

South Carolina: Southern Charm

With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



October 17 – 24, 2019

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Naturalist Journeys, LLC



Experience the history, nature, and culture of the charming South Carolina coast. The Revolutionary and Civil War port cities of Savannah and Charleston offer Southern Charm like no other.

Spend two days walking and birding charming Folly Beach. View the historical Morris Island lighthouse and bird from the Folly Island fishing pier.

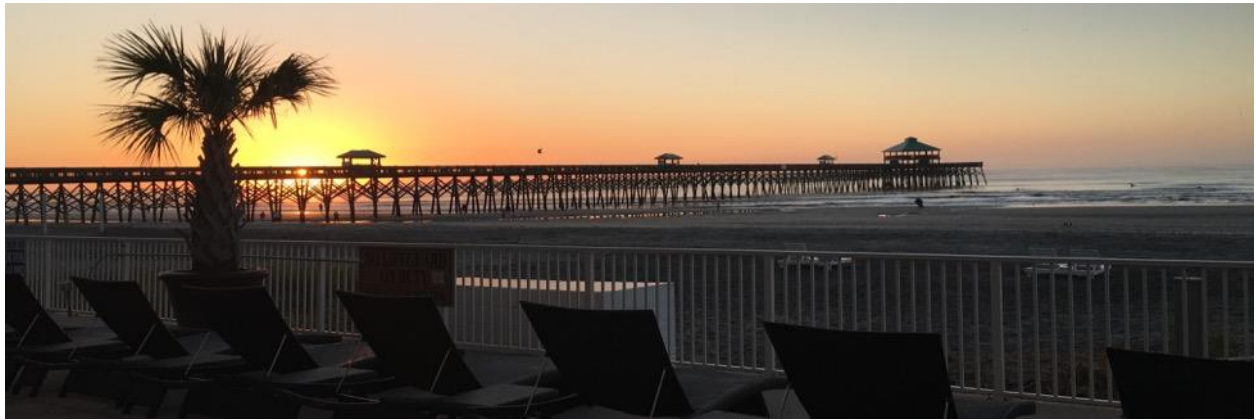
Experience the natural diversity of ACE Basin, a large estuary system protected by a dynamic partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, national conservation organizations, and local landowners. This expansive National Wildlife Refuge protects over 1-million acres that stretch between Charlotte and Savannah. A rich mix of habitats and 700,000+ estuary acres are a haven to endangered wildlife.



Enjoy the Southern Charm of horse-drawn carriage rides over cobblestone streets, bird the famous Magnolia Plantation gardens, tour antebellum mansions and museums, and dine at famous local restaurants serving Low-country cuisine.

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Tour Highlights

- Travel scenic Highway 17 through ACE Basin and enjoy the changing fall colors and unusual topography — salt marshes, cypress swamps, and live oak and longleaf pine forest
- Explore the Caw Caw Interpretive Center, searching for Bald Eagle, Wood Stork, Osprey, waterfowl, wading birds, otters, American Alligator, and deer (to name a few)
- Discover Savannah Wildlife Refuge, home to myriad bird and wildlife species, including Bobcat
- Learn the history of Gullah sweetgrass baskets, one of the oldest African-based handcrafts in the U.S.
- Enjoy three days touring the Charleston area, one of North America's most architecturally-significant cities
- Immerse yourself in the Charleston City Market, teeming with culture, local art, and mouthwatering foods
- Cruise the Charleston Harbor en route to Ft. Sumter and spot a variety of sea birds

Tour Summary

8-Day / 7-Night Coastal Tour with Pat Lueders

\$2490 from Charleston, South Carolina

Airport is Charleston International (CHS)



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Itinerary

Thurs., Oct. 17

Arrivals in Charleston | Travel to Savannah

Please plan to arrive at the Charleston International Airport by 2:00 PM. We travel the scenic Highway 17, arriving in Savannah, the oldest city in Georgia, established in 1773 and a strategic port city in both the American Revolution and the Civil War. We stay in the historic district with 22 park-like squares that retain the original town plan prescribed by founder James Oglethorpe. This evening we enjoy a walk on the riverfront and check into our centrally located hotel.

Our welcome dinner tonight is at a historic restaurant that features local cuisine. After dinner we visit the many shops along the cobblestone streets.

Accommodations in Savannah (D)



Fri., Oct. 18

Savannah National Wildlife Refuge

After breakfast in our Savannah hotel, we tour the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, getting our first views of towering live oaks, wading birds, and American Alligator. The refuge is a short distance from Savannah and is one of a chain of seven refuges that stretch 100 miles along the coastline, featuring fresh and saltwater marshes, tidal rivers and creeks, bottomland hardwoods, maritime forests, barrier island beaches, and more.

We drive the four-mile Wildlife Drive, the best place in South Carolina to find breeding Purple Gallinule. We also watch for Common Gallinule, Wood Stork, Anhinga, Glossy and White Ibis, Tricolored Heron, and Little Blue Heron, which can be seen here in the fall. We picnic at the beautiful refuge headquarters that features a garden of native and local plants.

We return to Savannah to enjoy happy hour at our hotel and explore the local shops featuring items unique to this Southern and historic area. Dinner tonight is at your leisure to enjoy local eateries that feature Southern cuisine like shrimp & grits, fried catfish, and locally caught seafood.

Accommodations in Savannah (B,L)



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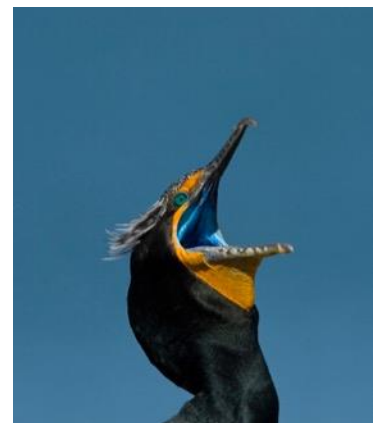
Sat., Oct. 19 ACE Basin | Charleston | Folly Beach

We experience the natural diversity of the region as our route north takes us through the ACE Basin area of South Carolina. Covering 700,000 acres, the basin is composed of state, federal, and private land. ACE stands for Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto, which are three rivers that flow into St. Helena Sound, creating the basin. The variety of habitat in the basin provides chances for birds as varied as Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Osprey, Mottled Duck, Clapper and Virginia Rail, and Prairie Warbler. The live oaks, marshes, and ponds offer excellent photo opportunities for alligator, deer, shorebirds, and nature. Brown-headed Nuthatch, Pine Warbler, and Red-headed and Pileated Woodpecker can be seen in the pine and cypress trees.

We arrive at our beachside accommodations in Folly Beach late in the afternoon after a fulfilling field day with great birding.

For dinner, we dine at Blu Restaurant in our ocean side hotel, Tides. We watch the sunset from the Folly Beach Fishing Pier, which extends 1045' into the ocean, offering unique views of seabirds, dolphins, Royal and Caspian Terns, Double-crested Cormorants, Brown Pelican, and other birds that are hard to see from the beach.

Accommodations at the Tides Hotel, Folly Beach (B,L,D)



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Sun., Oct. 20 Folly Beach

We spend the next two days walking and birding charming Folly Beach, featuring the 1045' pier and delicious seafood caught just off shore.

After our ocean side breakfast, we visit the Folly Beach County Park, walking the beach to see Sanderling, Willet, Dunlin, Piping and Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, and Red Knot. The famous Folly Beach Pier offers close views of Royal, Caspian, and Forster's Terns, Laughing Gull, Red-throated Loon, Black Skimmers, and Brown Pelican.

After lunch in the charming village of Folly, we walk a short trail to view the Morris Island Lighthouse, watching for Seaside, Saltmarsh, and Nelson's Sparrows along the brush-lined paved road. The lighthouse was completed in 1876, and replaces the original one on Morris Island that is now surrounded by water.

Dinner is on your own this evening so you can shop or relax on the beach or at the pool.

Accommodations at the Tides Hotel, Folly Beach (B,L)



Mon., Oct. 21 Caw Caw Interpretive Center | Historic Charleston

This morning we get an early start, leaving Folly Island and visiting Caw Caw Interpretive Center, a 1046-acre site that was once part of several rice plantations in the early 1800s. This site's current habitat diversity is the main factor behind the diversity of wildlife seen at the park. Their exhibit center explores the roles of enslaved Africans during the South Carolina rice era.

We walk some of the trails and boardwalks, home to Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Belted Kingfisher, Roseate Spoonbill, Common Gallinule, Tri-colored Heron, and American Bittern. Many American Alligator also call this area home, as do River Otter and Bobcat. Clapper Rail and Bald Eagle can be seen from the wide levees.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we visit the Angel Oak Tree, estimated to be over 500 years old and a "must see" on a visit to this area. We drive to Charleston, South Carolina, one of



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North America's most architecturally significant destinations. Our local guide provides us with a fascinating orientation to the area, visiting the downtown and bay street districts. We enjoy a horse drawn carriage ride that includes a colorful narrative of the history of the mansions, churches, historic buildings, and hidden gardens.

We then check into our bayside hotel with views of the Charleston Harbor, bay, bridges, and marinas. Dinner tonight comes with a view of this beautiful seaside city.

Accommodations in Charleston (B,L,D)

Tues., Oct. 22 Audubon's Francis Beidler Forest Sanctuary | Francis Marion National Forest | Mt. Pleasant

This morning we leave early for a day of birding, beginning at the Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Sanctuary, home to the Audubon South Carolina state office and a 1.7-mile-long boardwalk that leads into the heart of Four Holes Swamp. The boardwalk starts off in a mixed hardwood forest and continues into an old-growth hardwood swamp. Residents include Brown-headed Nuthatch, Barred Owl, Wild Turkey, and six species of woodpeckers. In addition to birds, the fallen logs and cypress stumps are habitat for snakes, turtles, and frogs. We also watch for Cottonmouth, American Alligator, White-tailed Deer, Bobcat, Beaver, and River Otter during our walk.

After lunch in Summerville, we travel to the Francis Marion National Forest to find the Southeast longleaf pine forest specialty bird, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. This is an endangered species of concern, as a result of the decline in its original habitat due to logging.

We travel through charming beach towns to Mt. Pleasant and bird Patriots Point, Pitt Street Bridge, and the Ft. Moultrie area. Black Skimmer, American Oystercatcher, Least Tern, Marsh Wren, and Common Ground Dove are found in this area. At low tide we look for Seaside Sparrow, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Wood Stork and White ibis.

Dinner tonight is at a local seafood restaurant in Shem Creek Harbor where the boat that caught your shrimp or fish that morning is docked!

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Accommodations in Charleston (B,L,D)

Wed., Oct. 23 Magnolia Plantation | Cruise to Ft. Sumter

After breakfast, we spend the morning visiting Magnolia Plantation's Audubon Swamp Garden Trail looking for Wood Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Anhinga, and numerous other duck species. Located off of scenic Ashley River Road, the gardens are known as one of "America's Most Beautiful Gardens," the only garden with this distinction in the Palmetto State. The Audubon Trail is named after John James Audubon who collected his Anhinga specimen here during a lengthy visit.

We tour the Magnolia Cabin Project before lunch, an effort that began ten years ago to preserve five historic structures, former dwellings of enslaved West Africans that date back to 1850. During this tour, Magnolia recognizes the vital role that Gullah people and culture plays in any interpretation of Lowcountry history.

We spend the afternoon and evening visiting downtown historic Charleston, enjoying a boat ride to Ft. Sumter watching for seabirds and shorebirds on the beach at the monument, where decades of growing strife between North and South erupted in civil war in 1861. A shopping stop at the City Market is fun.

Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner at one of Pat's favorite restaurants!

Accommodations in Charleston (B,L,D)

Thurs., Oct. 24 Departures

This morning, before departing the city of Charleston, we enjoy a nice breakfast and a walk before returning to the airport.

While you may leave at any time this morning, to enjoy our last morning, plan on flights leaving Charleston after 11:00 AM, or if you wish to extend your visit, we can transport you to an airport hotel, or you can catch a taxi or shuttle to your destination from the airport.

(B)



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Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with [Allianz Travel Insurance](#). Their website will show a grid of tour cost and your age category for you to make selections. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Cost of the Journey

The cost for this guided tour is \$2490 person, double occupancy, and \$3095 single occupancy. Tour price includes seven night's accommodations, all meals as noted in the itinerary, airport transfers, land and boat transportation during the journey, professional guide services, park and other entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses. Tour cost does not include round-trip airfare to and from Charleston, personal expenses such as laundry, telephone, drinks from the bar, and gratuities for luggage handling or other services.

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Tour Notes & Pace

Dining is casual. Pace of the tour is moderate with days of birding and touring walks on established trails or roads, or on a beach. Typical walks are from .5 – 2 miles at a leisurely pace.

Travel Information

Airport is Charleston International Airport (CHS). Plan to arrive no later than 2:00 PM on October 17. Please plan departures from Charleston International Airport after 11:00 AM on October 24.

Group Size & Guides

This is a birding, wildlife, and history trip with Pat Lueders. There is a minimum of 4, maximum of 8 participants.

Guide Pat Lueders

Pat Lueders started leading birding tours for St Louis Audubon in 2002, serving as their field trip coordinator. She has traveled throughout the U.S., Central, and South America as a tour guide and birder. Expanding into the area of citizen science, she has coordinated habitat surveys in the Midwest for U.S. Fish & Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Audubon Society. Since 2011, she has been the lead coordinator of the Great Rivers Trumpeter Swan Watch and has participated on a bird banding team since 2004. Since 2010, Pat has frequently visited and birded in South Carolina and looks forward to sharing this exciting destination with others. When home in St. Louis, she enjoys hiking, golf, and always birding.



Photo credits

Boat to Ft Sumter at the Fort's dock, Pat Lueders (PL); Great Egret and Woodstork, Peg Abbott (PA); American Alligator, PA; Folly Beach Sunset, PL; ACE Basin Headquarters, courtesy of ACE Basin; Little Blue Heron at Magnolia Plantation, PL; Savannah National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, PL; Purple Gallinule, Tom Dove (TD); Snowy Egret in Waves, Greg Smith (GS); Tides Folly Beach, PL; Morris Island Lighthouse, PL; Folly Beach Shorebirds Sign, PL; Double-crested Cormorant, GS; Great Egret, Jim Schafer; Terns, Naturalist Journeys Stock; Wood Duck, Richard Becker; Birders at Caw Caw, PL; Magnolia Plantation, PL; Restaurant near Folly Beach, PL; Pileated Woodpecker, TD; Historical Sign, PL; Ft. Sumter, PL; Ft. Moultrie, PL; Black Skimmers, Carlos Sanchez (CS); Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Mike Boyce; Snowy Egret and White Ibis, Betty Andres; Ravenal Bridge, Pat Lueders, Lesley Davis.