



April 11 - 20, 2021

South Florida: Everglades & More!

With Carlos Sanchez and 4 participants: Susan, Mark, Bob, and Cathy

Compiled by Carlos Sanchez

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(I)= Introduced

(E)= Endemic

Summary: What an amazing tour! Over the course of nine days, the Naturalist Journey South Florida Birding experience took us through a wide swath of various habitats from sawgrass prairie to mangroves to pinelands to tropical hardwood hammocks to lush tropical gardens. We also saw some truly marvelous birds that inhabit this barely tropical part of the country, including Mangrove Cuckoo, White-crowned Pigeon, Florida Scrub-Jay, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Burrowing Owl, and even a vagrant Bahama Mockingbird. The extension to the Dry Tortugas really rounded the trip out, with bustling colonies of tropical seabirds like Sooty Tern, Brown Noddy, and Masked Booby and solid numbers of migrants wandering around the fort such as Scarlet Tanager, Yellow-throated Vireo, Orchard Oriole, Hooded Warbler, and Broad-winged Hawk. West Indian Manatees frolicked in the marina at Flamingo, wading bird rookeries bustled with activity at Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Chuck-will's-widow and Common Nighthawk called incessantly on a misty pre-dawn morning in Everglades NP, and a secluded cove in the Florida Keys full of endemic 'Florida Key' Clapper Rail and nesting Wilson's Plover enjoyed to ourselves – just a brief reel of highlights from a very memorable trip.

BIRDS (182 species recorded, of which 1 was heard only):

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae (8)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*—good numbers of these tropical ducks observed lounging about at Green Cay and Wakodahatchee Wetlands; morning flyover of a pair at Sand Hill Crane Park

Egyptian Goose (I) *Alopochen aegyptiaca*—accidentally introduced via a collector on Key Biscayne, these sheldgeese are now very common throughout suburban Miami where we saw them daily

Muscovy Duck (I) *Cairina moschata*—another introduced species of waterfowl, common in suburban Miami in all the canals and ponds

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*—numerous at Peaceful Waters Sanctuary with flyover sightings at Three Lakes WMA and Sand Hill Crane Park; normally not this numerous on our South Florida route!

Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors*—several very attractive pairs of this migratory duck were still lingering at the various artificial wetlands in Palm Beach County

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*—a single female-type bird at Peaceful Waters Sanctuary

Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula*—very similar to a female Mallard in appearance and threatened by that promiscuous species via hybridization; still common in the artificial wetland sites in Palm Beach County
Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*—a single lingering bird in the moat at Fort Zachary Taylor State Park in Key West was a very odd sighting this late into spring! ***extension only***

NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae (1)

Northern Bobwhite *Odontophorus virginianus* (HO)—heard calling in the fields on Joe Overstreet Road on our Central Florida day

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS, AND ALLIES: Phasianidae (1)

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*—one bird feeding in a field on Joe Overstreet Road in Central Florida

GREBES: Podicipedidae (2)

Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus*—our group saw the lingering individual at Crandon Park in Key Biscayne, which was a new county record for Miami-Dade County at the time of its discovery!

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*—although a common winter resident, this grebe is only a very local breeder in South Florida in the spring and summer. We saw several breeding plumage birds at Green Cay Wetlands

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (6)

Rock Pigeon (1) *Columba livia*—seen daily throughout the trip wherever there was a town or city

White-crowned Pigeon *Patagioenas leucocephala*—locally common in suburban neighborhoods of Miami, where we saw several including one carrying nesting material. We observed this species regularly in the Lower Keys as well, especially around Key West. This tropical pigeon feeds primarily on fruit.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (1) *Streptopelia decaocto*—established in South Florida since the 1980s, we saw this introduced dove every day

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*—fairly local and a bit more habitat specific than the other South Florida doves; we saw them at Flamingo in Everglades National Park, Jonathan Dickinson State Park, and Crandon Park. However, our best views were along Boca Chica Road where they kept landing on the road in front of us!

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*—small numbers encountered regularly in suburban Miami as we explored neighborhoods and parks for other species

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*—ubiquitous dove in South Florida in a variety of habitats

CUCKOOS: Cuculidae (2)

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*—one extremely skittish individual at Carysfort Circle in Key Largo; a migrant seen at Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas, as well

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor*—spectacular views of this normally retiring species in coastal Miami-Dade County, where a semi-continuous belt of maturing mangrove forest provides habitat for several resident pairs. Bird of the trip for one.

NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae (2)

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*—great views of this aerial insectivore at Long Pine Key Campground in Everglades National Park. They were actively displaying already, often diving at great speeds to create a ‘wooshing’ sound.

Chuck-will’s-widow *Antrostomus carolinensis*—fantastic views of singing birds at Lone Pine Key Campground in the Everglades on our dawn vigil. The combination of multiple singing nocturnal birds

and a light dawn mist over a sleepy Everglades pineland made it the experience of the trip for this group! We also had one briefly perched on a branch at Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas.

SWIFTS: Apodidae (1)

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*—a few early arriving individuals at Brewer Park, where they nest in the crannies of older homes

RAILS, COOTS, AND ALLIES: Rallidae (6)

Clapper Rail *Rallus crepitans*—amazing views of a pair of the Florida Keys endemic *R. c. insularum* in the Lower Keys with at least two more pairs calling in the background. These mangrove-dwelling rails are more closely related to the subspecies of Clapper found in the West Indies rather than the ones on the mainland ***extension only***

Sora *Porzana carolina*—great views of a cooperative individual sneaking along the edge of the vegetation at Green Cay Wetlands

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*—ubiquitous in mainland Florida wherever there was permanent freshwater

American Coot *Fulica americana*—although common in winter, only a very local species at this time of year with a few at Green Cay Wetlands and a lingering individual in the West Kendall Baptist Hospital area of Miami

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica*—great views of these exquisitely colorful gallinules at Joe Overstreet Road in Central Florida, Green Cay Wetlands, and Wakodahatchee Wetlands

Gray-headed Swamphen (I) *Porphyrio poliocephalus*—these gigantic yet beautiful introduced rails (originally from South Asia) were common at Green Cay and Wakodahatchee Wetlands. They feed by picking up aquatic vegetation with their feet and surgically snipping the rhizome with their sharp beaks – a very cool behavior to watch

LIMPKIN: Aramididae (1)

Limpkin *Aramus guarauna*—two as we were leaving Peaceful Waters Sanctuary; several at the end of Joe Overstreet Road and another at Sand Hill Crane Park; the only species in its family, highlighting its uniqueness

CRANES: Gruidae (1)

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*—singles of this statuesque species observed at Joe Overstreet Road and Sand Hill Crane Park

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (1)

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*—common summer resident in both freshwater and saline habitats in South Florida; we saw gatherings of these birds in Flamingo at Everglades National Park, Peaceful Waters Sanctuary, Lake Florence Boat Ramp, and Grassy Key

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (5)

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*—our best views of this common migrant were at Grassy Key, where several birds were transitioning into their black-bellied summer plumage

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia*—very local breeding species in the Florida Keys; we saw several lively birds in a secluded cove in the Lower Keys ***extension only***

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*—locally abundant migrant plover; large gatherings at Crandon Park, Grassy Key, and Boca Chica Key

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus*—small numbers of these charismatic, threatened plovers at Crandon Park; two more at Boca Chica Key

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*—two at the parking lot at Crandon Park; singles at Peaceful Waters and Joe Overstreet Road

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (12)

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*—small numbers along the shore at Boca Chica Beach; very tame birds foraging like feral Rock Pigeons on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas ***extension only***

Sanderling *Calidris alba*—large numbers at Crandon Park and Boca Chica Beach

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*—two mixed in with Sanderling at Crandon Park in Key Biscayne; three birds molting into breeding plumage on Boca Chica Beach

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*—the most widespread of the ‘peeps’ on this route, occurring in both freshwater and saltwater habitats; good numbers observed at Crandon Park, Peaceful Waters Sanctuary, Grassy Key, and Boca Chica Beach

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*—excellent close studies of at least two individuals on Boca Chica Beach, feeding alongside both Sanderling and Least Sandpiper for comparison ***extension only***

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*—a single bird at Crandon Park was our only one of the trip

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*—large gatherings at Grassy Key and Boca Chica Road; this species prefers coastal mudflats and saline habitats in migration in Florida unlike the Long-billed Dowitcher ***extension only***

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*—we saw this stocky little shorebird teetering along the water’s edge at Peaceful Waters, coastal Miami, and Everglades National Park (Flamingo)

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*—one of the few tree-nesting shorebirds; seen well at Peaceful Waters Sanctuary and the canal at Sand Hill Crane Park

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*—just a few of these elegant shorebirds in Everglades National Park (Mrazek Pond) and the Lake Florence Boat Ramp in Central Florida

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*—one seen in flight, showing off its diagnostic black and white wing pattern, at Crandon Park in Key Biscayne; small numbers at Boca Chica Beach and Everglades NP (Flamingo)

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*—nice side by side comparison with Greater Yellowlegs at Lake Florence in Central Florida; two additional birds at Peaceful Waters in Palm Beach Co.

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (11)

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*—very common at coastal sites such as Crandon Park on Key Biscayne and throughout the Florida Keys

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*—a few lingering birds loafing around the tropical tern colony in the Dry Tortugas ***extension only***

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*—abundant once we approached Fort Jefferson, where they nest by the thousands! ***extension only***

Black Noddy *Anous minutus*—we saw the continuing individual at the North Coaling Docks, perched side by side with the abundant Brown Noddy for comparison – visibly smaller size, sharply defined white cap, and a thin, straight bill ***extension only***

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*—abundant once we approached Fort Jefferson, where we observed them by the thousands – the only site in the Lower 48 where this tern regularly nests ***extension only***

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*—two birds seen at the South Coaling Docks as the Yankee Freedom was pulling away from the island on the return home. This bird has a much lighter gray back and much more white on the outer tail feathers than the preceding species. ***extension only***

Least Tern *Sternula antillarum*—numerous summer breeding visitor to Florida; seen at sites throughout the mainland and Florida Keys, showing all manners of behavior from actively fishing to food offerings to the female by the male

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*—a couple individuals were loafing on the mudflat in front of the Flamingo Visitor Center in Everglades National Park as we were enjoying a picnic lunch – the world's largest tern species

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*—a single bird resting on a mudflat at the Lake Florence Boat Ramp area in Central Florida together with many recently arrived Least Tern

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*—common at coastal sites in mainland Florida and the Florida Keys

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*—distant views of a sizeable flock of flying skimmers as the Yankee Freedom cruised by the northwest side of Key West in the early morning. These birds apparently loaf on the docks on this part of the island. ***extension only***

STORKS: Ciconiidae (1)

Wood Stork *Mycteria americana*—the only stork species that regularly occurs in the USA and a bioindicator of the health of the Everglades in South Florida; dozens seen on our day exploring Everglades NP followed by at least a couple hundred more nesting to within arm's reach at the incredible Wakodahatchee Wetlands rookery in Palm Beach Co.

FRIGATEBIRDS: Fregatidae (1)

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*—a few soaring effortlessly overhead on Key Biscayne in Miami-Dade followed; abundant in the Florida Keys at all sites

GANNETS AND BOOBIES: Sulidae (2)

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*—the colony we saw on Hospital Key in the Dry Tortugas is the only known nesting colony of this species in the lower 48

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*—a single somewhat late bird floating on the water on our way from Key West to the Dry Tortugas was a nice sighting!

ANHINGAS: Anhingidae (1)

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*—very common in freshwater habitats throughout the Florida mainland; we got especially great views of them at Wakodahatchee Wetlands where they nest in large numbers

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (1)

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*—common throughout, observed almost daily in numbers

PELICANS: Pelecanidae (2)

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*—over a hundred American White Pelicans circled high overhead before coming in for a landing at Lake Florence while we were there – migration unfolding right before our eyes!

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*—these plunge-diving pelicans were numerous at all coastal sites

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (11)

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*—nice views of these diminutive, skulking herons at Green Cay and Wakodahatchee Wetlands – a total of three individuals seen

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*—small numbers throughout, as well as singles of ‘Great White Heron’ (*Ardea h. occidentalis*) at both Everglades NP (Flamingo) and Fort Zachary Taylor SP

Great Egret *Ardea alba*—seen daily on the mainland, including over a dozen nesting pairs at Wakodahatchee Wetlands

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*—good numbers throughout the tour, especially near Pa-hay-okee in Everglades NP and in Big Cypress National Preserve where drying freshwater pools were concentrating fish

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*—small numbers daily on the mainland portion of the tour

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*—lankier than the preceding species; small numbers seen daily, including some nesting birds at Wakodahatchee Wetlands which were just starting to nest

Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens*—North America’s rarest and least studied ardeid; we saw this charismatic and uncommon species at Grassy Key and Boca Chica Beach ***extension only***

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*—seen every day, even out in the remote Dry Tortugas where they hunt exhausted and hapless songbirds

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*—a common heron wherever there is water throughout Florida; we saw them daily, including a very wary migrant stuck on the Dry Tortugas

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*—a few of these stately nocturnal birds posed well for us at Sweetwater Strand in Big Cypress National Preserve; we also had several flyovers at Pa-hay-okee and Sand Hill Crane Park

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*—this night-heron specializes on eating crustaceans; great views of a small rookery in the suburbs of South Miami on our first morning; a juvenile hunting in broad daylight at Flamingo in Everglades NP and a roosting bird at Fort Zachary Taylor SP rounded out our sightings of this handsome species

IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae (3)

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*—we saw this abundant and ubiquitous species daily on our Florida tour

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*—large numbers of this handsome wader in Palm Beach Co. and further north in Central Florida, where we saw nearly a hundred birds at the end of Joe Overstreet Road

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja*—brilliant sightings of mostly flyover adults on four days, and we did see a couple roosting birds at Eco Pond in Everglades NP for prolonged scope views; this flamboyant bird is the only spoonbill species which is predominantly pink

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (2)

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*—common and ubiquitous, seen almost daily overhead

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*—not quite as numerous as the preceding species this time of year, but we still managed to see this one every day, too!

OSPREY: Pandionidae (1)

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*—observed almost daily, perhaps South Florida’s most numerous raptor; several active nests seen at close range at Flamingo in Everglades NP

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (8)

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus*—arguably the world’s most graceful raptor; seen on four days, including both soaring and perched views: Everglades NP (Flamingo), Three Lakes WMA, Lake Florence, and Sand Hill Crane Park

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis*—one seen by Mark Cavallo at Sand Hill Crane Park while the rest of us were hanging back

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*—one flushed at the Portofino Cave Swallow colony in Homestead, presumably trying to ambush the nesting Cave Swallows; great views of a large female trapped on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*—one adult at Flamingo in Everglades NP; quite numerous in Central Florida, especially along Joe Overstreet Road where there are several active nests

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*—small numbers observed daily throughout the Florida mainland and Upper Keys

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*—two birds desperately trying to catch thermals over Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas but unable to catch enough lift to fly off the island ***extension only***

Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus*—could not believe how lucky we were to see a dark morph individual soaring over the marina as the Yankee Freedom docked in Key West – WOW! This species normally departs its wintering grounds in South Florida mid-March to nest in Central Florida ***extension only***

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*—not a common bird in South Florida, limited to extensive agricultural areas; one soaring overhead in Homestead was our only one

OWLS: Strigidae (2)

Eastern Screech-Owl *Megascops asio*—beautiful views of a gray individual in a patch of tropical hardwood hammock in Everglades NP

Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia*—we literally drove up to two birds on the side of the road at Miami Executive Airport; an amazing and unusual little owl

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae (1)

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*—nice views of lingering winter birds on three days: Crandon Park in Key Biscayne, Mrazek Pond in Everglades NP, and Sandhill Crane Park in Palm Beach Co.; the lack of suitable earthen banks for nesting in South Florida means that this species vacates the area during their nesting season only to return as early as August

WOODPECKERS: Picidae (6)

Red-headed Woodpecker *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*—fantastic views of an adult bird drumming away on a dead pine tree in Jonathan Dickinson SP. Nice!

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*— recorded daily; common and adaptable woodpecker of all wooded habitats in South Florida

Downy Woodpecker *Dryobates pubescens*—Sweetwater Strand in Big Cypress National Preserve offered us our best views of this widespread but low density resident of wooded areas in Southeast Florida

Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Dryobates borealis*—an Endangered and highly social woodpecker that nests cooperatively and excavates nests in living trees; we saw three individuals ('clan' members) at Three Lakes WMA – **voted as the bird of the trip by the entire group**

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*—great views of this largest of extant North American Woodpeckers at Big Cypress National Preserve and Sand Hill Crane Park. However, our most unusual sighting was in the parking lot at Crandon Park in Key Biscayne, a very odd place for this species!

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*—two birds perched nicely on a bare snag at Helen and Allan Cruickshank Sanctuary while we were looking for Florida Scrub-Jay

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (4)

Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*—one flew right by the van while we were leaving the Joe Overstreet Road area, perhaps too fast for some in the back but there was no way to stop

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*—one very late individual, a female, on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas ***extension only***

Merlin *Falco columbarius*—a surprise flyover of one with prey in its talons on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas ***extension only***

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*—one soaring over suburban Miami on our first full day of Florida birding was a nice treat; we spotted a second individual in the Dry Tortugas hunting migrants and nesting terns. It amazes me how such a great variety of raptors manages to hide on an almost treeless and small island, as we remained unaware of most of these for the first hour or so.

PARROTS: Psittacidae (3)

Monk Parakeet (1) *Myiopsitta monachus*—brief views in suburban Miami were frustrating, but we had much improved views of perched birds in Palm Beach Co. at Sand Hill Crane Park; these introduced parrots originate from southern South America and are the only stick-nesting parrot species in the world

Mitred Parakeet (1) *Psittacara mitratus*—a couple dozen crafty individuals kept giving us the slip by noisily switching trees, falling silent, and then exploding raucously out of tree once we got close.

Eventually, a pair of birds decided to offer us prolonged views while they were allopreening. This large parakeet nests in tall buildings in Miami in the same way that it uses cliffs in its native Peruvian range

****Red-masked Parakeet (1)** *Psittacara erythrogenys*—a few dozen birds flew over us in the early morning in South Miami, where there is a well established population of several hundred; this parakeet originates from the Tumbesian dry forest of southwestern Ecuador

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (6)

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*—the most common flycatcher of wooded habitats in South Florida; really nice views at Flamingo in Everglades NP, Three Lakes WMA, and Sweetwater Strand in Big Cypress National Preserve; we also had them in Key Largo and Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*—increasingly common winter visitor to South Florida; we saw a lingering individual just outside Everglades National Park together with both Western Kingbird and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis*—a lingering winter bird just outside the entrance to Everglades NP was a nice treat

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*—one migrant flying overhead in South Miami while searching for Spot-breasted Oriole

Gray Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis*—the sound of summer for urbanized areas and parking lots throughout Miami and the Florida Keys; we even saw several birds skirmishing in a parking lot on our way to dinner one evening in suburban Kendall

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus*—two lingering winter birds, including one with a very long tail, just outside Everglades NP; up to a dozen birds will often winter in the agricultural areas between Homestead and the Everglades

VIREOS: Vireonidae (3)

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*—a common breeding resident in South Florida; seen well (and heard singing) at Everglades NP (Flamingo), Big Cypress NP (Sweet Water Strand), and the Upper Keys

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*—a reasonably common early migrant and winter visitor in South Florida; the ones we saw at Sweetwater Strand and in the Dry Tortugas were unusually late but welcome sightings

Black-whiskered Vireo *Vireo altiloquus*—we saw this Florida specialty very well at Crandon Park, Dry Tortugas, and the Key Largo Botanical site – whiskered and all

SHRIKES: Laniidae (1)

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*—common in South Florida, even in suburban areas; we saw them daily in a variety of open habitats on the mainland portion of our tour, even in people's front yards

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (4)

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*—common and conspicuous in all wooded habitats

Florida Scrub-Jay (E) *Aphelocoma coerulescens*— a delightful family group entertained us at Helen and Allen Cruickshank Sanctuary, Florida's only true endemic bird species; this species is an ice age relict, separated from all other scrub-jays at the end of the last ice age

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*— family groups of American Crow were commonplace along the roadside in Everglades National Park and Three Lakes WMA (note: none in urban areas in Miami!)

Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus*—numerous and conspicuous throughout the Miami-Fort Lauderdale and the Palm Beaches, where they are constantly patrolling overhead for feeding opportunities such as unattended nests

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (2)

Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis*—very uncommon in Central Florida, so very surprised to see one at Three Lakes WMA while looking for pineland specialists

Tufted Titmouse *Baeolophus bicolor*—a family group of this species entertained us for a while at Sweetwater Strand in Big Cypress National Preserve, the extreme southern limit of their distribution

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (6)

Purple Martin *Progne subis*— nice views overhead at Snapper Creek, Wakodahatchee Wetlands, and around Homestead, where they have a martin house setups

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*—large numbers lined up on a wire at Joe Overstreet Road were a surprise this late in the season

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia*—a single bird at Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas NP was a nice find, as this is an uncommon spring migrant in the region ***extension only***

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*—small numbers migrating overhead in suburban Miami, Everglades NP (Flamingo), and the Dry Tortugas; this species is much more common in the fall, when there is a near constant stream of birds flying overhead even in urbanized areas

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*—at least one or possibly two birds flying around with the Barn Swallows in the Dry Tortugas ***extension only***

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva*—our best views were at the Portofino Swallow colony, where they nest in large numbers underneath an overpass; here, represented by the more richly colored Caribbean race, ssp. *fulva*

BULBULS: Pycnonotidae (1)

Red-whiskered Bulbul (I) *Pycnonotus jocosus*— a pair of birds at King's Creek Village in Miami, where they had us playing a game of Marco Polo; introduced into the area in the 1960s from southern Asia

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (1)

Brown-headed Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla*—a couple small family groups at Three Lakes WMA in central Florida, including a couple birds flocking together with the Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. We also had a bird at Jonathan Dickinson State Park, where it was reintroduced very recently.

GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae (1)

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Polioptila caerulea*— seen at Sweetwater Strand in Big Cypress National Preserve

WRENS: Troglodytidae (1)

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*—seen well at Sweetwater Strand, where one posed perfectly on a mossy branch overhanging the water and began to sing; uncommon and local in Southeast Florida, where it has been on a steady decline over the past three decades even in seemingly remote wilderness

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (2)

European Starling (I) *Sturnus vulgaris*—unfortunately, very widespread and numerous

Common Myna (I) *Acridotheres tristis*— great views in the Miami Metro area and Florida Keys, specializing in parking lots with busy restaurants

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (4)

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*—these classic eastern birds were ubiquitous in the various migrant traps we visited in South Florida and the Florida Keys

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*—quick but solid views of a singing bird on the edge of some thickets at Eco Pond in Everglades NP; rather uncommon yet widespread resident in South Florida with some not so well understood local movements

Bahama Mockingbird *Mimus gundlachi*—did not take long (less than thirty minutes!) for us to drive up to the fruiting tree at Spanish River Park and watch this chunky brown mockingbird pop up for good views; the group really relished the sighting of this vagrant from the Bahamas, an island tramp specialist with a bizarre Caribbean distribution

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*—Florida's state bird was a constant companion on this tour

THRUSHES: Turdidae (1)

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*—we saw a family group of these birds in the pinelands of Three Lakes WMA; an uncommon and local pineland specialist in the southern half of Florida

WAXWINGS: Bombycillidae (1)

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*—a few lingering birds at Sand Hill Crane Park

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)

House Sparrow (I) *Passer domesticus*— common but limited to parking lots and highly urbanized areas

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (4)

Bachman's Sparrow *Peucaea aestivalis*—perfect views of a bird singing away on a Florida Slash Pine at Jonathan Dickinson State Park; in South Florida, it inhabits pinelands with a dense saw palmetto understory

Seaside Sparrow *Ammospiza maritima*— here represented by the 'Cape Sable' race (ssp. *mirabilis*); this endangered sparrow is highly dependent on correctly fluctuating water levels, and its sensitivity to environmental conditions have earned it the nickname "Goldilocks bird" because it needs conditions to be 'just right'; heard singing in the distance and one distant bird was visible for some time, but the early morning mist hampered our views

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*—a few lingering winter birds on the edge of the parking lot at the end of Joe Overstreet Road

Eastern Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*—seen well at both Long Pine Key in Everglades NP and Three Lakes WMA; birds in Central and South Florida belong to the endemic subspecies *alleni*

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (10)

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*—our best views were at Joe Overstreet Road in Central Florida, where multiple birds perched on wires and walked along in short grass right by the road

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*—a lone female at Flamingo in Everglades NP and a pair at Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas; this is the smallest North American oriole, often confused with warblers

Spot-breasted Oriole (I) *Icterus pectoralis*—could not ask for better views of this spectacular species in suburban Miami, where a pair graced us with their presence at close range; the slow, rich and haunting melody of this species is arguably the most beautiful of all the American orioles – **bird of the trip for one trip participant!**

Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*—a dull first year bird showed briefly at a feeder in Homestead

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*—numerous near water, observed almost daily (the Dry Tortugas broke our streak!)

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*—two handsome males and a female visiting a feeder in Homestead, where they showed well alongside the much larger and aggressive Bronzed Cowbird

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus*—this species has successfully colonized Miami-Dade County over the past decade, becoming the dominant of the three cowbird species in the area; multiples seen in West Kendall and Homestead, where they mainly parasitize Red-winged Blackbirds but also target Spot-breasted Oriole

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*—a flock of a dozen or so feeding on the lawn in front of the Flamingo Visitor Center in Everglades NP

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*—common, widespread and conspicuous – tends to use more wooded habitats

Boat-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus major*—common, widespread and conspicuous – tends to use open wetlands and urbanized habitats, but strangely absent from the Florida Keys

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (18)

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla*—excellent views in the Dry Tortugas by the fountain and at Crandon Park in Key Biscayne; normally, one of South Florida's most abundant migrant warblers

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum*—frustrating glimpses at A.D. Barnes Park, followed by better views in the tropical hardwood hammock at Crandon Park

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*—great luck with this common migrant on this year's tour, seeing it every day (usually in multiples) except for one

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*—a male performed beautifully for us at Sweetwater Strand in Big Cypress National Preserve, the southernmost accessible breeding site for this species

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*—most of our sightings this year were in Everglades NP, where it is a common nesting species in the sawgrass prairie

Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina*—the most numerous warbler in the Dry Tortugas, where we saw multiple semi-tame individuals ***extension only***

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*—just as numerous as Black-and-white Warbler, seeing it every day except in Central Florida

Cape May Warbler *Setophaga tigrina*—quite common throughout the tour, observed at a multitude of sites; this warbler species primarily winters in the Caribbean islands and extreme southern Florida

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*—very common wintering bird, migrant, and nesting species in Florida; observed daily

Magnolia Warbler *Setophaga magnolia*—a stunning male showed beautifully for us at Sweetwater Strand in Big Cypress NP; we saw a second bird at Carysfort Circle in Key Largo

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*—one bird of the northern migratory race at Key West Botanical Garden ***extension only***

Blackpoll Warbler *Setophaga striata*—singles at Crandon Park and Wakodahatchee Wetlands; one of the most impressive migratory routes of any warbler species, coming up from the Amazon Basin to nest in the Canadian boreal forest

Black-throated Blue Warbler *Setophaga caerulescens*—we managed to find a single female at Crandon Park of this normally very common Caribbean migrant – where were they?

Palm Warbler *Setophaga palmarum*—quite a few migrants and lingering winter birds throughout the tour

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus*—small numbers seen and heard at Three Lakes WMA, where they were feeding in association with nuthatches, bluebirds, and woodpeckers

Yellow-throated Warbler *Setophaga dominica*—one somewhat oddly plumaged individual at Crandon Park in Key Biscayne on our first full day of birding

Prairie Warbler *Setophaga discolor*—a numerous and common warbler in Florida, represented by both northern migratory birds and the endemic ‘Florida’ race, ssp. *paludicola*

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens*—singles at Everglades NP (Flamingo) and Big Cypress NP (Sweetwater Strand)

CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (5)

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*—a couple birds in the Dry Tortugas, including one very bright male visiting the water fountain much to everyone’s delight ***extension only***

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*—a brilliant firecracker red male visiting the water fountain in the Dry Tortugas ***extension only***

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*—present in all wooded habitats throughout South Florida; a beautiful bird nonetheless with a pleasant song

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*—multiple migrant birds, including some colorful males, sprinkled throughout the tour

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris*—about a dozen birds, including some very colorful males, visiting a set of feeders in Homestead

Dickcissel *Spiza americana*—a couple sharp males posed nicely for us at Fort Zachary Taylor SP in Key West; a very uncommon spring migrant in the Florida Keys ***extension only***

MAMMALS (5 species recorded):

Eastern Gray Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*—the most common mammal in South Florida

Marsh Rabbit *Sylvilagus palustris*—small numbers at Wakodahatchee Wetlands and Green Cay Wetlands in Palm Beach County

West Indian Manatee *Trichechus manatus*—several frolicking together at the Flamingo Marina was surely a trip highlight!

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*—we saw a whole herd of the miniature Key Deer (*O. v. clavium*) at Big Pine Key in the Lower Keys, where it is an endemic subspecies

Northern River Otter *Lontra canadensis*—two seen hunting fish at Peaceful Waters Sanctuary, yet another pleasant surprise during our time in the field

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (13 species recorded):

Florida Softshell *Apalone ferox*—our best views were at Peaceful Waters Sanctuary, where we saw several of these large turtles sunning themselves on mowed grass

Florida Cooter *Pseudemys floridana*—the common slider at Green Cay and Wakodahatchee Wetlands

American Alligator *Alligator mississippiensis*—common in freshwater habitats in Everglades NP

American Crocodile *Crocodylus acutus*—great views of a very large and old individual near the Flamingo Marina in Everglades NP; South Florida holds the distinction of being the only place in the world where alligators and crocodiles occur side by side

Carolina Green Anole *Anolis carolinensis*—uncommon native lizard seen in Everglades NP

Crested Anole (1) *Anolis cristatellus*—one individual in Everglades NP

Cuban Brown Anole (1) *Anolis sagrei*—the common small lizard of South Florida

Northern Curly-tailed Lizard (1) *Leiocephalus carinatus*—seen at King's Creek Village in suburban Miami on our first afternoon

Black Spinytail Iguana (1) *Ctenosaura similis*—many large, mature individuals at Crandon Park in Key Biscayne; this iguana is far more terrestrial and carnivorous than the following species

Green Iguana (1) *Iguana iguana*—very common, including some very large individuals, near water in urbanized South Florida

Red-headed Agama (1) *Agama agama*—we saw this species almost everywhere in Miami-Dade, where it is becoming increasingly common and widespread

Common Basilisk (1) *Basiliscus basiliscus*—several individuals at Kings Creek Village and R. Hardy Matheson Preserve in Miami

Eastern Racer *Coluber constrictor*—one at Carysfort Circle in Key Largo