rd and follow 2.3 miles to the end.

#13, Mile 54, Boynton Cutoff Landing



The Boynton Landing Recreation Area campsite is available by reservation only and has a capacity of eight people and two vehicles. This campsite is available for campers with tents, vans and pickup-mounted campers only (no RVs or travel/camping trailers). The campsite does not have power, water or waste disposal hookups. Directions: From CR 284 turn south on Shell Landing Rd. Go 3.1 miles and turn west on Boynton Cutoff Rd. Stay left at the fork and drive through former RV park posted 'No trespassing' until end of the road.





# Choctawhatchee Blueway Guide

#14, Mile 60.5, Cedar Tree Landing, east side of river

Fee to launch, improved ramp with steep incline. From SR 79 turn west on Cedar Tree Rd., follow to end.

#15, Mile 64, End of the Trail, Cowford Landing, south side of Hwy 20 Bridge Improved launch, ample parking and picnic pavilion.



### **Outfitters and Shuttle Service**

Holmes Creek Canoe Livery, SR 79, Vernon, 850-210-7001

### **Base Camp**

Lodging along the river is available about 2 miles downstream from the trail's end at Cowford Landing at the Choctaw Lodge Bed and Breakfast Retreat (850) 835-1794. About 20 miles downstream of Cowford Landing near Choctawhatchee Bay is Live Oak Landing RV & Cottage Resort (877) 436-5063.







