

Louisiana: Birds, Bayous & Beignets

April 16-22, 2026 | Trip Report

By Vernie Aikins



Guided by Vernie Aikins and local guide Ken Eyster.

**With our amazing clients Estelle, John, Marie, Diane, Ken, Ann,
Linda, Sherry, Sandra, Dolores and Joan.**

Thursday, April 16 – Palmetto State Park | Lake Martin

With most of our group arriving early, we were able to offer some bonus birding on Day One. The group met in the lobby of the hotel and we all headed to Palmetto Island State Park. This park hosts the only endemic plant in Louisiana – the Abbeville Red Iris. Originally only found on a small chunk of private land, the state has set aside some space to propagate more and allow a place for the public to view this crimson red flower. As we arrived in the parking lot, Prothonotary Warblers were already singing and chasing each other around the park. One even landed right out in the open on the railing to the stairs, setting an awesome tone for the tour. (Prothonotary Warblers are definitely the most abundant warbler we saw on this trip.) With the excitement from the very cooperative warblers still fresh, we headed into the small swamp area where the flowers occur. The park has built a wonderful boardwalk leading into a small Bald Cypress grove and here we found Abbeville Iris to view at our feet, while Northern Parulas were singing above us. Within 30 minutes of arriving at our first destination, we were being treated to some of the staples of the tour! As we chatted and got to know each other, Joan caught my attention by saying she thought she saw a raptor fly behind me and asked what it may be in this area. I told her it was most likely either a Barred Owl or Red-shouldered Hawk – and not two minutes after





saying that, I spotted a Barred Owl that swooped in from the direction she had described. Less than an hour into the tour and we already had an owl!

After we were done at the iris spot, we moseyed around the park more. We stopped at a few more places, one being an overlook with great views of the sky. From here we were able to pick up our first of many Mississippi Kites, as well as a Bald Eagle. We then headed back to the hotel, but not before stopping and taking pictures with the park's massive gator statue. As we left, we scanned the entrance road for Limpkins without success, but just outside the park, I spotted some Purple Martins mobbing what I thought was an American Crow. As we got a little closer, we realized it was actually a Peregrine Falcon. It was not even lunch yet, and we had already had some spectacular encounters to start the tour!

Lunch was back in town at a local shop that specializes in Po-Boys. We all got our fill and as we loaded into the van, I heard a Fish Crow calling in the parking lot. Bam! Another new species. Everyone then enjoyed little downtime while we picked up the last remaining folks from the airport. Once everyone was with us, we headed to the south end of Lake Martin and the Nature Conservancy's property there. They maintain and protect a large rookery and have a nice boardwalk. Here, the crew got their first small taste of the magic of a Louisiana rookery. In the



distance we could see many egrets, herons, and spoonbills. Along the boardwalk, we enjoyed looks at another Northern Parula, followed by some Carolina Chickadees along the berm road. Also, along the boardwalk, we had a very skulky Swamp Sparrow that proved very difficult to see. Once we were finished there, it was back to the hotel and off to dinner.

Friday, April 17 – Tabasco Factory | Rip Van Winkle Gardens | Bird City

I always struggle on this tour to pick my favorite day. Is it Day 2 or 3? They are very different, but both so uniquely fun. On Day 2, we headed to the Tabasco Factory for a tour of the facilities and the gardens, called “Jungle Gardens”. This place is special, because not only is Tabasco known all around the world, but the McIlhenny family helped save the Snowy Egret from extinction.

First up, we toured the factory to see the process from pepper to bottle and we got to see how it's bottled, cured and stored. The massive curing barrel warehouse is so impressive, not just because of the aroma, but because of the sheer number of barrels lining the warehouse. You can't see where the barrels end – but is that because your eyes are watering so much, or because the warehouse goes on forever?

After our Tabasco factory tour, we left the property to head out for lunch at the nearby Rip Van Winkle Gardens. Along the way, we had to make a special stop at the local rookery. This rookery offered up close and personal views of Little Blue Herons, Roseate Spoonbills and Snowy and Great Egrets. And all just a few feet away, protected by a nice gator-filled moat! While here we also spent some time on the side of the rookery with the smaller birds, like Little Blue Heron, before heading to lunch.

At the gardens, we had a refreshing lunch out of the heat, before a nice stroll in the gardens. There was not a lot of activity, being that it was the middle of the day, but we did manage to see a very handsome Inca Dove working on a nest. Plus, we were treated to an array of Peacocks that live at the gardens. Before heading back to Avery Island (the Tabasco property), we stopped at the other side of the Rip Van Winkle Rookery. This side was much larger, housing many Great Egrets and Roseate Spoonbills. We also enjoyed White Ibises and Whistling-Ducks here and had our first snake encounter, when a Swamp Snake zipped across our path.

At some point we had to peel ourselves away from the rookery, which was a hard thing to do, as any place where you can just sit and watch spoonbills is a difficult place to leave. Back on Avery

Island, we cruised the auto loop through Jungle Gardens, stopping at the Japanese Garden to see the large Buddha statue, before continuing on to Bird City, our next location. Bird City is a rookery that was created in the late 1800's to help protect Snowy Egrets, which have now all been displaced here by Great Egrets. Here we picked up our first Tri-colored Herons of the trip, as a few flew into the surrounding trees lining the man-made portion of the rookery here. You can hear this rookery the moment you exit the vans – and as you walk up the stairs to the viewing platform, you are treated to what seems like an endless number of Great Egrets. (The group estimated 1,600 Great Egrets here.) The full egret life cycle was laid out before our eyes here. We had many adult males displaying for potential mates, along with nests with small fuzzy chicks and others with begging teenagers. On the way back to the vans, we briefly saw our first Scarlet Tanager, a target bird for many. Then, right above the van, we found a singing Blue-headed Vireo, a lifer for many and a great way to cap off the day.

Saturday, April 18 – Lake Martin | Vermilionville

This is the day that is, probably, unanimously voted the best day of the tour. Today, we headed to Lake Martin and our date with Captain Brett. This was our second year of heading out on the water with Capt. Brett and I think he was just as excited to take a bunch of birders out, as we





were to head out with him. Capt. Brett knows every inch of this lake intimately and his love of sharing it with us really shines through. We arrived with donuts and a sense of excitement for the day ahead and Capt. Brett was waiting for us when we arrived. After a quick introduction, we were off for the first part of the tour to the north end of the lake. Right away, we were seeing Great Egrets and Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and there was a large swarm of Tree Swallows buzzing around a dead cypress tree. At every turn, there were American Alligators peering out of the water at us. We drew closer to the end levy section of the lake, where there was an alligator nursery and we got to see a few small ones sunning on logs in the water, just within the watchful eye of mom. Capt. Brett taught us how to tell the size of an alligator by just seeing the eye-nose bridge length. He also told us he had been seeing some other herons in a different section of the lake, so we headed that way. On our way over, we had one of our first really exciting birds of the trip, a Pileated Woodpecker that was down low, working on a willow tree that was growing out over the water. As we continued cruising along, Little Blue Herons and White Ibis flew overhead. Once we got to the heron spot, Capt. Brett slowed the boat down and we all began to search, as he had seen Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned Night Herons nesting in this area. As we trolled along, we first spotted a Black-crowned on a nest, followed by a very shy Yellow-crowned. What a great way to conclude the first half of the tour. Now it was time to head to the south end.

We picked up some speed and cut across the open section of the lake and back towards the dock. From here, we started the second part of the tour at the south end of the lake. This is my favorite section because it has the oldest Bald Cypress trees on the lake and this is where I had spotted a Swallow-tailed Kite last year. Capt. Brett started us off with a very mellow cruise through the cypress, with Spanish Moss draping down and skimming right over our heads as he talked to us about these magical cypress trees towering above. Hidden among the cypress, we had another little surprise – a perched Barred Owl that watched us as we slowly floated past, not disturbed by our presence as it scanned for crawfish.

As we broke from the cypress into a large opening, I glanced up the moment we came into the clearing and spotted a pair of Swallow-tailed Kites! The boat was filled with excitement as they

briefly circled overhead and then out of sight, blocked by the towering cypress. The excitement continued as we rounded the lake and had amazing looks at another Pileated Woodpecker working a dead tree, just feet from the boat. The south end of the lake was booming with birds. Eastern Kingbirds called from the trees and as we headed back towards a smaller cypress grove, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks entertained us with their ever-exciting whistling calls as they flew around. A Purple Gallinule was also seen and we had brief looks at a Belted Kingfisher as it flew off. Somewhere around this area was also when we spotted the biggest American Alligator I have ever seen. At this point, we had already seen probably two dozen of varying sizes, so when this magnificent ancient reptile cruised by, we just instantly recognized its massive size. Capt. Brett estimated it at 14 feet, and said it's one of the largest alligators on the lake. It was truly an impressive sight.

With the south end done and everyone thoroughly sunbaked and hungry, it was time to conclude our exciting morning adventure. We parted ways with our most excellent Captain and headed for lunch and cold drinks, before heading to our last adventure of the day at Vermilionville. Vermilionville is a park with replicas of different homes and things of the Acadians and early Louisianians. This part of the tour is about culture instead of the birds and the star of the show is the music. Vermilionville offers live Cajun music on the weekends and we timed the day to end here for that reason. As we arrived, we headed straight for the hall where the music was and some of us were instantly moved by it. Some feet got to tapping, some hands got a clapping and others were even moved to dance! It's such a fun experience to take in. After the music session was over, we had time to explore the rest of the park before heading back to the hotel. Day 3 always just feels so truly Louisianian – the music, the cypress trees, the alligators *and* the birds really just make this day the complete package.

Sunday, April 19 – Crawfish Fields | Lacassine NWR

Today was a travel day, as we had more of Louisiana and more biomes to explore. After three days in Lafayette, it was time to head west and position ourselves a little closer to the coast. We woke to cooler temperatures and clouds, but if you were to pick one day to be kind of rainy during the tour, today was perfect. Our journey to Lake Charles took us through endless farm fields,





which offered us the chance at new birds and habitats. Today we were looking for flooded fields full of varying shorebirds, with Upland Sandpipers being one of our main targets.

Vans packed and boxed lunches picked up, it was time to hit the road. We headed off in the drizzling rain and passed hundreds of crawfish farms, some filled with an abundance of egrets and herons and Laughing Gulls. Our first notable bird was a Greater White-fronted Goose that should have been much further north this time of year. And in our first fields with a healthy number of shorebirds, Dunlins and dowitchers made up the vast majority of what we were seeing. After a bit more wandering around, we pulled onto a dirt road with some flooded fields and had our first looks at Black-bellied and American Golden-Plovers, along with some distant Buff-Breasted Sandpipers. We battled the wind and muddy road conditions to see them all. Then, I was “kindly” asked to exit the road. Even though none of us saw any private property signs, we did not contest and moved along. It was windy and rainy, anyway, so we “kindly” moved on.

We were still missing Upland Sandpiper for the trip and thus far, our target spots had not produced any. These birds are only briefly in Louisiana, as they migrate north to their breeding grounds from their wintering grounds in South America. Before we headed to lunch, we had one more spot we wanted to check out, a turf farm where they are known to occur. Unfortunately, none were present, however, we did get our first Swainson Hawks of the tour, which was exciting.

Ken and I had a great spot picked out for lunch at Lorrain Parrish Park, right on the banks of the Lacassine Bayou. Here, you could be watched by an alligator as you ate your turkey sandwich. It was a pleasant place for lunch, watching the swallows fly by and getting a little sun after the rainy morning. The park is also just down the road from one of the best wildlife refuges in the entire state, Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge, where we spent the afternoon. Lacassine ended up providing our second most species-rich outing of the tour, with 52 species seen and it was the perfect way to end the day. Even before we officially entered the refuge, we were seeing hundreds of shorebirds flying around, as well as Boat-tailed Grackles perched on the side of the road. Then, at the last intersection before entering the refuge, Ken spotted a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher perched on the side of the road. Even though the refuge was calling our names, this was worth spotting for. It perched nicely for us, in the field beside the road, giving everyone a chance to see it in the scope and welcoming us to Lacassine.

Lacassine is a truly remarkable place. At almost 35,000 acres, it's massive wintering grounds for waterfowl and in the spring, it's completely alive aswell. The plan was to drive the approximately

6-mile loop that traverses just a small snippet of the refuge. It took us over 2 hours, but really, you could easily spend 4 or 5 hours here. Just along the first stretch of the road, while the scissor-tail was fresh in our minds, we had a King Rail right along the side of the van, an American Bittern stalking in the reeds and a Limpkin. This area was also crawling with Purple and Common Gallinules – we almost couldn't avoid them. Tri-colored Herons, Black-necked Stilts, and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were also all being seen well. The refuge provided many firsts of the trip, as well as some more winter holdovers, like Snow Goose and Blue-winged Teal. Eventually though, we had to say binoculars down or we could be here until dark – and we still needed to get to Lake Charles to check into the hotel. We had an even bigger and more exciting day lined up for the following day. So, we said goodbye to the Green Herons stalking the roadside ditches as American Alligators judged their technique and bid farewell to the clacking of the hidden Soras in the reeds.

Monday, April 20 – Rutherford Beach | Willow Island | Peveto Woods

There are so many amazing days on this tour, I always feel like I say one is better than the other, but maybe the truth is that they are all just amazing. Today was beach and oak chenier day – another chance to hit more new habitats that we hadn't yet visited. And it was our day to take in the full migration experience as well. We started early with a long drive south to the coast, passing through what seemed like endless coastal marshes, but not really taking it all in until we crossed over one of the highest points, which is the bridge over the Intercoastal Waterway, expanding our views in every direction. Our first true stop of the day was Rutherford Beach, our





first chance at terns and beach-loving plovers. As we turned off the highway and started passing the marshes that lead to the beach, we were welcomed by a large colorful ball of life out in the water. There, a group of Roseate Spoonbills, Black-necked Stilts, and American Avocets all waded, feeding together in a large group. It was a gorgeous splash of color to brighten our morning. Least Terns also flew by, which were our first looks at the little balls of energy. Just as we were going to leave, I spotted a Least Bittern in the reeds. So, we all got back out of the van to get looks at these very secretive birds. We needed to stay focused, though, because we had not even made it to the beach yet. As we were driving, I spotted another Least Bittern, then another one. Somehow, my eyes were perfectly tuned to them this morning. We also encountered a Clapper Rail on the roadside and a plethora of Tri-colored Herons. At this point, we were probably already at 25 species before we even made it to the beach. With so many amazing birds stealing our attention, it was hard to stay focused on the goal.

Rutherford Beach and its sandbars were what we were primarily here for. As soon as we pulled onto the beach, we could see a massive group of gulls and terns at the end. We pulled up so we could get out with the spotting scope and get a close look. From here, the work was sorting through the terns before someone, or something, stirred them all up. Royal Terns dominated the herd sitting on the beach, but mixed in the flock were Caspian, Forster's, Sandwich and Gull-billed Terns and Least Terns were flying everywhere. It was a tern buffet. As we sorted through the terns, we had some real excitement, too, when a Black Skimmer skimmed its way just feet from us – just one lone skimmer working the edge of the water. After we sorted out the terns, it was time to “tern” our attention to something else – the little puff balls running around. At Rutherford, there were many shorebirds, but some of the most exciting were all the plovers. We had all the sizes, from the large Black-bellied to the tiny Snowy, and everything in between. Piping and Wilson's Plover were among the favorites and lifers for a lot of the group. And the Least Terns, who nest here, never stopped putting on a show. We even got to witness a male doing his mating behavior, where he brings the female a tiny fish as an offering. It melts your heart to watch them interacting and zipping around.

I could sit and watch terns and skimmers all day, but we still had a lot of the day ahead of us. Before lunch, we wanted to stop at one more spot – a small piece of property that the owners have been kind enough to open to the public. They have a small property along the coast with

some mature oaks still left, perfect for migrating birds. So, we make sure to stop by. Not even a minute after getting out of the van, before we were even in their gate, the colors were starting to hit us. Reds, blues, oranges, blacks, yellows, were all flying by and making our heads spin. We didn't even have your bearings yet and there was a tree with Scarlet Tanager, Baltimore Oriole, and Orchard Oriole. Indigo Buntings singing on the fence and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were also hanging out. We only spent a little over an hour here, but added 7 species of warblers, many of which were new for the trip. It was a great appetizer to Peveto Woods, which was to come later after lunch.

Lunch was at a local spot, where we got to witness, first-hand, humans' impact on the coastal regions of Louisiana. Here, they are building a massive natural gas facility, with probably 30 large cranes and a massive number of vehicles coming and going. It's unfortunate to see, but it's the reality here. And it stings to see how vast and unique the region is, but how in peril it is on multiple fronts.

After lunch, it was time to catch the small ferry over the Calcasieu River. But before that, we made a quick stop in good habitat for Seaside and Nelson's Sparrow to see if we could drum up any sparrow business. As we are searching for the sparrows, we saw some Common Bottlenose Dolphins offshore playing in the way of a passing ship. After some work, we finally got Seaside Sparrows to make a brief appearance and then it was time to catch the ferry.

After departing the ferry, we headed to Peveto Woods. This 40-acre oak chenier is a migrating bird paradise and it did not disappoint. Its winding trails and benches at water sources offer something for everyone. It can be so busy with birds that you almost have to just pick one spot and stay there. The water features were one of the easiest and most popular spots to see birds and we spent a lot of time there. We were treated to many Prothonotary Warblers again, our old friend from earlier in the trip. But now, it's not-so-distant sibling, the Blue-winged Warbler, was being very accommodating as well. Black-and-white Warblers stopped by and Gray Catbirds were basically in every bush we looked at. Wood and Swainson's Thrush were briefly around as well. There were so many stunning birds to see, it's hard to even list. Chestnut-sided Warbler stopped in for a look and one or two of us got brief looks at a Cerulean Warbler. The one that was toying with us, though, was the Worm-eating Warbler, which everyone wanted to see. But it kept just popping its head up for brief looks. Only I was seeing it at first, making me think I was crazy





because no one else was seeing it. It did this to us the entire time we were there, right up until the very end, when the group split and both got to see it. One of the target birds for everyone was the paint palette bird, the Painted Bunting. On our first pass around the trails, we only got to see a nice, green-colored female. But after some persistence, an absolutely show-stopping male came into the water feature. We weren't the only ones enjoying the birds there, though. A Swamp Rabbit also came out to have a look at the warblers and a Water Moccasin hung out under the water dish, probably looking to fill up on Gray Catbirds. We kept hearing from passersby that the Cerulean was being seen here or there, but every time we looked, we had no luck. But it was hard to be disappointed in missing it, when there were Blackburnian Warblers to keep us happy. Eventually though, we needed to call it a day, as we still had a long drive back to Lake Charles. We had our fill of warblers, though, with a great list of 16 different species! After that, we finished the night with another wonderful Louisiana meal.

Tuesday, April 21 – Longleaf Pine Savannah | Cooter's Bog

Today we switched things up again and headed north away from the coast, out of the crawfish farms and into the Longleaf Pine savannah. One of the most biodiverse habitats in the U.S. and with only 3% of it is still remaining, it was very important that we get to spend some time in it. There were a few target species we were looking for and a few other treats planned for the day.

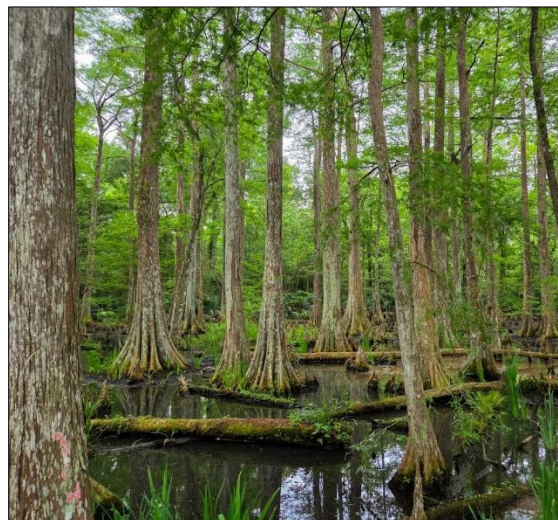
We started in the Longleaf habitat with a stop in a campground. Our change in habitat meant a change in birds and we were treated almost right away to new ones. Red-headed Woodpeckers worked the fence right near the parking lot and just above the bathrooms were Brown-headed Nuthatches. These little guys, with their busy attitudes, made it hard to get good looks at them. They provided a good show of flying back and forth over our heads, though, while some Eastern Bluebirds perched on a powerline and a Pine Warbler was singing away. A perfect little start to the morning.

From there, we headed just up the road to some proper Longleaf Pine habitat. Our first goal of the day was here and we began our search. After a little help, we finally heard one singing not far off before it came in a little closer for us to look. A gorgeous Bachman's Sparrow perched, singing for everyone to see and it gave us time to get the spotting scope on it. From there, we headed down the road, into a little drizzle of rain, so we birded from the vans with the windows

down. We could hear a Prairie Warbler calling, but when we got out of the van, it stopped. Then we all got back in the van and it started up again. It was playing games with us. I decided that we just use the van for a blind and voilà! It showed up right next to the van, sporting a missing tail, but very comfortable singing for us, as long as we stayed in the van where it wanted us. The Prairie Warbler was a very nice distraction, but I was focused on our main target. I had scouted this area the year before and had found them here. But on last year's tour, I missed them. I knew they were here, so I crept along slowly with the windows down, listening and watching. It was an isolated dirt road, so it was perfect for birding by car. After a bit, I heard the first squeak. I called out, "I hear one!" Just then, I saw it fly up ahead of us. It was a Red-cockaded Woodpecker. We all get out of the van, thinking it's just in a tree up ahead, and then nothing. I could not find the bird. And they live in family units, so there should be more than one. We searched around toward some manmade nesting boxes and had no luck. I knew it could not have gone far, so we decided to leave the vans and walk down the road, scouring every tree we saw for these fairly small birds. A few more Red-headed Woodpeckers popped up, giving us some false hope. Then, about a mile down the road, I heard them again and this time, we found them. They were not super close, but there was a family of three working some Longleaf Pines and putting on a bit of a show for us. They are very active workers, and we got to watch them flying back and forth from tree to tree for some time.

Still riding the wave of excitement from seeing these wonderful little woodpeckers, we were off toward the town cooters were found here, but we got to experience an expansive field full of carnivorous plants. This one spot has just the right conditions for them. Sundews and Pale Pitcher Plants spanned the field. We spent a little time observing and photographing them before we had to leave for lunch. Normally, I leave the food stop details on these trip reports, but our lunch spot in Oakdale is just too good to leave out. In the short life of this tour, Cafe on 10th has been the clients' favorite place to eat every time. It's not just that their food is amazing, providing one





but also how friendly they are. We only visit once a year and they always remember the birders. They treat us with such wonderful hospitality and kindness, that we wish we could eat there for every meal. They are everything that is good in Louisiana and I look forward to going there every year, just because it makes me happy.

With our bellies full of the world's best onion rings and fried shrimp (and maybe a sneaky dessert from the bakery next door), we were on the road again. Lake Charles was our destination. It was our last full day together and we had already seen so many wonderful things, but something was missing. Way back, many days ago, we had looked and looked for the infamous "Uppie" with no luck. Well, while everyone ate lunch, I worked on some mapping and math skills (very hard to do when you are distracted by such great food) and had a little conversation with Ken. We decided we had the time and were in the right place to try for Upland Sandpipers again. The group had pretty much seen everything they wanted, and the "Uppie" was the last big thing we were missing. So, we went for it.

We zigged and zagged our way across farm fields. Drove up and down dirt roads. Some more spotty rain came in. Western Cattle Egrets filled pastures full of cattle. There were even two very cooperating Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, but still, no "Uppies". This time, we were approaching the sod farms we had previously checked from a different direction, which opened up a few more spots to view. Somewhere just north of the sod farm, with myself and everyone scanning from the van, I had pulled over to check a field on my side and had no luck. Just as I was about to drive, though, someone said they thought they saw something brown fly way out in the field. Brown was a good start and out in a field was another plus. I hopped out to get the scope out and look more closely. At first glance, I did not see anything. Then, someone said they saw it again and we had a better location. I radioed back to the other van that we had a promising lead and began to scan more. That's when I spotted it in the scope, an "UPPIE"! There were two of them, way out in a plowed dirt field, but they were there. Even after finding them, they provided a tricky time seeing them. But everyone did get to see them in the scope. It's a very fun bird, and one that only spends a tiny amount of time in Louisiana, just passing through on its way to its breeding grounds. The perfect cap to the perfect last full day of the tour. Everyone was happy and we made our way back to Lake Charles for the evening.

Wednesday, April 22 – Private Rookery | Departures

Normally, the last day of a tour can be uneventful. But not in Louisiana. Our amazing local guide, Ken, knew of a secret/private rookery that was more than worth the detour to go and see. As we were nearing, two Swallow-tailed Kites appeared just above Ken's van in front of us. They circled and gave us time to get out of the van and both flew very close and right over the trees, providing outstanding views. As we entered the gate and drove down the road, we could already see herons and egrets flying back and forth. The sound, as we got closer, could be heard in the van with the windows up. Right there, alongside this dirt road, was a massive rookery of at least a thousand nesting Great Egrets, Roseate Spoonbills and Anhingas. Little Blue Herons flew by and a Red-bellied Woodpecker worked on its cavity just feet away. It was the largest rookery we had seen on the trip and the sights and sounds were beyond impressive. In fact, the sounds were so loud it felt like we were just standing there in the trees with them. The egrets, some still in breeding plumage, some with eggs, and others with chicks, were so close that it seemed like we could almost touch them. (We did need to be mindful of the alligator filled water below, though!) It was an absolute spectacle and the perfect scene to end the tour!



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