Saddlebrook Resort is nestled on 480 acres of a gated, secure Florida nature preserve. As guests walk, jog, or bike along pathways of the resort, they take in our beautiful tropical setting abounding in wildlife, flora, and fauna. Myriad species of exotic, striking birds; interesting lizards, turtles, frogs, and gators; colorful, fragrant flowers; lush landscaping, and verdant vegetation coexist in perfect harmony. Fresh, pure air and the resort’s pristine natural layout beckon guests to explore and commune with the elements. Please adventure in our great outdoors appreciating breath-taking wonders. Along with the highlights of nature described by the numerical legend indicated along the areas of this guide, discover many other creatures and experience nuances of peaceful loveliness found throughout Saddlebrook. Enjoy!
Sandhill Cranes: These birds have a body length just over 3 ft. long and a wingspan of 6 ft. Sandhill Cranes are predominantly grey. The Florida subspecies is a year-round resident in freshwater marshes, pastures, and open woodland.

Green Herons: The smallest herons in North America. Green Herons are only about the size of crows. They are very common at Saddlebrook and can be spotted in virtually every pond and bayhead. Green Herons are expert hunters and are often seen crouched in bushes or on sticks just above the water ready to strike at small fish, frogs, or water insects with lightning speed.

Great Blue Herons: These are the largest and best known herons in North America. They stand four feet tall and have wingspans of seven feet. Great Blue Herons are commonly seen wading in the ponds hunting for fish, frogs, dragonflies, small mammals, and even birds. There is a white version of the Great Blue Heron which is found only in southern Florida. The large white birds seen at Saddlebrook are Great Egrets.

American Alligator: Once nearly extinct, Alligators have made a dramatic comeback in recent years due to protective laws. Nearly every pond in Saddlebrook contains one. Alligators must be regarded with extreme caution. It is against Florida law to feed, taunt, or in any way provoke them. Such actions will reduce their natural fear of humans and increase the possibility of an accident. Alligators feed on fish, snakes, turtles, small mammals, and birds.

Locusts: These Locusts are better known as Lubber Grasshoppers. In our area, they are mostly yellow but bear red and black markings and red on the wings. Adult males can reach two inches in length, while the female Lubbers can approach three inches at maturity. The eggs begin to hatch in March and the largest number of adults occurs in July and August.

Armadillos: Armadillos are not native to Florida, but are now common over most of the state. Armadillo-like forested or semi-open habitats with loose textured soil that allow them to dig easily. They eat many insects, other invertebrates, and some plants. They most often feed at night, and have very poor eyesight.

Wild Turkeys: The Florida Wild Turkey is also known as the Osceola. It’s the most common turkey in the southeastern United States. Most males are dark brown with white stripes on their heads, breasts, and tails. The females are mostly yellow but bear red and black markings and red on the wings. Adult males can reach two inches in length, while the female Lubbers can approach three inches at maturity. The eggs begin to hatch in March and the largest number of adults occurs in July and August.

Love Bugs: Usually, Love Bugs are seen in Florida in the late spring and then again in the late summer. They can also be seen in South Florida in smaller numbers in December. These “flights” can take place between 6 to 5 weeks. Adult females live between 3 and 4 days, while the males live a little longer. These bugs are known as a public nuisance. They have a slightly acidic body chemistry which can make it extremely difficult to remove off cars.

Black Racer: Black Racer Snakes are not poisonous. They can range anywhere from 20-56 inches. These snakes do not tolerate handling and typically will strike when they are handled. They have also been known to charge at people in order to scare them. They are fast, giving them the name the “Racer”.

Birds of Paradise: The Bird of Paradise Flower, also known as the crane flower, is a native of South Africa. The name evolved from the appearance of its bloom, which resembles the vivid plumage and beak of the Bird of Paradise. The Bird of Paradise plant grows 3 to 5 feet tall and has korky green leaves that average 18 inches long, although some varieties have leaves more than 70 inches long.

Anoles (Lizards): Green and Cuban Brown Anoles are generally about 5 to 8 inches long. Females are usually smaller and can be under 5 inches long. The long, slender tail of the Anole (which makes up about half of its length) may break off at the slightest pressure and continue to wiggle on the ground, distracting would-be predators. But, no fear, the Lizard’s tail grows back over several weeks to once again serve as a quick get-a-way aid.

For your own safety, and that of the animals, please do not attempt to engage with or feed any wildlife during your stay at Saddlebrook Resort.