



Photo courtesy of Donna McDonald-Bailey ©

GULLS AND TERNS

Bonaparte's Gull

Chroicocephalus philadelphia

- Status: Winter resident
Abundance: Fairly common
When found: November–March
Habitat: Bays, bayous, islands
Best locations: Bayou Heron, Grand Battures Washover

Notes: Look for Bonaparte's Gulls in or around large rafts of Horned Grebes. The gulls follow the foraging grebes hoping for a free meal.

Laughing Gull

Leucophaeus atricilla

- Status: Permanent resident, nests elsewhere
Abundance: Common
When found: Year round
Habitat: Bays, bayous, islands, mudflats
Best locations: Bayou Heron, Grand Battures Washover



Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Notes: These familiar, black-hooded gulls are found at Grand Bay all year, yet their nesting areas are unknown.

Least Tern

Sternula antillarum

- Status: Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
- Abundance: Common
- When found: April–September
- Habitat: Bays, bayous, sand and shell beaches



Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Best locations: Bayou Cumbest, Bangs Island, Grand Battures Washover

Notes: Least Terns nest at Grand Bay most years, but their attempts are often unsuccessful due to raccoons and high water events. If these birds start dive-bombing you, you are too close to their nests. Leave the area immediately.

Gull-billed Tern

Gelochelidon nilotica

- Status: Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
- Abundance: Fairly common
- When found: March–September
- Habitat: Salt pannes, salt & freshwater marsh, islands



Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Best locations: Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes, Grand Battures Washover, Catch 'em All Bar, Hawkes' Marsh

Notes: Look for these terns feeding over the marsh, where they hunt for grasshoppers, dragonflies, and fiddler crabs rather than fish.

Black Tern

Chlidonias niger

- Status: Transient
Abundance: Fairly common
When found: July–September
Habitat: Bays, islands,
Mississippi sound
Best locations: Grand Battures Washover

Notes: When Black Terns finish nesting up north, they head south and start to collect just offshore along the Gulf coast. The flocks keep building up and may become immense (over 10,000 strong) before they leave in late September.



Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Sandwich Tern

Thalasseus sandvicensis

- Status: Summer resident, nests elsewhere
Abundance: Fairly common
When found: March–October, but scarce in June
Habitat: Bays, sand beaches
Best locations: Grand Battures Washover

Notes: Sandwich Terns nest on Mississippi's barrier islands, but do not nest at Grand Bay.



Photo courtesy of
Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Black Skimmer

Rynchops niger

- Status: Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay some years
Abundance: Common in summer, uncommon other seasons
When found: Year round
Habitat: Bays, islands
Best locations: Grand Battures Washover

Note: In years when beach conditions are favorable, Black Skimmers nest at Grand Bay.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

