

Georgia Coastal Birding | Species List

September 29 – October 6, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



With Guide Drew Haffenden and participants Niki, Ann & Don, Anne & Bob,
Pete & Betty



Compiled by Drew Haffenden

A very compatible group traveled the Georgia coast including Savannah, Savannah NWR, Harris Neck NWR, St. Simon's Island, Jekyll Island and Little St. Simons Island. The beauty of Georgia's coastal marshes, swamps and Spanish Moss clad forests impressed everyone. Highlights were avian, mammalian and reptilian, with pink Roseate Spoonbills, soaring Wood Storks, Dolphins and Manatees, Alligators and a friendly Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake standing out.

OCNC: Ogeechee Canal Nature Center; SNWR: Savannah NWR; HNWR: Harris Neck NWR; GNP Gaule Nature Preserve St. Simon's Island; OAJ: Old Amphitheater Jekyll Island; BTJI: Boat Tour & Marina Jekyll Island; LSSI: Little St. Simon's Island

Family or Species Common Name: Scientific Name

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis* — 41 seen at SNWR including downy young and older fledged birds and several LSSI

Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors* — 7 seen LSSI.
Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* — 2 seen LSSI
Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* — 2 LSSI, an unusual sighting for LSSI

GREBES: Podicipedidae

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* — 2 in the lake behind Hyatt in Savannah

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae

Rock Pigeon (I) *Columba livia* — a few seen in built up areas
Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* — seen every day at various locations

CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* — one heard GNP

RAILS, CRAKES, AND ALLIES: Rallidae

Clapper Rail *Rallus crepitans* — numerous heard daily LSSI
Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata* — 1 SNWR and 2 LSSI
Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica* — 2 SNWR

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* — 3 on beach LSSI
Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* — 1 on beach LSSI
Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* — 4 LSSI beach. One banded bird, combo indicated an endangered Great Lakes population bird

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* — 3 on beach LSSI
Red Knot *Calidris canutus* — flew in in front of us LSSI beach. All in mostly or full basic plumage
Sanderling *Calidris alba* — many on the beach LSSI and a few at Gould's Inlet St. Simons Island
Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* — 8 foraging high on the beach and close to the water LSSI
Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* — 1 flew past in the marsh during our LSSI boat trip

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* — Common, seen every day at suitable locations
Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* — 2 adults and 1 juvenile were loafing with hundreds of other seabirds at the southern tip of Jekyll BTJI
Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* — 1 flying along beach LSSI
Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri* — common BTJI and a few LSSI
Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus* — a few at HNWR and LSSI and many loafing tip of Jekyll BTJI
Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* — a couple of hundred loafing southern tip of Jekyll BTJI

STORKS: Ciconiidae

Wood Stork *Mycteria americana* — seen perched and soaring HNWR, soaring at Hamilton River Marina and foraging in Myrtle Pond LSSI

ANHINGAS: Anhingidae

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* — seen at Hyatt lake, SNWR, HNWR, OAJ and LSSI

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae

Double-crested Cormorant *Nannopterum auritum* — several seen BTJI and LSSI

PELICANS: Pelecanidae

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* — a few seen BTJI and LSSI

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* — several seen SNWR, HNWR, LSSI

Great Egret *Ardea alba* — very common in most wet locations

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* — very common in most wet locations

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* — both adults and white immatures seen at SNWR and LSSI

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* — a few seen at SNWR & LSSI

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* — 1 at HNWR and 21+ at OAJI

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* — a couple of immatures at LSSI

IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus* — 18 in total LSSI

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* — 2 flew in to Myrtle Pond LSSI- not a common bird for LSSI

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja* — 1 at HNWR, about 16 on LSSI and 42+ at OAJI.

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* — seen daily

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* — seen daily

OSPREY: Pandionidae

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* — seen daily

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae

Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius* — 1 on beach and 1 in marsh LSSI

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii* — 1 at OAJI and 1 Myrtle Pond LSSI

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* — 2 adults in marsh and an adult and an immature Myrtle pond, LSSI

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* — an early bird well seen flying over SNWR, size and wing shape and definitive black on trailing edge of wings obvious

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus* — 1 calling but only very briefly seen OAJI

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* — just one flying over the grassland at Myrtle pond LSSI

OWLS: Strigidae

Eastern Screech-Owl *Megascops asio* — 2 heard calling LSSI

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae

Belted Kingfisher *Megascops asio* - one or two seen most days



WOODPECKERS: Picidae

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius* – 2 seen at OCNC, somewhat early birds

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus* — ubiquitous, multiple seen and heard every day

Downy Woodpecker *Dryobates pubescens* — heard or seen most days

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus* — heard only at OCNC and LSSI

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae

Merlin *Falco columbarius* — 2 flying along beach LSSI – just after they were requested!

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae

Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe* – one seen at OCNC

VIREOS: Vireonidae

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus* — common, multiples heard mostly but also seen each day. Many calls were truncated and messy, typical of hatch year birds

SHRIKES: Laniidae

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus* — one sitting nicely SNWR

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata* — seen or heard every day

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos* — one heard at OCNC only

Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus* — heard or seen on several days – With one exception voice was distinguishing feature

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae

Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis* — seen or heard every day except one

Tufted Titmouse *Baeolophus bicolor* — one only seen or heard, at HNWR

KINGLETS: Regulidae

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Corthylio calendula* — 3 at OAJI

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae

Brown-headed Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla* — one only LSSI

GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Polioptila caerulea* — one heard only (but seen by 2 other birders) HNWR

WRENS: Troglodytidae

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris* — 2 seen SNWR and one in marsh LSSI

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus* — a few heard on St Simons and LSSI, unexpected low number

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* — ()

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis* — abundant SNWR and common HNWR, a couple seen on LSSI

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum* — one of my favorite birds, one singing high at HNWR – a good field mark to differentiate from mockingbirds – and 4 at GNP

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* — common, seen daily

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus* — a couple found by Niki at a feeder on St. Simons Island and a couple, also at a feeder, LSSI

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae

Seaside Sparrow *Ammodramus maritima* — 4 or 5 seen in marsh LSSI. These are the Atlantic form, much darker overall than those along the Gulf

Eastern Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* — a singing bird was coaxed closer where it eventually sat on the top of a bush and sang for us all



NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES: Icteridae

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* — common in freshwater and saltwater marshes

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula* — a few seen mixed in with a flock of boat-taileds

Boat-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus major* — very common in natural and developed areas and seen every day

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* — one seen SNWR

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* — Lived up to their name and seen most days

Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina* — one seen by a few of us at SNWR

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla* — the most common warbler, seen every day. Most were immatures and females

Cape May Warbler *Setophaga tigrina* — an extremely dull hatch year female proved a challenge to ID

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana* — a couple at OAJI

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia* — one of our most striking warblers, 3 each at SNWR and LSSI

Black-throated Blue Warbler *Setophaga caerulescens* — one at SNWR and one possibly two OAJI

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus* — 3 seen or heard GNP

Prairie Warbler *Setophaga discolor* — one gave us great views at SNWR, another seen LSSI

CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES:

Cardinalidae

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis* — common mainland, not seen on LSSI

MAMMALS

Nine-banded Armadillo *Dasypus novemcinctus* — two seen on LSSI

Marsh Rabbit *Sylvilagus palustris* several seen LSSI



Eastern Gray Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* – common, seen every day

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* – great extended views of several BTJI, one in marsh creek LSSI

West Indian Manatee *Trichechus manatus* – one seen feeding SNWR and three drinking freshwater from an overflow pipe BTJI. A new mammal for some.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

American Alligator *Alligator mississippiensis* – Several seen SNWR, HNWR, LSSI including juveniles

Pond Slider *Tachemys scripta* – a few seen SNWR and LSSI

Green Anole *Anolis carolinensis* - one only seen St Simons Island

Black Racer *Coluber constrictor* - one sunning at OCNC

Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake *Crotalus adamanteus* – a nice sized individual tried to hitch a lift on our boat on LSSI to escape a very high tide flooding his marsh island but our naturalists decided to rebuff it so it looked elsewhere for drier ground. Despite being the largest and heaviest rattlesnake this species is an excellent swimmer, with its body able to float high on the water.

