

# Selected Birds of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and Vicinity

## A VISITOR'S FIELD GUIDE

### *Note to Users*

*Selected Birds of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and Vicinity* is the second in a series of guides to Grand Bay's biodiverse natural resources. This guide was compiled to provide you, our visitors, with pictures and potential locations of selected species of birds found within and near the protected wildlands of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. This book was not written as an identification guide. Please see our bibliography in the back of this guide for a list of books that will help you identify birds.

We encourage you to cautiously explore these sensitive areas when you are birding. Many habitats of the reserve such as salt pannes and pine savannas are very fragile. When you are exploring our sensitive terrestrial areas, please do so only on foot. Many of the habitats in the reserve are wet, so we advise you to wear boots or waterproof shoes when birding.

The rights of private property owners should be respected at all times. If you are uncertain as to where the reserve and refuge boundaries are located, please stop into the office to view a detailed map of the boundary lines. Vehicles, including bicycles, are not allowed off public roads or parking areas except for permitted research or management activities.

Boaters should take care not to scar the bottom of our shallow bays, bayous, seagrass beds and oyster beds and should minimize their wakes when near shore, especially when adjacent to the Bayou Heron and Point O'Pines boat launches. Do not throw or dump marine debris, litter or trash within the reserve. Pack out what you pack in.

Please do not remove or disturb the plants or animals without the proper permits. During nesting season it is imperative that you maintain an appropriate distance between yourself and any nesting animal. If an animal appears to be agitated, you are too close. Back away quietly, and leave along another route. Remember, take only pictures and leave



Sunrise birding cruise through the reserve. – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

as few footprints as possible as you explore some of South Mississippi's most beautiful habitats.

Birders and hikers, please be aware that hunting is allowed on the reserve during designated hunting seasons. Hunters, please be aware that the reserve is a multi-use area, so extreme caution must be used while hunting here, especially near trails designated for other purposes. Some types of hunting are not allowed in certain areas of the reserve.

Many areas of the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) may be closed to the public, except along public roads and marked trails. Please check at the Grand Bay Coastal Resources Center for a copy of current Refuge rules and regulations.

In addition, please follow the American Birding Association's *Code of Birding Ethics* which can be found in Appendix 1 of this guide. Remember, it is everyone's responsibility to conserve our coastal resources. Thank you for caring.