

# South Carolina: Southern Charm | Species List

## October 18 – 25, 2017 | Compiled by Guide Pat Lueders



**Guide Pat Lueders with participants Jean, Ellen & Jane**



### Summary

An enjoyable eight-day tour of the South's charming low-country from Savannah, Georgia, to Charleston, South Carolina, with stops in between sighting many of the local specialties: Anhinga, Tricolored Heron, White and Glossy Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Wood Stork, Mottled Duck, Clapper Rail, American Oystercatcher, American Avocet, Red Knot, Black Skimmer, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Seaside Sparrow, and Salt-marsh Sparrow. American Alligators were seen at close range on the frequent visits to swamp areas. The city tours of Savannah and Charleston provided a historical picture of their participation in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Visits to scenic Ft. Sumter and Ft. Moultrie were educational, and meals at many of the local restaurants featuring low-country cuisine were delicious! The group enjoyed visits to the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge where Spanish moss-covered Live Oak trees create a haven for many bird species. The ACE Basin is home to many of the area species that prefer marsh and river habitat. The Francis Beidler Audubon Center is a tupelo and bald cypress swamp, home to all species of woodpecker in the southern United States. We visited beaches for shorebirds and seabirds. We worked around a couple of rainy days but that didn't slow down this energetic and delightful group!

### Key

(HO) = Heard Only

(LO) = Leader Only

(#) = number of species seen in family

(#) after name = # of days seen out of 8

(RS) = Regional Specialty

### Reference Locations

Day 1: 10/18/2017 Drive from Charleston to Savannah on Highway 17, city birding in Savannah

Day 2: 10/19/2017 Birded the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge's Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive and visitor's

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center

- Day 3: 10/20/2017 Drove Hwy 17 to ACE Basin; birded Donnelley Wildlife Management Area and Bear Island Wildlife Management Area
- Day 4: 10/21/2017 Pitt St. Causeway, Sullivan Island Beach, Francis Marion National Forest
- Day 5: 10/22/2017 Folly Island fishing pier, Folly Beach "Washout" area, Morris Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve
- Day 6: 10/23/2017 Magnolia Plantation and the Audubon Swamp Trail
- Day 7: 10/24/2017 Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Center and Sanctuary, Charleston Bay, Ft. Sumter National Monument
- Day 8: 10/25/2017 Hoover Road, Francis Marion National Forest

### **Birds: 128 Species**

#### **Anatidae: Ducks, Geese and Swans (8)**

**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*-(3) Seen on the first and last day in a pond near the Charleston airport

**Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa*-(1) Special request of Jean's: 30 males, females and juveniles seen at Magnolia's Audubon Swamp

**Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors*-(2) Many seen in ponds at ACE Basin, 10 more found at Magnolia's Audubon Swamp

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*-(1) Fifteen in Ashepoo River at Bear Island WMA

**American Wigeon** *Anas americana*-(1) Two in Ashepoo River at Bear Island WMA

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*-(3) Seen in ponds at Donnelley WMA, in Ashepoo River at Bear Island, and Audubon Swamp

**Mottled Duck** *Anas fulvigula*-(1) Male and female in the Ashepoo River at Bear Island WMA

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*-(1) Fifteen males and females in the Ashepoo River at Bear Island WMA

#### **Podicipedidae: Grebes (1)**

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*-(4) Seen often in ponds including Savannah NWR, ACE Basin, Audubon Swamp

#### **Ciconiidae: Storks (1)**

**Wood Stork** *Mycteria americana*-(2-RS) Always fun to see, close look at one at Pitt Street Bridge and roosting in the trees; many seen soaring at Donnelley WMA

#### **Phalacrocoracidae: Cormorants (1)**

**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus* -(5) Seen almost daily at fresh and saltwater locations

#### **Anhingidae: Anhingas (1)**

**Anhinga** *Anhinga anhinga*-(2-RS) Fitting that we would have our first sighting near the Audubon Swamp where John James Audubon observed and collected his first Anhinga specimen; another was perched along the channel at swamp at Francis Beidler

#### **Pelecanidae: Pelicans (1)**

**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis*-(4) Good numbers seen at all salt water locations

#### **Ardeidae: Herons and Egrets (6)**

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea Herodias*-(7) This largest of all herons was seen daily at all locations; very close looks at the Savannah NWR

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**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*-(7) This plentiful egret was seen daily at all locations

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula*-(5) Seen at all fresh water ponds and lakes, often with Little Blue Herons for comparison

**Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea*-(6) Both blue and white plumages seen, often together for comparison, at Savannah NWR; also seen at ACE Basin, Audubon Swamp and Pitt Street Bridge

**Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor*-(3 RS) Twenty seen at various locations at ACE Basin; two seen at Pitt St. Bridge

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*-(1) Four seen standing on the levee and in the marsh at Savannah NWR

### Threskiornithidae: Ibis and Spoonbills (3)

**White Ibis** *Eudocimus albus*-(8) Seen daily at all locations and in residential areas; first seen roosting in trees at Savannah NWR

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*-(1) Two seen at close range flying low over the Savannah NWR marsh

**Roseate Spoonbill** *Platalea ajaja*-(3-RS) We were lucky to see ten of this spectacular species roosting in trees at Donnelley WMA after a quick fly over at Savannah NWR

### Cathartidae: New World Vultures (2)

**Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus*-(4) Nice views at locations in the ACE Basin; seen often during drives

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*-(8) Seen daily in good numbers at all locations

### Pandionidae: Osprey (1)

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*-(2) First two seen at Pitt St. Causeway; others seen on Sullivan's Island

### Accipitridae: Hawks, Eagles, and Kites (6)

**Northern Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* -(1) Only sighting was one soaring over the Savannah NWR marsh

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus*-(1) One seen at close range on Savannah NWR wildlife drive

**Cooper's Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii*-(5) Seen fairly often perched and flying often in residential areas

**Bald Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*-(5) Adults and juveniles seen often, soaring and perched

**Red-shouldered Hawk** *Buteo lineatus* -(2) Heard at Savannah NWR; scope views of one perched on Sullivan's Island

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis* -(4) Seen soaring and perched at various locations

### Rallidae: Rails, Coots, and Allies (5)

**King Rail** *Rallus elegans*-(1-HO) Heard only at the entrance to the Savannah NWR

**Clapper Rail** *Rallus crepitans* -(2) Heard maybe 3 – 4 vocalizing at Pitt St., one spotted by Jane very close to us for great looks!

**Sora** *Porzana carolina*-(2-HO) Distinctive vocalization heard at Savannah NWR and Pitt St. causeway

**Common Gallinule** *Gallinula galeata*-(3) Many seen out in the open at Savannah NWR, at ACE Basin, and in the pond at Magnolia's Audubon Swamp

**American Coot** *Fulica americana*-(1) Surprisingly, only seen once at Donnelley WMA

### Haematopodidae: Oystercatchers (1)

**American Oystercatcher** *Haematopus palliatus*-(1) Seen flying over the marsh and perched on a pier at Ft. Moultrie

### Charadriidae: Plovers and Lapwings (2)

**Black-bellied Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*-(1) Three seen with other shorebirds on Sullivan Island

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*-(5) Heard and seen often at Savannah NWR & ACE Basin

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### Scolopacidae: Sandpipers and Allies (8)

- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*-(2) Four on the pier at Folly washout and piers at Pitt St. causeway  
**Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*-(2) Group of 15 on Sullivan Island's Beach; hundreds at Morris lighthouse  
**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*-(4) Most common shorebird; seen on visits to the beaches running away from the waves  
**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*-(1) Three with Sanderlings for comparison on beach at Ft. Sumter  
**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*-(2) First one spotted by Jane near pier on Folly Island; another at Ft. Sumter  
**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*-(2) Heard and seen flying at Donnelley WMA and Bear Island  
**Willet** *Tringa semipalmata*-(2) Large group of 25 on a pier at Ft Moultrie; individuals on beach at Sullivan's Island  
**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*-(1) Two vocalized while flying by us on the Pitt St. causeway

### Laridae: Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers (8)

- Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla*-(7) Seen often and everywhere during the week  
**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*-(2) Seen with Laughing and Herring Gulls on Folly Beach washout pier for comparison  
**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*-(2) Two seen perched on the pier for good views of size and pink leg color  
**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*-(1) Scope view of two at Morris Island lighthouse with Royal for nice comparison  
**Forster's Tern** *Sterna forsteri*-(4) Many seen perched on Folly Beach and Pitt St. piers with other terns  
**Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus*-(3) Seen at all beach locations and perched on piers at Folly Beach and Pitt St.  
**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis*-(1) Nice scope views of nine of this smaller tern with yellow tip on black bill at Pitt St.  
**Black Skimmer** *Rynchops niger*-(2) Large flocks flying and perched in Charleston Harbor from Ft. Sumter cruise in Charleston

### Columbidae: Pigeons and Doves (3)

- Rock Dove** *Columba livia*-(5) Seen often while driving in populated areas  
**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*-(2) Seen on wires along the roadsides and in the town of Folly Beach  
**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*-(4) Seen in trees at Savannah NWR, on wires in Folly Beach and other locations

### Cuculidae: Cuckoos and Allies (1)

- Yellow-billed Cuckoo** *Coccyzus americanus*-(2) Scope view at Magnolia's Audubon swamp and two at Francis Marion NF

### Alcedinidae: Kingfishers (1)

- Belted Kingfisher** *Megasceryle alcyon*-(8) Seen and heard daily including at Savannah NWR, ACE Basin, and Folly Beach

### Picidae: Woodpeckers (8)

- Red-headed Woodpecker** *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*-(1) This attractive bird was seen in good numbers at Francis Beidler  
**Red-bellied Woodpecker** *Melanerpes carolinus*-(6) Seen and heard at all locations; good looks at the entrance to Savannah  
**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus varius*-(3) A life bird for Jean, this fall migrant was seen often including at Savannah NWR  
**Downy Woodpecker** *Picoides pubescens*-(5) Seen and heard at all locations

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**Hairy Woodpecker** *Picoides villosus*-(2) Seen on the Francis Beidler boardwalk

**Red-Cockaded Woodpecker** *Leuconotopicus borealis*-(2-RS) We tried twice for this endangered species; heard the first time and then heard and seen well after a long search on the last day at Francis Marion NF

**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*-(4) Seen and heard often at many locations

**Pileated Woodpecker** *Dryocopus pileatus*-(6-HO,LO) A group favorite, we heard many but only had looks as they flew in front of the van

### Falconidae: Falcons and Caracaras (1)

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*-(1) One was seen perched at Bear Island, although the group often tried to make other birds into this species

### Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers (2)

**Eastern Wood-Pewee** *Contopus virens*-(1) Only seen once at Donnelley WMA

**Eastern Phoebe** *Sayornis phoebe*-(8) Seen and heard daily at all locations

### Laniidae: Shrikes (1)

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*-(1-LO) Seen on the fence at the Charleston airport

### Vireonidae: Vireos (1)

**White-eyed Vireo** *Vireo griseus*-(4) Heard and spotted often in mixed feeding flocks; close looks at Audubon Swamp

### Corvidae: Crows, Jays, and Magpies (3)

**Blue Jay** *Cyanocitta cristata*-(8) Seen and heard daily at all locations

**American Crow** *Corvus brachyrhynchos*-(8) Seen and heard vocalizing at all locations

**Fish Crow** *Corvus ossifragus*-(2) Heard vocalizing and seen flying over us at Pitt St. causeway

### Hirundinidae: Swallows and Martins (3)

**Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor*-(4) Many seen in the air over marshes including at Folly Beach, ACE Basin, and Pitt St Bridge

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*-(1) Seen flying over the fields at Donnelley WMA

### Paridae: Tits and Chickadees (2)

**Carolina Chickadee** *Poecile carolinensis*-(8) Seen daily leading mixed feeding flocks at all locations

**Tufted Titmouse** *Baeolophus bicolor*-(5) Seen almost daily in mixed flocks; good views at feeders at Savannah NWR

### Sittidae: Nuthatches (2)

**White-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta carolinensis*-(4) Seen at entrance to the Savannah NWR, at Donnelly WMA, and at Francis Beidler

**Brown-headed Nuthatch** *Sitta pusilla*-(2) Small flocks found vocalizing at Donnelly WMA and Francis Marion National Forest

### Troglodytidae: Wrens (4)

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*-(4) Many found, often with mixed feeding flocks including Savannah NWR, Donnelly WMA, and Morris Lighthouse inlet

**Winter Wren** *Troglodytes hiemalis*-(1) Seen by Pat and Jean skulking around a log at Francis Beidler

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**Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris*-(1-LO/HO) Heard by Pat at Francis Beidler prairie but wouldn't show himself  
**Carolina Wren** *Thryothorus ludovicianus*-(8) Proving true to his name, we heard and saw this species at all locations

### **Poliophilidae: Gnatcatchers (1)**

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Poliophtila caerulea*-(3) Best looks on short walk at Savannah NWR in Live Oaks

### **Regulidae: Kinglets (2)**

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus satrapa*-(1-LO) One seen well on last day at Francis Marion NF

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula*-(4) This kinglet was seen often with mixed feeding flocks

### **Turdidae: Thrushes (3)**

**Eastern Bluebird** *Sialia sialis*-(4) A group favorite, we first saw this species at Donnelly WMA and later at the Audubon Swamp

**Gray-cheeked Thrush** *Catharus minimus*-(1) A surprise sighting of this migrant under a bush at Magnolia Gardens

**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*-(3) We found many of this species in Forsyth Park, downtown Savannah

### **Mimidae: Mockingbirds and Thrashers (3)**

**Gray Catbird** *Dumetella carolinensis*-(8) This species was seen and heard daily and in large numbers at ACE Basin

**Brown Thrasher** *Toxostoma rufum*-(3) First one found by Ellen hiding in a bush at Pitt St. causeway

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*-(8) This species was seen daily at all locations, especially on Folly Island

### **Sturnidae: Starlings (1)**

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*-(1) Watching for this species, we finally had a flock at Folly Beach

### **Parulidae: Wood-Warblers (10)**

**Worm-eating Warbler** *Helmitheros vermivorus*-(1-LO) Quick look in palms on ground at Savannah NWR

**Black-and-White Warbler** *Mniotilta varia*-(3) First one seen by Jean at Savannah NWR; seen again at Francis Beidler

**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas*-(3) Females seen often in mixed feeding flocks; male seen at Savannah NWR

**American Redstart** *Setophaga ruticilla*-(1) A few females seen at Savannah NWR

**Northern Parula** *Setophaga americana*-(1-LO) One found in a mixed flock at Francis Beidler

**Magnolia Warbler** *Setophaga magnolia*-(1) Close look for all on the Morris Lighthouse inlet walk

**Black-throated Blue Warbler** *Setophaga caerulea*-(2) We got great close looks at two of this species, one at Savannah NWR and one from Francis Beidler boardwalk

**Palm Warbler** *Setophaga palmarum*-(4) This warbler, with distinctive behavioral field marks, was found in large numbers most locations including Savannah NWR, Ft. Moultrie, and Patriot's Point

**Pine Warbler** *Setophaga pinus*-(3) Good looks in pines at Donnelly WMA and Francis Marion National Forest

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*-(4) Second most numerous warbler seen, present at most locations

### **Emberizidae: New World Sparrows (8)**

**Saltmarsh Sparrow** *Ammodramus caudacutus*-(1-RS) We arrived at Pitt St. causeway at low tide and had perched looks at this colorful sparrow; lifer for some

**Seaside Sparrow** *Ammodramus maritimus*-(1-RS) This hard to see Southeast specialty was found in saltmarsh grass during low tide at the Pitt Street causeway, very close looks at adults and juveniles; "high five" life bird for Jean.

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**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*-(1) Flock of 15 found on the road at Donnelley WMA

**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*-(1) Seen at low tide perched at Pitt St. causeway

**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*-(2) Seen and heard at Donnelley WMA

**Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolni*-(1-LO) One seen at close range on road at Francis Marion NF

**Swamp Sparrow** *Melospiza georgiana*-(3) Nice numbers and good looks along Savannah NWR Laurel Hill Drive

**Eastern Towhee** *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*-(4) Heard at Savannah NWR and Donnelly WMA, finally seen at Francis Marion NF

### Cardinalidae: Cardinals and Grosbeaks (4)

**Scarlet Tanager** *Piranga olivacea*-(1) Seen by all a number of times while walking at the Savannah NWR visitor's center

**Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis*-(8) Large numbers seen daily at all locations

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak** *Pheucticus ludovicianus*-(1-LO) Quick look at a female at Savannah NWR

**Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea*-(1) Female or juvenile seen at Savannah NWR from car in a bush on wildlife drive

### Icteridae: Blackbirds and Orioles (6)

**Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna*-(1-LO) A few seen flying at Donnelley WMA prairie

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*-(6) Large numbers seen at Savannah NWR, ACE Basin, Francis Marion NF

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*-(1) Hundreds, mixed male and female flock, in trees at lunch at Donnelley WMA

**Rusty Blackbird** *Euphagus carolinus*-(1) Good scope looks perched on a post at Donnelley WMA

**Common Grackle** *Quiscalus quiscula*-(3) Seen flying at Donnelley WMA and Magnolia Plantation's Audubon Swamp Trail

**Boat-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus major*-(4) Common and vocal at many locations

### Fringillidae: Finches (2)

**House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus*-(1) Seen on the telephone wires on Folly Island

**American Goldfinch** *Spinus tristis*-(1) Only seen once in field at Donnelley WMA prairie

### Passeridae: Old World Sparrows (1)

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*-(4) Seen in cities in parking lots and on Folly Island

## **Mammals: 4 Species**

**Eastern Gray Squirrel** *Sciurus carolinensis*-(8) Seen daily at all locations, very numerous!

**Bottlenose Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus*-(1) Exciting sighting on the cruise to Ft. Sumter

**White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus*-(1) Seen in the swamp at Francis Beidler

**Eastern Fox Squirrel** *Sciurus niger*-(1) Seen on trip to Francis Beidler Audubon Center

## **Reptiles: 2 Species**

**American Alligator** *Alligator mississippiensis*-(3) Numerous sightings at the Savannah NWR, at Donnelley WMA and many at Magnolia Garden and Audubon Swamp

**Yellow-Bellied Slider** *Trachemys scripta scripta*-(2) Seen at Savannah NWR and Audubon Swamp