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NATURALIST JOURNEYS Alabama Dauphin Island Tour Species List April 12-17, 2015

BIRDS

Ducks and Geese - Anatidae

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* – Seen around Mobile and on the mainland side

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa* – Seen in flight from the vehicles, on our day driving north to the pitcher plant bog.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* – Seen on three days of the trip.

Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula* – First seen in a small pond where we parked to explore Shell Mound, our most productive birding site. A life bird for several of the group.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* – Seen on three days of the tour.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* – Seen in a quiet pond as we walked along the beach the sunny afternoon we went in search of terns and shorebirds.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affini* – Seen right alongside two Greater Scaup, great for comparison.

(LO) White-winged Scoter *Melanitta fusca* – Seen off the ferry, a late wintering bird.

Loons - Gaviidae

Common Loon *Gavia immer* – We found several wintering loons lingering in waters of the day, seen daily.

Grebes - Podicipedidae

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* – Seen on our boat ride in the Mobile delta area.

Gannets and Boobies - Sulidae

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* – Seen on a blustery day from the most eastern point of the island, diving at a great distance, not ideal viewing conditions but present.

Cormorants - Phalacrocoracidae

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus* – Commonly seen from the island and in the Delta.

Darters Anhingidae

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* – Seen only on our day inland to the delta area, nice looks at this bird.

Pelicans - Pelecanidae

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* – Seen roosting on sand islands as we crossed the high bridge between the island and mainland, often a dozen or more.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* – Common and seen daily from shore.

Hérons - Ardeidae

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* – Several great looks at this regal bird.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* – Seen daily from day two forward.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* – Seen on three days of our journey, less common than Great Egret but regularly sighted – good looks on the Delta boat tour.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* – Seen on two days of the journey, not common.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* – Seen on three days in a variety of habitat.

Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens* – Seen as we crossed the bridge, dancing its odd-way while hunting for fish.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* – Seen daily, many coming into breeding plumage.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens* – We had great looks at this species, often perched in odd places such as pine trees. Nice to study its details.

(LO) Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – Seen by Peg, Dodie and Andrew while scouting a place to bird we did not get back to as warblers were always calling! They were roosting in pines around a private home.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* – While waiting for dessert at our first night restaurant on a marina, Carla found one perched on a ship, we watched it fly from boat to boat, quite content hunting from all these perches!

Ibises and Spoonbills - Threskiornithidae

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus* – Forty or more feeding diligently in a field as we approached Bellingrath Gardens.

New World Vultures - Cathartidae

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* – Seen daily, a half dozen or so.

Osprey - Pandionidae

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* – Always great to watch them, several were nesting, one from the place we'd watch rails, one in the parking lot at the Oyster House restaurant.

Hawks, Kites, and Eagles - Accipitridae

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus* – Only a few got to see this as we passed an area Andrew expected them; we were moving quickly across a series of bridges.

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* – Great looks from Shell Mound as we looked out to sea, and then again over the Delta as we watched from our great feed at the Oyster House.

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus* – Andrew spotted one individual in the agricultural area of the mainland near Bayou la Batre we stopped at, and Peg called out another as we plied the waters of the Delta by boat, though it was simultaneous with seeing a Purple Gallinule which stole the show!
Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus* – Charlotte caught a glimpse of this agile hunter as it passed through pockets of forest near the Five Rivers Delta exhibit area, after we left the boat trip.
Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* – Seen on our day to go inland towards the Delta.

Rails, Crakes, and Gallinules - Rallidae

Clapper Rail *Rallus crepitans* – Amazing looks at this elusive birds, they were courting it seemed, males calling, pairs walking in tandem, wonderful!
(HO) Sora *Porzana carolina* – Heard only, as we were transfixed on watching the Clappers.
Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica* – Good looks at several on our boat trip in the Delta.
Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata* – Seen on our day to the Delta.
American Coot *Fulica americana* – Andrew said there was one on the island and we found it, in the company of Clapper Rails.

Stilts and Avocets - Recurvirostridae

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* – Lovely elegant birds, seen on the days we explored inland. Peg and Dodie also had while scouting, in a small pond adjacent to the Golf Course.

Plovers - Charadriidae

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* – Regular in small numbers on the beaches.
Snowy Plover *Charadrius nivosus* – Several seen on our beach walk, a couple of adults in breeding attire.
Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* – Seen on our beach day, and in the vicinity of the marine lab.
Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* – Anrew had been studying this species, particularly looking for banded individuals. Peg spotted one and he knew it by its color bands right away – great to hear of this very current monitoring.
Killdeer *Charadrius vociferous* – Seen early on in the trip in rain-flooded fields.

Sandpipers and Snipe - Scolopacidae

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* – A tick for the trip list on our final morning, one hanging around on a cement pad near where we parked at Shell Mound.
Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* – Several seen in the flooded school green area. Classic Dauphin Island where it is still possible to pull off the road, set up scopes and take a tally – even in the middle of “town”!
Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* – Seen on two days in wetlands environments.
Willit *Tringa semipalmata* – Common where we encountered shorebirds, seen on three days.
Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* – Seen in freshwater areas of our estuary boat trip.
(LO) Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* – Seen only when scouting, on a sandbar scoped from the spot of roosting night-herons.
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* – Seen on our beach walk day.
Red Knot *Calidris canutus* – Seen in our beach walk day, nice to study them against other shorebirds.
Sanderling *Calidris alba* – Seen on two days, present with other shorebirds where we observed the beaches.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* – One of the more common shorebird species, several sporting black tummies – spring!

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* – Seen on two days, on the beach walk fairly common.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* – Seen in good number on our beach walk.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* – One seen in the scope and studied well on our beach walk day.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus* – One of the most common shorebirds, very much at home in this terrain.

Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers - Laridae

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* – A common daily companion, great to hear them when we'd open our doors in the morning.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* – Seen on three days, much less common than Laughings but present.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* – Seen on three days, but best studied on our beach walk day.

Least Tern *Sternula antillarum* – We were thrilled to see this Species of Concern in the country's interior. They were noisy, courting, and cheeky. Seen on three days.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* – We found these first from the seawall near Shell Mound, then got to study them mixed in with other terns on the beach walk.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* – Posing regally – one here or there but hard to miss.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri* – Seen on three days, enjoyed watching their agility in flight and feeding.

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus* – We saw these best on the beach walk, roosting on sand areas in groups of half a dozen, sky-pointing, testing their positions, wing-stretching – Fun!

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* – How readily we learned that the yellow tip can be very hard to see, best to look at the overall picture. Once we had the jizz, there were many.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* – Seen in good number on our crossings of the bridge, on small sand areas, resting.

Pigeons and Doves - Columbidae

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* – Seen daily in good number, common.

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* – Seen in Mobile and in travel.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* – Present on the island and mainland, often first calls of the morning.

Cuckoos - Cuculidae

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* – Surprisingly easy to see, as they rested and fed in the oases of trees we wandered. Seen resting on rocks near the shorelines, in trees with lush growth, one arrival seemed exhausted and really needing time to refuel.

Owls- Strigidae

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus* – Seen on our second day, hunting from the island's Water Tower. Peg and Dodie had one roosting in pine while scouting.

Nighthawks and Nightjars - Caprimulgidae

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor* – Several seen in lights of the Water Tower mid-town. Also one roosting in a tree by Shell Mound.

Swifts - Apodidae

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica* – Common and vocal, seen almost daily.

Hummingbirds - Trochilidae

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris* – We had great looks at this little dynamo. They were highly protective of feeding patches, and perched often where we could see them well and glimpse their gem-like gorgets.

Kingfishers - Alcedinidae

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon* – Seen daily, this is their realm!

Woodpeckers - Picidae

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus* – Another bird seen daily, we had good looks, and often were alerted by calls.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius* – Seen on two days.

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens* – Heard early on in the trip and then seen on our final day.

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus* – Seen on our second day.

(HO) Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus* – Heard only, a teaser as we explored the pine lands.

Falcons - Falconidae

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* – Seen on the day we ventured inland into the delta region.

Tyrant Flycatchers- Tyrannidae

Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens* – On our second day, it was a First of the Season sighting for this species.

(HO)Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virescens* – Heard in the parking lot where we took the delta region boat ride.

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus* – Seen or heard every day, bold and crabby, always!

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus* – Seen regularly, on four days, not in large number but present.

Vireos - Vireonidae

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus* – We had to laugh at the time we spent to find the first one, when after that it was one of the most regular sightings of the tour. Great vocalizations.

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons* – Seen on three days of the tour, quiet, feeding in mixed groups with warblers.

Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitaries* – Seen on two days, easy to spot, bold plumage but quiet, feeding.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* – This vireo called regularly, alerting us to its presence on each day of the tour.

Black-whiskered Vireo *Vireo altiloquus* – A real highlight of the tour for many, this elusive Caribbean species barely reaches up into the `US and we were all thrilled to join a group gawking at it, with stunning views and the chance to photograph it.

Jays - Corvidae

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata* – Seen daily, appreciated mainly by the western contingent of the group. They frequented the parking lot beyond Shell Mound by the research lab.

Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus* – One of our favorite memories of the trip will be the crazy sounds of this nasal-toned species, common and seen daily.

Swallows - Hirundinidae

Purple Martin *Progne subis* – Seen daily in good number.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor* – Seen in the Clapper Rail marsh area, and near the ocean lab our first two rainy days.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* – Seen on four days of the journey, in small number but regular.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* – Seen on two days, but by far the best views were on the day we walked out to the beach.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – Seen daily, really moving through the area.

Chickadees and Titmice - Paridae

Carolina Chickadee - *Poecile carolinensis* – Seen by Peg and a few at the pitcher plant bog, calling. Heard in the picnic area across from the research facilities at the Delta Center where we caught to boat ride.

(HO) Tufted Titmouse - *Baeolophus bicolor* – Clearly heard but in thick forest, our day inland to the pitcher plant bog.

Nuthatches - Sittidae

Brown-headed Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla* – A really friendly islander showed us a nest early on, and all of the group got to see it, on island. We had very good views by the pitcher plant bog as well, and listened to their vocalizations.

Wrens - Troglodytidae

Sedge Wren *Cistothorus platensis* – Heard from the boat on our delta day.

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus* – Loud, calling often, but always a task to see. We nailed it well on day four by the Ghost Trees, as well as at Bellingrath Gardens.

Gnatcatchers - Polioptilidae

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Polioptila caerulea* – Highly visible our day at the pitcher plant bog.

Kinglets - Regulidae

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* – Seen on two days of our journey, numbers thinning out and likely heading north.

Thrushes - Turdidae

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis* – Seen on four days of the journey, good looks when we stopped for the White ibis mob atop a dead tree in the field.

(LO) Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus* – Peg made a run back to the van and then ran into an individual of this species, seen by others this day, as she returned to the group. Alas, no others were able to find.

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina* – Seen and heard (lovely!) on three days of the journey, several at the back of Cadillac Park and others in the woods of Shell Mound.

Mockingbirds - Mimidae

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis* – Common, encountered on woods walks, daily.

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum* – Best looks by the barbecue place we dined at, as we drove in to park. Seen almost daily, four days of the trip.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* – Very common, seen daily, and it was fun for those not from the Southeast to take in its repertoire of calls.

Starlings - Sturnidae

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* – Seen daily.

Waxwings - Bombycillidae

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum* – Heard one morning as we went to the Clapper Rail marsh area, but then seen at the picnic area by the boat launch for the delta.

Wood-Warblers - Parulidae

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus* – Individuals seen on four days, usually solo, but often staying in one area long enough all got good looks.

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum* – We saw the first one at the Sanctuary area, then saw them daily at Shell Mound.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* – Seen in the small depression at Shell Mound on two days, but then also seen near the ferry pickup between a shrub row and the jetty rocks.

Blue-winged Warbler *Vermivora cyanoptera* – Seen on three days of our trip, often in the same general area near the edge of the open benches part of Shell Mound, always in flock with others.

Black-and-White Warbler *Mniotilta varia* – Best looks at Shell Mound and Bellingrath Gardens, seen daily.

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea* – First seen at the small pond by where we parked at Shell Mound, we then saw it daily and had endearing long looks.

Swainson's Warbler *Limnithlypis swainsonii* – Seen on the first two days of our tour, in the small depression as we entered Shell Mound, a life bird for several of the group.

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata* – Seen on two days of the journey, always in the company of other warblers.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* – Seen on three and heard on another day, nice to see its jaunty black mask peer out from vegetation.

Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina* – One of the most common, and confiding, warblers encountered.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla* – Seen on two days, nice bright plumage males.

Cape May Warbler *Setophaga tigrina* – Great times with a bright male that settled into a bottlebrush hedge our final morning, great photo opportunity.

Cerulean Warbler *Setophaga cerulea* – Master birder Andrew spotted this gem in a mixed flock at Shell Mound, breeding plumage, a WOW for sure. Just this one sighting, day two...

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana* – Seen on three days, singing at Bellingrath Gardens, lovely bird!

Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca* – Who can't be knocked out by dayglow black and orange? Another gift of the storm, a single sighting on day two.

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechial* – Beautiful male we all paused to appreciate, seen the day after the storm subsided.

Blackpoll Warbler *Setophaga striata* – We had the First of Season on our day three, and then had photo ops as one was a show off in the bench section of Shell Mound.

Palm Warbler *Setophaga palmarum* – That endearing wag... Seen on four days of the journey.

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus* – We had to work for this one, kept hearing it, finally zoned in at the parking lot of our restaurant place where some caught it, then again at Fort Morgan, where it came down mercifully to eye-level.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronate* – Fairly common, seen on three days of the journey.

Yellow-throated Warbler *Setophaga dominica* – A stunning individual in our Day Two wave of migrants, came into photo range...

Prairie Warbler *Setophaga discolor* – Lovely species, singing at times, Peg and Dodie spied while scouting and then seen on our Day two bonanza.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens* – Fairly common in the mixed flocks, first seen at the Cadillac Rest stop.

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla* – Seen only on Day two with the wave of migrants.

Seed eaters and Sparrows - Emberizidae

Eastern Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* – Seen in a few places including the Audubon Bird Sanctuary and Splinter Hill Bog.

Bachman's Sparrow *Peucaea aestivalis* – Seen and heard at Splinter Hill Bog.

(HO)Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerine* – Heard at Splinter Hill Bog.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* – One seen by a few people at the Fort Morgan Historical site.

Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Buntings - Cardinalidae

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra* – Seen the first day by the Shell Mounds, and seen every day after that.

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea* – Observed every day.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis* – A common site, seen every day.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus* – Seen four out of five days.

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea* – Seen most days.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea* – Seen every day, a large group was seen in the central depression at Shell Mound.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* – First seen by a few after a report to Andrew at Cadillac Park; afterwards the whole group saw a few times in and near Shell Mound.

American Orioles and Blackbirds - Icteridae

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* –A common bird, seen every day.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna* –Seen in some fields after lunch on our way to Bellingrath Gardens on the fourth day.

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula* – Seen all days of our trip.

Boat-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus major* – Seen all days that we used to causeway to leave the island.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater* – Common and seen all days.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius* –Seen a few days, often in the Bottlebrush plant by Shell Mound.

Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula* – Seen day three, only by a few at Shell Mound.

Finches and Allies Fringillidae

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus* – Seen most days, fairly common.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* – Not overwhelming – only seen two days.

MAMMALS

Red Fox – Peg spotted the first one as we were getting in our cars at the Clapper Rail marsh area, and then we all had good looks checking the bottle brush hedge by the local cemetery where one seemed quite tame.

Eastern Gray Squirrel – Fairly common on the island.

Bottle-nosed Dolphin – Seen from the ferry and from the shore at the point we looked for gannets.

HERPS

American Alligator

Alabama Red-bellied Turtle

Tree frog, sp.

Chorus frog, sp.

Ribbon Snake

Black Racer

Watersnake, sp.

Cuban Anole

Skink, sp.

INVERTEBRATES, a note...

Cecropia moth - amazing creature seen and photographed at our gas station stop the day we drove north to the bog and pine woodlands.