Selected Birds *of the*

GRAND BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE AND VICINITY

"After observing birds over many years, I never cease to be amazed by those extraordinary moments in the field that will last a lifetime. One such moment occurred at the Grand Bay NERR. As I motored towards Bangs Island, a white phase Peregrine Falcon remained perched on one of the island's last remaining snags, not flushing until I was no more than 20 feet away. Of course, I fumbled to get the camera out and missed the photo opportunity, so the image remains etched in my mind only, forever."

David Ruple, Manager
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Cover – Photo of Eastern Bluebird courtesy of Tom Carlisle ©
Cover – Photo of Green Heron courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

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

Authors
Mark S. Woodrey, Ph.D.
Jacob Walker

Editor
Jennifer M. Buchanan

Photo Editor
Olivia Graves, Ph.D.

Curriculum Developers
David L. Ruple
Jennifer M. Buchanan
Olivia Graves, Ph.D.

Grand Bay
National Estuarine Research Reserve

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www.grandbaynerr.org

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We would especially like to thank the following photographers for their donated submissions that are included in this guide:

Larry Basden: Larry is a self-taught photographer who began with film cameras and darkroom work. Always interested in wildlife and nature, he recently became an active birder and is using photography as a way to document the birds he observes.

Jennifer Buchanan: Jennifer enjoys taking digital photos of her family, Mississippi's coastal resources, and the many natural areas around the country that she has been fortunate enough to visit. Jennifer especially likes to use her pictures to teach about coastal conservation and to promote environmental stewardship within her community.

Tom Carlisle: Tom is a biologist, environmental scientist, conservation photographer, National Wildlife Refuge System volunteer and chairperson of the North American Nature Photography Association Environment Committee.

Gretchen Grammer: Gretchen is a self-taught wildlife and nature photographer; she especially enjoys photographing insects, plants, and landscapes. Gretchen strives to capture unique details of her subjects in simple, well-designed images.

Olivia Graves: Olivia is a nature photographer and delights in glimpsing and recording "moments in time" in the outdoors. She is retired from teaching and spends time traveling and photographing birds, butterflies, other wildlife, plants and scenery.

Michael Gray: Michael has been birding and doing wildlife photography for over 25 years. He specializes in bird photography but photographs everything from landscapes to insects. He volunteers at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO) as a photographer and is the Sanctuary Superintendent. His bird photographs have been published in several magazines and books.

Dave Hawkins: Dave, a professional commercial photographer located in Nashville, Tennessee, has been taking photos of birds since 2006. His wife, an avid bird-watcher and native of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, has greatly

influenced his interest in birds. He can attribute some of his rising success as a bird photographer to the mentoring he received from many longtime birders, field specialists, and other bird photographers. Currently, Dave is expanding his bird portfolio with tropical species from Central America.

Alan Hinkel: Alan is a young, amateur photographer who became passionate about photographing birds after he first took a picture of a Bald Eagle. Alan has taken two photography classes at the local community college to increase his technical skills and looks forward to photographing as many southern bird species as possible.

George Housley, Jr.: George is a longtime nature lover, who studied a very narrow field of biology, human rheumatology, and used that work to support his current loves of gardening, nature study and photography.

Danny Johnson: Danny is from Vicksburg, Mississippi, and is a photographer in his spare time; he enjoys all areas of nature and wildlife photography. Danny believes in capturing images without traveling extensively, concentrating on the beauty around him to keep his portfolio growing.

Pamela Johnson: Pamela is an enthusiastic wildlife and nature photographer; she especially enjoys photographing birds, butterflies and various types of flowers and plants. Pamela strives to capture her subjects in their natural surroundings, detailing her subjects in simple photographic images.

Donna McDonald-Bailey: Donna became totally engaged in bird watching 15 years ago, when she discovered six male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at her feeder. She has since increased her number of feeders and documented more than one hundred species at her former home. Donna fondly remembers exchanging information on creating butterfly habitat with her good friend and regional birding expert, Judy Toups, who in return, shared her vast knowledge of the birding world with her.

Sharon Milligan: Sharon is a birder who recently took up nature photography. Her main focus is birds, but she also finds plants and insects to be very interesting subjects too. An occasional gator, turtle or just about any other creature may find itself in her viewfinder as well.

Joseph L. Ravita: Joe has been birding since 1996, and was tutored by the iconic Judith A. Toups. As a "bushwhacker", he started photographing birds shortly thereafter.

Jeff Rester: Jeff is based out of Ocean Springs, Mississippi where his camera is a constant companion. Jeff does not consider himself an artist, rather a documenter of the beauty that surrounds us every day. He enjoys sharing his vision of the outdoors with others in hopes that they will appreciate the

environment as much as he does and treat the environment with the respect it deserves.

Eric Soehren: Since 1997, Eric has worked for the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division in the Natural Heritage Section. Eric has a passion to capture interesting and seldom observed facets of natural history through photography.

Bill Stripling: Bill began taking bird photographs over 50 years ago in his yard in Nacogdoches, Texas. His photography skills increased over the years along with the advances in technology. Today Bill is a retired government attorney living in Vicksburg, Mississippi, who devotes much of his time to wildlife photography and Audubon activities.

Paula Waggy: Paula is a naturalist who tries to capture the wonder of the natural world with her camera. Her favorite subjects are plants, insects, and amphibians. She endeavors to reveal the subjects' habitats in her photos.

Jake Walker: Jake is an avid bird-watcher who started working as a research technician at the Grand Bay NERR in January 2006. In the field, Jake is usually so engrossed in studying the birds around him that he only occasionally remembers to put down his binoculars and pick up his camera.

Joan White-Spunner Dixon: Joan began her career as a portrait and landscape painter. Two years ago Joan began birding, and this new interest inspired her to paint birds as well. In order to make her paintings more accurate, Joan photographs many of her subjects in the field.

Michael Woodruff: Michael held a fascination for birds and birding from a young age, and finally at the age of 13, after months of studying and preparing on his own, he purchased his first digital SLR camera setup to photograph birds. Over the years he has developed his skills and built up his portfolio, adding a whole new element to his already all-encompassing hobby of birding.

Additionally we would like to thank Laura Tolar, the graphic artist for this project. Laura was introduced to the world of birds as she put this book together, and she now uses the guide to learn more about the birds she finds in her own backyard, a maritime forest.

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A birder on a guided tour of the Goat Farm – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

"The Reserve sponsors many unique birding events. On one guided birding trip by boat out to the Grand Battures overwash, we observed a wintering flock of American White Pelicans, hundreds of Dunlins, American Oystercatchers, Dowitchers, plovers, ducks and wading birds. The view to the north from the relic islands revealed a stunning, intact natural ecosystem of interconnected forests, rivers, bayous and savannas. To top that, we were treated to a close-up look of Seaside and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows. This once-in-a-lifetime trip provided several new life birds for many of the participants!"

Olivia Graves, Retired Teacher and Nature Photographer

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.

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

Birdlife of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and Vicinity

The Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) and surrounding areas are located in southeastern Jackson County, Mississippi, and contain a diversity of habitats which support numerous and significant populations of pelicans, Ospreys, marshbirds, waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, and migrant landbirds. In the first assessment of the environmental and biological characteristics of the proposed Grand Bay NERR, biologists noted 83 bird species during their 1998 surveys. Based on daily field observations of NERR/NWR staff, visiting scientists, and birders, as well as specific ornithological studies, 268 bird species have been observed in and around the Grand Bay NERR/NWR area during the period 2001-2009 (See Checklist). This represents 69% of the 387 species documented in the Birds of the Mississippi Coastal Counties Checklist for the six southern-most counties in Mississippi. Of the 268 species noted for the reserve/refuge, 49 species (18%) are known to nest in the vicinity, 57 (21%) are permanent residents, 102 (38%) are winter residents, 24 (9%) are summer residents and 85 (32%) are transients or species that migrate through the area.

Bird-Habitat Relationships

All good birders know that an appreciation for and the knowledge of habitats used by the local bird species are the keys to a successful birding trip. In addition to its relevance to both the casual and serious bird-watcher, understanding ecological bird-habitat relationships is an important first step in identifying potential management issues, and developing conservation strategies to address the needs of bird species of concern. In this section, we provide a brief overview of our current understanding of species-habitat relationships for birds of the Grand Bay NERR area.

BIRD HABITATS

Mississippi Sound

The Mississippi Sound is a large, protected water body that extends between the mainland of Mississippi and western Alabama and the barrier islands located offshore about 10 miles to the south. The sound is relatively shallow, averaging 10 feet in depth. Only the cuts between the islands and the channels are significantly deeper. This habitat supports large numbers of wintering waterfowl, pelicans and seabirds such as Northern Gannets. During the summer, many shorebirds, gulls and even Magnificent Frigatebirds forage for food in these waters to feed themselves and their young.

Shell Islands and Bars

Shell islands and bars are typically made up of relic oyster shells that accumulated during the food-gathering activities of early American Indians. The best known example of this habitat is Bangs Island, located near the mouth of Bayou Cumbest. These habitats provide loafing, nesting, foraging and roosting areas for a variety of birds including American White and Brown Pelicans, shorebirds including Wilson's

Grand Battures Washover – Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Plovers, Spotted Sandpipers, Whimbrels, Long-billed Curlews, Ruddy Turnstones, American Oystercatchers, gulls and several species of terns.

Sand Beaches

Sand beaches are predominantly found along the shores of Point aux Chenes and the Grand Battures. Coastal birds of conservation interest, in particular Wilson's Plovers, Gull-billed and Least Terns, and Black Skimmers commonly use these habitats for nesting. Other species, such as Black-bellied Plover and Sanderling are commonly seen feeding and roosting in this habitat as well.

Bays

Bay habitats are larger, open water areas typically surrounded on three sides by land. In the Grand Bay NERR/NWR area, the bays typically open into the eastern Mississippi Sound and are very shallow. The two most prominent bays in the Grand Bay area are Middle Bay and Point aux Chenes Bay. These areas provide important habitat for large

Catch 'em All Bar – Photo courtesy of Jake Walker ©

numbers of wintering waterfowl, such as Redheads and Lesser Scaup, and provide feeding areas for other species such as Common Loon, Brown Pelican, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Laughing Gull, and Caspian, Royal and Least Tern.

Bayous

Bayous are larger estuarine tidal creeks and channels found throughout the area. The major bayous in the area include Bayou Heron, Crooked Bayou, Bayou Cumbest, and Bangs Bayou. These typically deep-channel waterways provide foraging habitat for many species of birds. During the winter, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers and Horned Grebes are commonly seen diving below the surface for food. Throughout the year, Great Blue, Little Blue, and Tricolored Herons as well as Great and Snowy Egrets can be observed foraging in the shallows along the bank. Royal, Forster's and Least Terns, Ospreys and Belted Kingfishers often patrol these channels from the air, periodically diving into the water in pursuit of prey.

Salt Marshes

Salt marshes along the northern Gulf of Mexico in Mississippi are wetland habitats dominated by stands of periodically-flooded black needlerush that are often fringed with a zone of emergent smooth cordgrass. The salt marshes of the Grand Bay NERR/NWR are brackish in nature but are often dominated by the high salinity waters of the Mississippi Sound. Characteristic bird species found in this habitat are

Bayou Heron South – Photo courtesy of Gretchen Grammer ©

nesting Mottled Duck, Least Bittern, Clapper Rail, Willet, Seaside Sparrow and Red-winged Blackbird. Species such as Reddish Egret and White Ibis can be found in this habitat year-round; whereas, Northern Harrier, Black Rail, Sora, Short-eared Owl, Tree Swallow, Marsh Wren and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow are strictly winter residents.

Mud and Sand Flats

Mud and sand flats are typically unstable lumps of mud or sand that are exposed during low tides. These areas can be extensive, given the shallow nature of the waters of Grand Bay NERR/NWR. Their size is most dependent on the speed and direction of the wind. Two of the more extensive and regularly exposed areas are Catch 'em All Bar, located along North Rigolets Bayou, and the Grand Batture Washover. Shorebirds are the most commonly observed birds using this habitat on a regular basis. Species such as American Oystercatcher, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, Least and Western Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Dunlin are commonly observed at these sites. Less commonly observed, although not necessarily less important, are Marbled Godwit, Red Knot, Semipalmated, White-rumped and Stilt Sandpiper.

Salt Pannes

Salt pannes are unique, high salinity, sparsely-vegetated habitats scattered across the NERR with the most extensive areas occurring near Point aux Chenes. These areas are often flooded, especially during high tides, and

Kenny's Island – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

provide habitat for a variety of bird species including herons, egrets, and ibises as well as several species of shorebirds including Black-bellied, American Golden, and Wilson's Plover, Willet, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Pectoral Sandpiper and Gull-billed Tern.

Maritime Forests

For this guide, we include both shell midden and slash pine forests under the maritime forest habitat category. These habitats occur at a slightly higher elevation than the adjacent salt marshes and are periodically impacted by saltwater from tidal flooding or by salt spray blown in by high winds. Along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, maritime forests are critically important as stopover sites for landbird migrants that make non-stop flights of 18-24 hours over the Gulf. In the Grand Bay NERR/NWR area, these habitats provide refuge for numerous species of migrant landbirds. Included in this group are raptors such as Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, cuckoos, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, warblers such as Tennessee, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Prairie, Cerulean, American Redstart, Mourning, and Canada, both Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Indigo and Painted Buntings and Baltimore Orioles.

Wet Pine Savannas and Flatwoods

The majority of freshwater wetland habitats in the Grand Bay NERR/NWR area are wet pine savannas and flatwoods. This fire-adapted community consists of a well-defined herbaceous layer of vegetation with

Pine Savanna – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

pine trees scattered throughout. The fire frequency in this habitat is 2-3 years and is essential for maintaining the herbaceous understory. In addition, frequent fire appears to be related to maintaining a wide variety of winter grassland bird species. The bird community here, although not very species-rich, contains several species of conservation concern including the American Kestrel, Yellow Rail, American Woodcock, Common Nighthawk, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Sedge Wren, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Oak Hammocks

These unique terrestrial habitats are typically associated with abandoned home sites and are dominated by evergreen live oak trees. These small, usually less than 1 acre, patches of forest are often interspersed within larger pine savanna landscapes. Red-tailed Hawks, White-winged Doves, and several species of owls, including Screech and Great Horned, woodpeckers including Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy, and Pileated and both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets use this habitat at various times throughout the year. In addition, many species of migrants can be found using these areas during the spring and fall (see list under Maritime Forests heading).

Freshwater Marshes

Freshwater marshes within Grand Bay NERR/NWR typically occur within the more common wet pine savanna habitat or directly adjacent to

Crossvine in a Swamp – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

small creeks or oxbows. The largest freshwater marsh in the Grand Bay NERR/NWR area is known as Hawkes' Marsh. Bird species commonly found in this habitat include waterfowl such as Wood Duck, Mallard, and Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, waterbirds such as Anhinga and marsh birds such as American Bittern, Virginia Rail and Sora, Wilson's Snipe and Boat-tailed Grackle.

Swamps and Bottomland Hardwoods

Swamps are regularly flooded, wooded freshwater habitats dominated by cypress and tupelo gum trees. Bottomland hardwoods are forested freshwater wetlands that are periodically flooded when large amounts of rainfall cause the adjacent streams to flood and overflow into these often dry-looking habitats. These bottomlands are dominated by water oaks, sweet bay, and red maples. Located adjacent to our larger streams, such as the Escatawpa River and Franklin Creek, oxbow lakes, swamps and bottomland hardwoods are critical stopover sites for many migrating birds. Prothonotary and Northern Parula Warblers nest in these habitats during the spring and summer. Barred Owl, Wood Duck and Anhinga can be found here year round.

Oak Grove Birding Trail – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

Birding Locations Map

Legend to the Birding Locations Map

1. ESCATAWPA TRAIL
2. PECAN ROAD
3. BAYOU HERON ROAD
4. COASTAL RESOURCES CENTER SAVANNAS
5. POWER LINE RIGHT-OF-WAY
6. HAWKES' MARSH
7. OAK GROVE BIRDING TRAIL
8. GOAT FARM
9. MIDDLE BAYOU
10. BAYOU HERON BOAT LAUNCH
11. POINT O' PINES BOAT LAUNCH
12. BAYOU CUMBEST
13. KENNY'S ISLAND
14. BANGS ISLAND
15. BAYOU HERON
16. BANGS LAKE
17. POINT AUX CHENES
18. POINT AUX CHENES BAY
19. JOSE BAY
20. GRAND BATTURES WASHOVER
21. CATCH 'EM ALL BAR
22. GRAND BAY
23. MIDDLE BAY

Sand Beach – Photo courtesy of Christina Mohrman ©

"Stepping foot on the Grand Bay NERR, it is easy to envision yourself an early naturalist seeing the region's birdlife for the first time."

Scott A. Rush, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Georgia

Birding Locations

BIRDING LOCATIONS ACCESSIBLE BY CAR AND FOOT

Escatawpa Trail

Access to this portion of the Grand Bay NWR is at the Mississippi Welcome Center on westbound I-10, just west of exit 75. The trail begins on the west side of the Welcome Center and makes a ¾ mile loop through pine savanna and along a hardwood tree-lined bank of the Escatawpa River.

The savanna here is the only known location at Grand Bay that hosts Bachman's Sparrows. Other savanna birds include: Summer Tanagers, House and Sedge Wrens, Henslow's and Swamp Sparrows, Blue Grosbeaks, Loggerhead Shrikes, and many woodpeckers. The hardwoods along the river can be productive during migration.

Pecan Road

Pecan Road is a loop that both ends and begins on Hwy 90. We refer to the part of the road located to the east of the road's intersection with Bayou Heron Road as East Pecan Road, while the part of the road to the west of the intersection is referred to as West Pecan Road.

Northern Parulas have nested along West Pecan Road, and the oaks can be good for migrants. East Pecan Road has nesting Red-headed Woodpeckers in the dead trees near the train tracks, and hosts the following species in season: Northern Bobwhite, Northern Harrier, Barn Owl, Common Nighthawk, Sedge Wren, Henslow's Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, and Yellow-breasted Chat.

Bayou Heron Road

From the train tracks to the boat launch, Bayou Heron Road passes through a number of habitats, including: pine flatwoods, pine savanna, maritime forest, and salt marsh.

In winter, American Robins line the roadsides. Look for Northern Mockingbirds, Gray Catbirds, Hermit Thrushes, Eastern Bluebirds,

Hawkes' Marsh – Photo courtesy of Gretchen Grammer ©

and Palm Warblers flying across the road. Wilson's Snipe frequent the roadside ditches when they hold water. Orange-crowned Warblers are most easily observed in shrubs along the edge of this road.

Power Line Right-of-Way

Just north of the Coastal Resources Center lies the Power Line Right-of-Way. Follow this corridor west to Hawkes' Marsh, or travel along it eastward through savanna maintained by periodic mowing. The habitat is mowed pine savanna, and is often wet, so wear your boots.

Osprey nest overhead on the towers during spring. In winter, the Right-of-Way is an easily accessible place to find Henslow's Sparrows. Because the vegetation is mowed, the sparrows often perch higher up at the edge of the right-of-way, offering excellent views. Yellow and Virginia Rails have been flushed out of wetter sections.

Hawkes' Marsh

Access the marsh from the power line right-of-way or walk the old road across from the rifle range. Where the right-of-way intersects the marsh, the area to the right is public land, but the area to the left is privately-owned and should be avoided.

The birds using Hawkes' Marsh vary depending on recent rainfall. When it is wet, expect a lot of birds. Wood and Mottled Ducks are usually present, and both teal can be found in season. White Ibises, Anhingas, Bald Eagles, Eastern Kingbirds, and Gull-billed Terns are often seen.

South Rigolets – Photo courtesy of Christina Mohrman ©

Coastal Resources Center Savannas

The pine savannas at Grand Bay are currently burned on an irregular schedule, and the birdlife varies accordingly. Prescribed fire helps keep these savannas open and grassy as they were historically. The most recently burned savannas will look the most open, and should be the most productive bird-wise. Inquire in the Coastal Resources Center to see which savannas you may walk through.

In winter, look for Henslow's, Savannah, and Swamp Sparrows; House and Sedge Wrens; Yellow and Virginia Rails, Brown-headed Nuthatches, and Loggerhead Shrikes. In summer, look for Indigo Buntings, Blue Grosbeaks, Yellow-breasted Chats, Northern Bobwhites, and Summer Tanagers.

Oak Grove Birding Trail

The birding trail starts at the gravel parking lot and heads back along an old driveway towards a grove of oaks. The oaks here are remnants of an old homestead. Side loops venture off the gravel path on both sides near the end, and lead through more hardwood forest.

The birding trail can provide excellent birding for warblers and other migrants during April, May, September, and October. The passage of cold fronts and inclement weather usually bring the most birds. In winter, look for Brown Creepers, both kinglets, Blue-headed Vireos, Hermit Thrushes, and wintering warblers.

Bayou Heron Boat Launch – Photo courtesy of Jake Walker ©

Goat Farm

The Goat Farm is the next pull-off on Bayou Heron Road south of the Birding Trail, on the opposite side of the road. Here, there are two freshwater ponds, an old homestead, freshwater and brackish marshes, and maritime forest. A small manmade hill surrounded by fig trees is located in the center of this site. When the figs are ripe, birds flock to these trees to feed on the delicate fruits.

Olive-sided Flycatchers sometimes sit atop the trees here during fall migration. Look for Sedge Wrens during winter, and try for King, Clapper, Virginia, and Yellow Rails along the marsh edges.

Middle Bayou

This is a small bayou through the salt marsh, accessible by foot via the Goat Farm, or by boat from the north end of Middle Bay. Salt pannes flank both sides where the bayou reaches the tree-line.

Least Bitterns seem to prefer this bayou to other locations at Grand Bay. This could be because it is seldom visited, even by Reserve staff. Shorebirds may use these salt pannes, and the habitat where the forest meets the marsh appears suitable for Black and Yellow Rails.

Bayou Heron Boat Launch

The public boat launch at the end of Bayou Heron Road offers a view of extensive salt marsh, maritime forest and salt pannes. Ospreys and Bald Eagles are often seen from this site.

Grand Bay – Photo courtesy of Jake Walker ©

Pied-billed Grebes and Brown Pelicans roam the bayous. A walk up the road from the launch to the edge of the forest may yield views of Clapper Rails, Marsh and Sedge Wrens, Seaside and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, and Northern Harriers. Brewer's Blackbirds often roost on the wires in winter. Both Black and Yellow Rails have been observed crossing the road where the marsh meets the maritime forest.

Point O' Pines Boat Launch

The Point O' Pines Boat Launch is located on Grand Batture Road, and provides access to Bayou Cumbest. To reach the launch, turn south on Orange Grove Road from Hwy 90 and continue until you reach Grand Batture Road, and take a left. The boat launch is at the end of the road.

The boat launch is privately owned, and a small fee is requested to launch a vessel. Purple Martins nest in the houses here. Eastern Bluebirds and Orchard Orioles nest here as well. This ramp provides access to the western half of the Reserve, and Bayou Cumbest is more canoe- and kayak-friendly than Bayou Heron.

Many areas of the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge 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.

Bangs Island – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

BIRDING LOCATIONS ACCESSIBLE BY CANOE OR KAYAK

The locations listed in this section can be reached easily with a canoe or kayak. Overall, launching at Point O' Pines lets you reach a greater variety of habitats over a shorter distance. Some of the locations in the following section can be reached in a canoe or kayak as well, but all involve paddling long distances over great expanses of open water.

Bayou Cumbest

Bayou Cumbest runs from the community of Orange Grove down through maritime forest, salt marsh, and salt pannes, before emptying into Point aux Chenes Bay at Bangs Island. Waterbirds are somewhat scarce, except at the mouth, but this bayou provides access to all the habitats mentioned above and to Kenny's and Bangs Islands.

Kenny's Island

This island is only an island in the sense that it is higher ground than the marsh around it. It was created in part by the activities of American Indians, who piled up vast quantities of discarded oyster shells. Now the island is half-covered by oaks, and the other half by pines. The northwestern half of the island is privately owned, but the large patches of oaks are public.

Kenny's Island can be spectacular during spring and fall migrations, when warblers, vireos, flycatchers, thrushes, and buntings stop to refuel. Inclement weather often brings the most birds in spring.

Bayou Heron – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

Bangs Island

Bangs Island is another shell midden, but has little vegetation due to recent hurricanes. Many ducks and other diving birds can be observed from the island. Bangs Island is privately owned, but the shoreline below mean high tide is public.

The island is a great place to look for roosting terns and shorebirds, such as oystercatchers, Willets, Black-bellied Plovers, Marbled Godwits, Black-necked Stilts, and Gull-billed and Least Terns. Least Terns and Wilson's Plovers sometimes nest on the island.

Bayou Heron

Bayou Heron is a fairly deep bayou overall, and many diving birds, pelicans and Ospreys can be found throughout, particularly at the mouth. The shores are lined with black needlerush and smooth cordgrass. Rails, herons, and marsh sparrows are often observed along the edge or in small tidal creeks. A small shell midden south of the boat launch is worth checking for spring migrants. However, this island is privately owned so bird only from your boat.

Many areas of the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge 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.

Point aux Chenes Bay – Photo courtesy of Gretchen Grammer ©

BIRDING LOCATIONS ACCESSIBLE BY MOTORBOAT

Overall, Grand Bay is a very shallow system. At low tide, the water at the mouth of Bayou Heron may be only six inches deep. Please watch the tides carefully, and feel free to ask in the Coastal Resources Center about shallow spots around the Reserve. Fiberglass boats over 16' long typically do not do well unless they are built specifically to run in shallow water. Rubber knee boots or hip waders are necessary to land at most locations other than shell middens.

Bangs Lake

Bangs Lake is a large, mostly shallow body of water on the west side of the Reserve. In the winter the lake can be full of ducks, loons, and grebes. Tremendous rafts of Buffleheads, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, Common Loons, and Horned Grebes can be found here.

Point aux Chenes

Point aux Chenes is a large, seldom-visited expanse of marsh and salt pannes in the southwestern corner of the Reserve. The marsh here is very different from the rest of the reserve and resembles a giant dune swale. The marshes are thick with Marsh Wrens, Seaside and Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Clapper Rails, Wilson's Snipe, and Boat-tailed Grackles. The habitat also looks good for Black and Yellow Rails.

The salt pannes at Point aux Chenes are the largest at Grand Bay, and they attract thousands of roosting shorebirds at high tide. During

Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes – Photo courtesy of Gretchen Grammer ©

migration, these groups may include American Golden Plovers, Whimbrels, Long-billed Curlews, Pectoral Sandpipers, and probably Buff-breasted, Upland, and Baird's Sandpipers. Wilson's Plovers, Willets, and Gull-billed Terns nest on the pannes.

Several small ridges run through the marsh where taller, woody vegetation persists. These areas are great for observing raptors, such as Peregrine Falcons, Merlins, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, and Red-tailed Hawks. Barn Owls roost in this woody vegetation at times, and Short-eared Owls may be sighted as well.

Point aux Chenes Bay

The easiest way to bird Point aux Chenes Bay is to set up a telescope on the shore at Point aux Chenes. Birding the bay is best in winter, when scaup, Redheads, Buffleheads, Common Loons, Northern Gannets, and Horned Grebes are all common. Other winter birds may include all three scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Canvasbacks, and Common Goldeneyes.

Jose Bay

Jose Bay is a small bay on the east side of Point aux Chenes Bay. A large seagrass bed attracts diving ducks to the area. Scaup, Redheads, Red-breasted Mergansers, and scoters are often seen here. At low tide, a small mud island becomes exposed; when it does, shorebirds, gulls, terns, and pelicans flock to it.

Catch 'em All Bar – Photo courtesy of Jake Walker ©

Grand Battures Washover

The Grand Battures is the outer edge of the peninsula separating Point aux Chenes Bay from Grand Bay. The Washover is a mudflat on the west side of the Grand Battures joining the peninsula to a small island. Sand and shell beaches line the outer shore of the Grand Battures; the interior is vegetated with smooth cordgrass and black needlerush.

The Washover is arguably the best birding spot at the Reserve for water birds. Several hundred White Pelicans roost here most of the year, as do thousands of shorebirds. Gulls and terns may be here by the hundreds. Reddish Egrets are almost always present. Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles frequent the area looking for easy targets. If any unusual shorebirds, gulls, terns, or other vagrants find their way to Grand Bay, they are likely to wind up at this location.

In the spring and summer, Least Terns, Black Skimmers, American Oystercatchers, Wilson's Plovers, Gull-billed Terns, Willets, Seaside Sparrows, and Mottled Ducks have all nested on the small island. Please do not disturb any nesting birds.

Catch 'em All Bar

This mud bank is located in the North Rigolets, a bayou connecting Grand Bay to Point aux Chenes Bay. When the tide is halfway between low and high, hundreds of shorebirds, gulls, and terns come here to roost. At high tide, the water may be too deep for the birds to stand, while at low tide, the birds are usually out feeding elsewhere.

Freshwater Wetlands – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

In winter, expect to see Willets, dowitchers, Dunlins, Ruddy Turnstones, Black-bellied Plovers, and both yellowlegs. In spring and fall, add Pectoral Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Gull-billed Tern, and Least Bittern to the list. Seaside Sparrows are abundant in the marshes bordering the bayou here.

Grand Bay

The western side of Grand Bay boasts very high numbers of diving ducks, most likely because of the extensive submerged seagrass beds. Large flocks of 500-1000 scaup and Redheads are regular during winter. Large rafts of Common Loons and Horned Grebes patrol the bay, especially by the small island straight out from the mouth of Bayou Heron.

Middle Bay

Middle Bay extends off the northwest side of Grand Bay. The bay is very shallow and filled with seagrass. The area is a bit more enclosed than Grand Bay and often hosts a number of different dabbling ducks in addition to the divers, such as Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, and American Wigeons.

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WATERFOWL

Mottled Duck
Anas fulvigula

Status:	Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Salt & freshwater marsh ponds, small bayous
Best locations:	Hawkes' Marsh, Point aux Chenes

Notes: Mottled Ducks build their nests in dense mats of grass surrounding marsh ponds throughout the reserve. Though usually seen in pairs, in winter they may form flocks of up to 30 birds.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

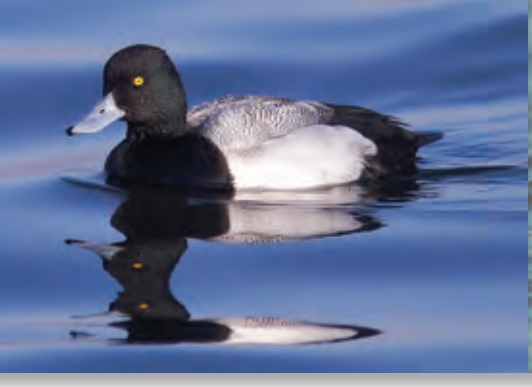
Redhead
Aythya americana

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	November–March
Habitat:	Bays & Mississippi Sound, often over seagrass beds
Best locations:	Grand Bay, Jose Bay, Point aux Chenes Bay

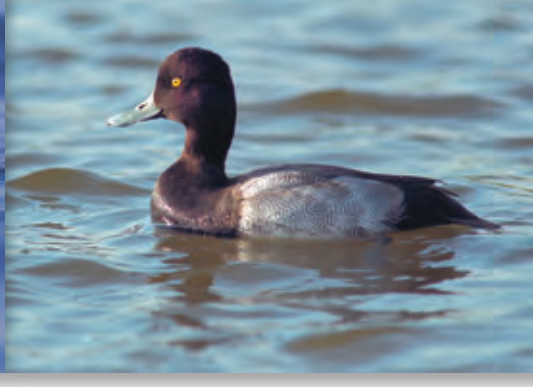
Notes: Rafts of up to 700 Redheads are most easily observed in November. Once duck hunting begins, most are found well out in the Gulf.

Redhead in background with a hen Scaup in foreground

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©



Greater – Photo courtesy of Jeff Rester ©



Lesser – Photo courtesy of Jeff Rester ©

Greater and Lesser Scaup

Aythya marila and A. affinis

Status:	Winter residents
Abundance:	Lesser is common; Greater is fairly common
When found:	November–March
Habitat:	Bays & Mississippi Sound, often over seagrass beds
Best locations:	Grand Bay, Jose Bay, Point aux Chenes Bay

Notes: Lesser Scaup outnumber Greater Scaup in Mississippi, but Greaters are more common here on the coast than in the rest of the state. Look for the extensive white in their primary feathers.

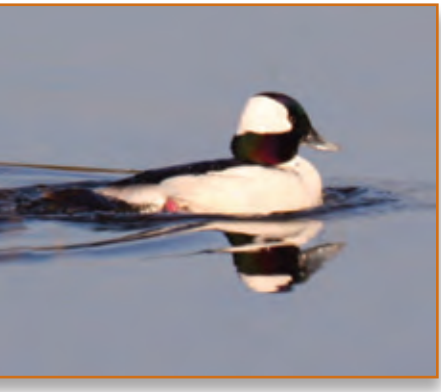


Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Bufflehead

Bucephala albeola

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	November–March
Habitat:	Bays and larger bayous
Best locations:	Bayou Cumbest, Bangs Lake, Middle Bay

Notes: These small ducks can be seen diving for invertebrates across the Reserve's major waterbodies. They breed in the boreal forest, where they nest in tree cavities made by woodpeckers.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Hooded Merganser

Lophodytes cucullatus

Status:	Winter resident, has nested in coastal Mississippi
Abundance:	Common
When found:	November–March
Habitat:	Bayous and marsh ponds
Best locations:	Bayou Heron, Bangs Lake, Bayou Cumbest

Notes: Rafts of over 50 Hooded Mergansers are not unusual on Bangs Lake. The majority of the Hooded Mergansers here are hens.

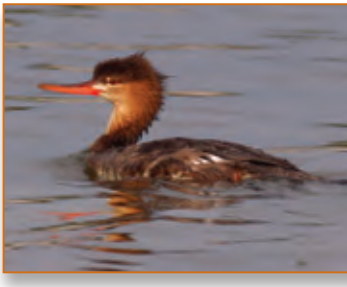
Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	November–April
Habitat:	Bays and the mouths of larger bayous
Best locations:	Bangs Lake, Bangs Island, Jose Bay

Notes: Flotillas of these large fish-eating ducks may be seen dipping their heads underwater to spot fish before they dive in unison to round up their prey.

Male above, Female below



Photos courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Photo courtesy of Bill Stripling ©

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Northern Bobwhite

Colinus virginianus

Status:	Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	Year round, though rarely detected in fall or winter.
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	Coastal Resources Center Savannas, Bayou Heron & East Pecan Roads

Notes: Look and listen for Bobwhites along Bayou Heron Road from the Coastal Resources Center up to the train tracks, and along East Pecan Road. Prescribed fire may help this rapidly declining species persist.

Common Loon

Gavia immer

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	November–May
Habitat:	Bays and the mouths of large bayous
Best locations:	Bayou Heron, Grand Bay, Point aux Chenes Bay

Notes: Large rafts of up to 100 Common Loons must look menacing to the fish beneath them. These excellent divers are built to out-swim the fish they pursue.

Photo courtesy of Donna McDonald-Bailey ©

Pied-billed Grebe

Podilymbus podiceps

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Bayous, marsh ponds
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Bayou Cumbest

Notes: These grebes are shy and dive underwater to avoid detection. Watch carefully, and you may see their head pop up to check if you are still there.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

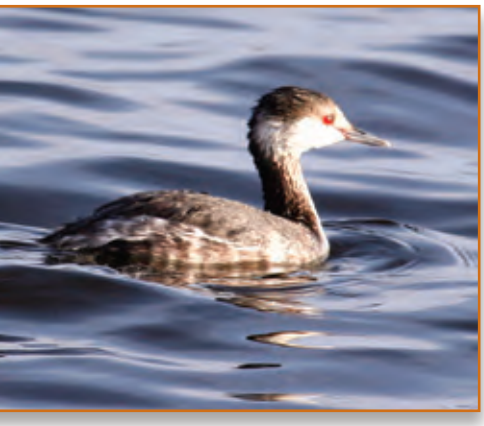


Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Horned Grebe

Podiceps auritus

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	November–April
Habitat:	Bays and the mouths of large bayou
Best locations:	Bangs Lake, Bayou Heron, Middle Bay

Notes: Rafts of Horned Grebes may instantly vanish as they dive simultaneously to round up prey. Though adept underwater, grebes are not masters of flight and are frequently taken by wintering Peregrine Falcons.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

PELECANIFORMS

American White Pelican

Pelecanus erythrorhynchos

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Common October–March; a few individuals often stay through the summer
Habitat:	Bays, bayous, shell islands & bars
Best locations:	Grand Battures Washover

Notes: At low tide, American White Pelicans form a line and herd fish against the shoreline, where they scoop them up with their pouch-like bills.

"I teach Coastal Ornithology each summer to undergraduate students here at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. A highlight of this field class is the abundance and diversity of coastal birds seen at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Reserve." Dr. John J. Dindo, Dauphin Island Sea Lab

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Brown Pelican
Pelecanus occidentalis

Status:	Permanent resident, nests elsewhere
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Bays, bayous, shell islands & bars
Best locations:	Grand Battures

Notes: These birds are commonly observed plunge-diving for fish along bayous and open water bays.

Photo courtesy of Jake Walker ©

Magnificent Frigatebird
Fregata magnificens

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–October
Habitat:	Mississippi Sound, bays
Best locations:	Grand Battures, Point aux Chenes Bay, Middle Bay

Notes: Frigatebirds abound during the passage of tropical storms and hurricanes. Sometimes, strong southerly winds will bring them in off the Gulf.

American Bittern

Botaurus lentiginosus

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Salt, brackish, & freshwater marsh, wet pine savanna
Best locations:	Point aux Chenes, Hawkes' Marsh

Notes: American Bitterns are so well-camouflaged that you can walk right by one without noticing it.

Photo courtesy of Gretchen Grammer ©

Least Bittern

Ixobrychus exilis

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found	April–July
Habitat:	Salt marsh
Best locations:	Middle Bayou

Notes: Bitterns are frequently heard calling during the summer but are rarely observed, except when flying.

Photo courtesy of North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERR ©

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Green Heron

Butorides virescens

Status: Summer resident, a few may overwinter, nests elsewhere

Abundance: Fairly common; rare in winter

When found: April–October

Habitat: Freshwater marsh, bayous, shell middens

Best locations: Kenny's Island, Hawkes' Marsh, Bayou Cumbest

Notes: A Green Heron was once observed snatching a piece of bread away from a group of ducks and geese that were being fed at a duck pond. Rather than eating the bread, the heron set it adrift along the shoreline, and caught fish one after another as they rose to feed on the bread.

Tricolored Heron

Egretta tricolor

Status: Permanent resident, nests elsewhere

Abundance: Common

When found: Year round

Habitat: Bayous, salt marsh

Best locations: Bayou Heron Boat Launch

Notes: Formerly called Louisiana Herons, Tricolored Herons favor coastal marshes and are the most abundant heron at Grand Bay.

Photo courtesy of George Housley, Jr. ©

Reddish Egret

Egretta rufescens

Status:	Permanent resident, nests elsewhere
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	Almost year round; absent in May & June
Habitat:	Mudflats
Best locations:	Grand Battures Washover

Notes: Other than on the barrier islands, the Grand Battures are probably the most reliable place to observe Reddish Egrets in Mississippi.

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Black-crowned Night-Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Status:	Summer resident, nests elsewhere
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	July–September; irregular in winter
Habitat:	Salt marshes, often near shell middens
Best locations:	Bayou Cumbest, Bayou Heron, Grand Battures

Notes: These night herons can often be found roosting in oaks along the upper reaches of Bayou Cumbest.

Photo courtesy of Jeff Rester ©

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

Nyctanassa violacea

Status:	Summer resident, nests elsewhere
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Late June–early October
Habitat:	Salt marshes, often near shell middens
Best locations:	Bayou Heron, Point aux Chenes, Grand Battures

Notes: When they finish nesting, night-herons flock to Grand Bay to feast on shrimp and fish.

Photo courtesy of George Housley, Jr. ©

Photo courtesy of George Housley, Jr. ©

White Ibis

Eudocimus albus

Status:	Permanent resident, nests elsewhere
Abundance:	Common May–September, uncommon the rest of the year
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Salt & freshwater marsh
Best locations:	Hawkes' Marsh, Grand Battures, Point aux Chenes

Notes: White Ibises seen at Grand Bay probably nest on nearby Cat Island, Alabama, though this has not yet been confirmed.

Photo courtesy of George Housley, Jr. ©

RAPTORS

Osprey
Pandion haliaetus

Status:	Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Hunts over water. Often nests inland.
Best locations:	Power Line Right-of-Way, Bayou Heron Boat Launch

Notes: Ospreys nest atop the power line towers near the Coastal Resources Center. Look for them in nearby trees, picking apart a striped mullet or bluegill.

Bald Eagle
Haliaeetus leucocephalus

Status:	Winter resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	September–May. Absent in summer.
Habitat:	Maritime forest, bays, salt marsh
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Point aux Chenes

Notes: Bald Eagles differ from most of Grand Bay's birds by nesting in the winter rather than during spring or summer.

Photo courtesy of Sharon Milligan ©

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Northern Harrier

Circus cyaneus

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Salt marsh, open pine savanna
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, along all bayous.

Notes: Harriers and raccoons are probably the most deadly predators of marshbirds and rice rats at Grand Bay. Harriers cruise low over the marsh looking for prey. When they spot something they hover briefly then instantly drop upon it, disappearing into the grass.

Photo courtesy of Sharon Milligan ©

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Bays, bayous, salt pannes, mudflats, shell middens
Best locations:	Bangs Island, Point aux Chenes, Grand Battures

Notes: The Peregrine Falcon is the fastest animal on our planet. One crafty falcon has learned to use boats to help it hunt. This Peregrine follows a boat around the Reserve waiting for a grebe or small duck to flush, so that it can swoop down and grab the fleeing bird out of the air. The photo above was taken seconds after one such attack, which on this occasion was unsuccessful.

Bayou Heron midden – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

"After an autumn night of good north winds, our ears were greeted with the 'pips' and 'cheeps' of call notes while our eyes spotted the small, shadowy figures of hundreds of newly arrived migrant songbirds darting through the island's shrubs."

Megan Hughes, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi

Yellow Rail

Coturnicops noveboracensis

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Rare
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Pine savanna, salt & freshwater marsh
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Power Line Right-of-Way

Notes: Yellow Rails are surely more common than the number of sightings suggest. Occasionally, these secretive rails can be enticed to call by tapping two pebbles together.

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Black Rail

Laterallus jamaicensis

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	(very) Rare
When found	November–March
Habitat:	Salt & brackish marsh, salt pannes
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes

Notes: There are only four records for this species at the reserve; three just north of the Bayou Heron Boat Launch, and one from Point aux Chenes.

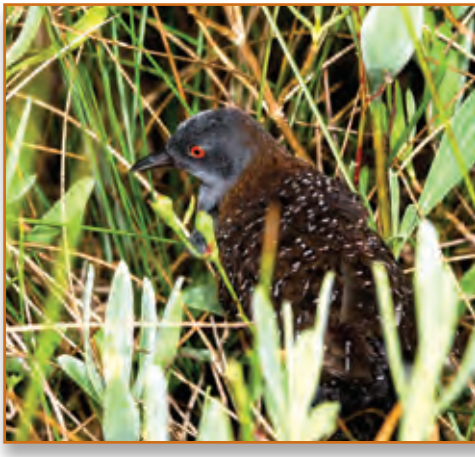


Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Clapper Rail
Rallus longirostris

Status:	Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Salt & brackish marsh
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Bayou Cumbest

Notes: This rail is the most common "secretive" marsh bird at the reserve. These birds have been the subject of several research projects here at Grand Bay.

Photo courtesy of
Dave Hawkins Photography©

Sora
Porzana carolina

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common in April & May, uncommon in fall & winter
When found:	September–May. Absent June through August.
Habitat:	Freshwater marsh; salt marsh during migration

Best locations:
Hawkes' Marsh

Notes: In the spring, any loud noise you can make in the marsh should elicit a raucous response of whinnies and whistles from numerous hidden Soras.

Photo courtesy of
Michael Gray, GCBO ©

summer

Photos courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

SHOREBIRDS

Black-bellied Plover
Pluvialis squatarola

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Almost year round; most are gone in June
Habitat:	Mudflats, salt pannes
Best locations:	Grand Battures Washover, Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes

winter

Notes: These shorebirds spend most of the year here, but fly to the high arctic for a month or so to nest and raise their young.

Wilson's – Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves © Piping – Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Wilson's Plover

Charadrius wilsonia

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	March–September
Habitat:	Salt pannes, sand & shell beaches, shell middens
Best locations:	Bangs Island, Grand Battures, Point aux Chenes

Notes: Ten to fifteen pairs of Wilson's Plovers nest at Grand Bay each summer. Several sightings in late November and early February suggest that a few may overwinter.

Piping Plover

Charadrius melodus

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Rare
When found:	January and February
Habitat:	Mudflats
Best locations:	Grand Battures Washover

Notes: One Piping Plover found at Grand Bay was marked with a unique combination of colored leg bands. Later, we learned it was banded as a chick on the Missouri River in South Dakota.

Oystercatcher – Photo courtesy of Jeff Rester ©

Stilt – Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

American Oystercatcher

Haematopus palliatus

Status:	Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Mudflats, sand & shell beaches
Best locations:	Bangs Island, Grand Battures

Notes: Oystercatchers were once very rare in Mississippi, but now they are residents along the coast. Grand Bay is one of the few known nesting areas for this species in the state.

Black-necked Stilt

Himantopus mexicanus

Status:	Summer resident, nests just outside of the Reserve
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	June–September
Habitat:	Mudflats, shell beaches
Best locations:	Bangs Lake and Island, Grand Battures Washover

Notes: Stilts often nest by the impoundments in the Chevron oil refinery. After breeding, they show up in small flocks across the Reserve.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Willet

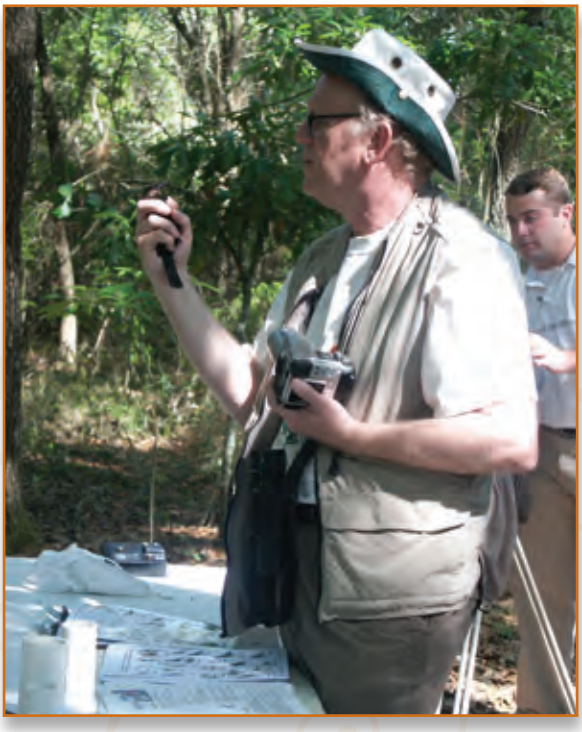
Tringa semipalmata

Status:	Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Mudflats, salt pannes, salt marsh
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Grand Battures Washover, Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes

Notes: If you venture too close to a Willet's nest or young, they won't let you stay for long. Be prepared for an ear-piercing racket, and possibly a good dive-bombing.

"I find that birding in the Grand Bay Reserve is very productive. There is no better place in the Mississippi Sound to observe large rafts of over-wintering bay ducks, such as three species of scoters, Redheads, and Greater Scaup than in the outer waters of the Reserve. During my "Big Year of Birding" a few years ago, I sighted many significant species of birds on the Reserve, including the Short-eared Owl. My observations have also led me to suspect (although not yet prove) that Wilson's Plovers overwinter at the Reserve."

Don McKee, Avid Mississippi Birder



A bird in the hand... – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

Whimbrel
Numenius phaeopus

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	March–May, July–September
Habitat:	Salt pannes, mudflats
Best locations:	Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes, Catch 'em All Bar

Notes: Grand Bay is perhaps the best place to observe migrating Whimbrels on the Mississippi coast. Flocks of over 100 have been seen in the past.

Photo courtesy of George Housley, Jr. ©

Long-billed Curlew
Numenius americanus

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–May, rare in winter
Habitat:	Salt pannes, mudflats
Best locations:	Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes, Catch 'em All Bar

Notes: These huge shorebirds at first may look similar to Whimbrels, but Curlews are much larger, have extra-long bills, and show a cinnamon wash on the underside of their wings.

Photo courtesy of Joan White-Spunner Dixon ©

Marbled Godwit
Limosa fedoa

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	Most are found in April or November. Irregular in winter
Habitat:	Mudflats, shell beaches
Best locations:	Bangs Island, Grand Battures Washover

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Notes: Look for Marbled Godwits among big groups of larger-sized shorebirds such as Willets or American Oystercatchers.

Ruddy Turnstone
Arenaria interpres

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	July–May; absent only in June
Habitat:	Shell middens, sand and shell beaches
Best locations:	Bangs Island, Grand Battures

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Notes: Look for turnstones along the shorelines of the middens or outer beaches. Because they are not shy, if you are quiet, they may walk right up to you.

Western Sandpiper
Calidris mauri

Photo courtesy of Jake Walker ©

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	August–April
Habitat:	Mudflats, salt pannes, tidal creeks
Best locations:	Grand Battures Washover, Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes

Notes: The Reserve plays host to some of the largest aggregations of Western Sandpipers in Mississippi. Flocks of over 400 Western Sandpipers can often be seen during high tide.

Dunlin
Calidris alpina

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	October–May; a few may linger through the summer
Habitat:	Mudflats, salt pannes, small bayous
Best locations:	Grand Battures Washover, Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes

Notes: Dunlins are the most abundant shorebirds at Grand Bay. At high tide, large flocks roost at the aforementioned locations, but at low tide, they are scattered across the Reserve, feeding in the exposed mud.

Photo courtesy of Donna McDonald-Bailey ©

Long and Short-Billed Dowitchers

Limnodromus scolopaceus and L. griseus

Status:	Winter residents
Abundance:	Both are common
When found:	Almost year round; absent in June
Habitat:	Mudflats, salt pannes, small bayous
Best locations:	Grand Battures Washover, Point aux Chenes Salt Pannes

Notes: In Grand Bay, be careful using the rule of thumb used by many birders that suggests that in winter, Short-billed Dowitchers are found near salt or brackish water, while Long-billed Dowitchers favor freshwater. Many of the dowitchers found in Grand Bay in saltwater are actually Long-billed.

Wilson's Snipe
Gallinago delicata

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Salt, brackish, & freshwater marshes, wet pine savannas
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Road, Hawkes' Marsh, Point aux Chenes

Notes: Look for Snipe in the ditches as you drive down Bayou Heron Road.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

American Woodcock
Scolopax minor

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Uncommon
When Found:	November–February
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best Locations:	Coastal Resources Center Savannas, East Pecan Road

Notes: American Woodcocks, also known as Timberdoodles, are most easily observed at dusk crossing Bayou Heron and East Pecan Roads.
The bird in this photograph exhibits a rare pigment abnormality, leucism, where the normally black pigmented feathers are white.

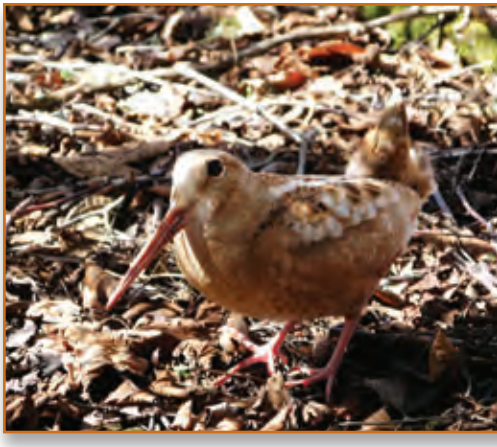


Photo courtesy of Paula Waggy ©

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

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

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

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

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

Barn Owl
Tyto alba

Status:	Permanent resident
Abundance:	Rare, but probably under-reported
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Pine savanna, salt & brackish marsh, freshwater marsh
Best locations:	Point aux Chenes, Bayou Heron Road

Notes: This species is not known to nest in the area but does roost in the shrubs and trees along the Point aux Chenes salt pannes. Listen for its bone-chilling screech along Bayou Heron Road at night.

Photo courtesy of Bill Stripling ©

Short-eared Owl
Asio flammeus

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Rare, though probably overlooked
When found:	December –March
Habitat:	Salt marsh
Best locations:	Grand Battures, Point aux Chenes, Bayou Heron Boat Launch

Notes: Try walking through dense cover at marsh edges, or scan from the boat launch at dusk to locate this bird.

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

GOATSUCKERS

Common Nighthawk

Chordeiles minor

Photo courtesy of Donna McDonald-Bailey ©

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Common
When found:	April–September
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	Coastal Resources Center Savannas, Point O' Pines Boat Launch, East Pecan Road

Notes: This species is commonly observed flying over open, grassy areas around sunrise and sunset, giving its characteristic nasal "peent" call

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"I will never forget the sunrise birding cruise that we guided through the Reserve during our BioBlitz on May 1, 2004. Our two boats pulled up to one of the brightly-colored middens on Crooked Bayou that was all abloom with eastern coralbean plants. Dozens of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were frantically feeding on these tubular, magenta-colored flowers and were totally oblivious to our presence. Professional and amateur birders alike were awed at this spectacular sight."

Jennifer Buchanan, Education Coordinator, Grand Bay NERR

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Archilochus colubris

Status:	Summer resident, possibly nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest, pine savanna
Best locations:	Kenny's Island, Coastal Resources Center

Notes: Although western hummingbird species are found along the Gulf coast during the winter, Ruby-throats migrate south to the tropics.

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

"Grand Bay is a great place for both novice and advanced bird-watchers. Birding here can be as relaxed or as challenging as you choose. You can bird watch from a car, boat, canoe or kayak, or trek through a variety of Coastal Preserve habitats."

Jeff Clark
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Coastal Preserves Program

Cypress wetland – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

Photo courtesy of Dave Hawkins Photography ©

KINGFISHERS

Belted Kingfisher

Megaceryle alcyon

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	August–May
Habitat:	Bayous, freshwater marsh
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Kenny's Island

Notes: Belted Kingfishers spend most of the year here at Grand Bay, but head farther north in May to nest in burrows in river banks.

WOODPECKERS

Red-headed Woodpecker
Melanerpes erythrocephalus

Status:	Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common in spring & summer; rare in fall & winter
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	East Pecan Road (near the train tracks)

Notes: Red-headed Woodpeckers seem to disappear in the winter. They likely move out of our area and into hardwood forests during the colder months.

Photo courtesy of George Housley, Jr. ©

FLYCATCHERS

Olive-sided Flycatcher
Contopus cooperi

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Rare
When found:	September–November
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	Goat Farm, Bayou Heron Road

Notes: To find this species, drive on Bayou Heron Road and scan the tops of pine trees looking for a flycatcher silhouette.

Photo courtesy of Michael Woodruff ©

Great-crested Flycatcher
Myiarchus crinitus

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	April–October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: This species is fairly noisy and is often first detected by hearing its distinctive "wheep" call.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Eastern Kingbird
Tyrannus tyrannus

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	April–October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest, pine savanna
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Point O' Pines Boat Launch

Notes: Eastern Kingbirds can often be observed mobbing and harassing larger birds, especially hawks.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Tyrannus forficatus

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Rare
When found:	August–October
Habitat:	Maritime forest
Best locations:	Kenny's Island, Bayou Heron Boat Launch

Notes: This species is typically a rare migrant to the area; birds seen at Grand Bay may be part of the small population that winters in Florida.

Muley Grass – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

SHRIKES AND VIREOS

Loggerhead Shrike

Lanius ludovicianus

Status:	Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Maritime forest, pine savanna
Best locations:	Coastal Resources Center Savannas

Notes: Also known as "butcher-birds," shrikes impale their prey (insects, small birds, and mammals) on sharp objects and tear it into bite-size pieces with their bills.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

White-eyed Vireo

Vireo griseus

Status:	Summer resident, but some winter, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found	Year round
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest, pine savanna
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: Although this species is associated with habitats containing mature trees, it will usually be found in the shrubby understory.

Photo courtesy of Dave Hawkins Photography ©

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS

Purple Martin

Progne subis

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Common
When found:	February–August
Habitat:	Usually nests near water
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Point O' Pines Boat Launch

Notes: Purple Martins are the first migrants to return in spring. This species nests almost exclusively in man-made birdhouses.

Brown-headed Nuthatch

Sitta pusilla

Status:	Permanent resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	Coastal Resources Center Savannas

Notes: This species is called a secondary cavity-nester which means it does not make cavities, but uses ones made by woodpeckers.

Photo courtesy of Larry Basden ©

Sedge Wren
Cistothorus platensis

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Pine savanna, freshwater marsh, salt & brackish marsh
Best locations:	Coastal Resources Center Savannas

Notes: This species is one of the most common grassland birds in recently burned savanna habitats.

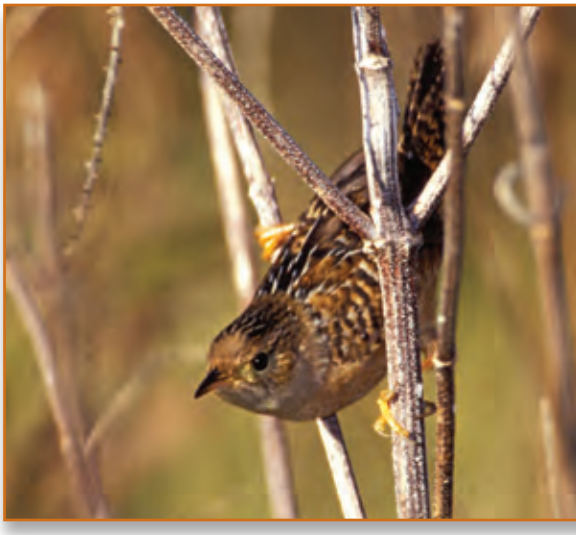

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Marsh Wren
Cistothorus palustris

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	September–May
Habitat:	Salt, brackish, & freshwater marsh
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Hawkes' Marsh

Notes: Although this species appears to breed in the Lower Pascagoula River marshes, it is not known to breed in the Reserve.

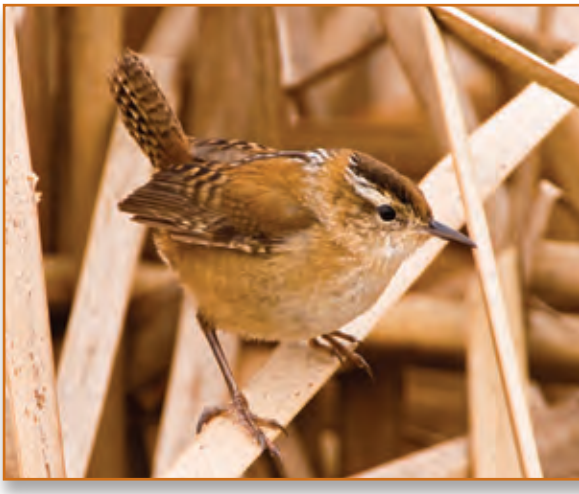

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Photo courtesy of Tom Carlisle ©

Eastern Bluebird

Sialia sialis

Status:	Permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	Coastal Resources Center Savannas

Notes: Bluebirds readily adapt to using nest boxes. Look for these birds perching on power lines.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Hermit Thrush

Catharus guttatus

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Oak Hammock, maritime forests, pine savanna
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: Although relatively common during the winter, this species is typically overlooked by most birders.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

MIMICS

Gray Catbird

Dumetella carolinensis

Status:	Permanent resident
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest, pine savanna
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Road, Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: The Gray Catbird's most common call is a cat-like "meow". This species is a mimic – it copies the songs and calls of other birds.

"One fall afternoon, I was kayaking along a narrow tidal creek off Bayou Heron. The Juncus marsh rose above my head. I had stopped paddling for a moment to enjoy the silence when a Northern Harrier came gliding directly overhead. Needless to say, we were both surprised. The bird banked hard and flew away. Chance encounters of animals unaware of my presence always leave lasting memories."

Chris May, former NERR Stewardship Coordinator

Gautier Bayou – Photo courtesy of Jennifer Buchanan ©

Photo courtesy of Sharon Milligan ©

Northern Mockingbird

Mimus polyglottos

Status:	Permanent resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Pine Flatwoods and Savanna
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Road, Coastal Resources Center Area

Notes: The Northern Mockingbird is the state bird of Mississippi and is our most accomplished vocalist. Often these birds will sing at night.

European Starling

EXOTIC INVASIVE

Sturnus vulgaris

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Rare
When found:	September–April
Habitat:	Prefers areas inhabited by humans
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch

Notes: This non-native was first introduced in Central Park in New York City in 1890. Starlings often out-compete our native species of birds for nesting cavities.

Photo courtesy of Alan Hinkel ©

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler

Vermivora peregrina

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–May; September–October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: On some fall days, this can be the most abundant warbler in the woods.

Photo courtesy of Dave Hawkins Photography©

Orange-crowned Warbler

Vermivora celata

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	November–March
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest, pine savanna
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Bayou Heron Road

Notes: This species is very nondescript and frequently overlooked.

Northern Parula
Parula americana

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	March–October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest, swamps and bottomland hardwoods
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Escatawpa Trail, West Pecan Road

Photo courtesy of Pamela Johnson ©

Notes: Though just a migrant through most of the Reserve, Northern Parulas breed in the Grand Bay NWR along the Escatawpa River and along Franklin Creek.

Yellow Warbler
Dendroica petechia

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April; July–September
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: Migrating in late summer, this species is the earliest of all the fall migrant warblers to pass through the Reserve.

Photo courtesy of
Dave Hawkins Photography©

Photo courtesy of Bill Stripling ©

Magnolia Warbler

Dendroica magnolia

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–early May; September–October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: In the fall, look for the wide black band at the tip of the tail to tell this bird from other nondescript warblers.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Black-throated Green Warbler

Dendroica virens

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–mid-May; September–late October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: These warblers come with the first waves of migrants in the spring and are some of the last to go through in the fall.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Blackburnian Warbler

Dendroica fusca

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–mid-May; September–mid-October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: The male Blackburnian Warbler has a blazing orange throat. Look high in the treetops for this bird.

Palm Warbler
Dendroica palmarum

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Pine savanna, maritime forest
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Road, Kenny's Island

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Notes: The race of Palm Warbler most often observed in the Reserve area is the brown, or "western", rather than the yellow, or "eastern" race.

Cerulean Warbler
Dendroica cerulea

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	Mid-April–mid-May; August–mid-October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: This species typically sticks to the treetops where it seldom offers bird-watchers satisfying views.

Photo courtesy of
Dave Hawkins Photography©

Black-and-white Warbler
Mniotilta varia

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	April–May; September–October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: Individuals of this species probably winter in the Reserve in small numbers but have not been documented.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

American Redstart
Setophaga ruticilla

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	Mid-April–mid-May; September–mid-October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: Although warblers typically glean insects from leaves, this species is frequently observed behaving more like a flycatcher, "hawking" insects in mid-air.

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Prothonotary Warbler

Protonotaria citrea

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	April–mid-October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest, swamps and bottomland hardwoods
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island, Escatawpa Trail

Notes: This is the only warbler species that nests in tree cavities or artificial nest boxes.

Photo courtesy of Danny Johnson ©

"It is often said that there is a certain disconnect between man and nature. If this is true, then for me, the Grand Bay NERR is the reconnect."

Scott A. Rush
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Georgia

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

Worm-eating Warbler

Helmitheros vermivorum

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	Mid-April–mid-May; September–mid-October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: This brown and tan warbler is often observed feeding on the ground, where it scratches at leaves, exposing insects.

Ovenbird
Seiurus aurocapilla

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–mid-May
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: The species name, aurocapilla, refers to the broad, orange crown patch, which can sometimes be obscured.

Photo courtesy of
Dave Hawkins Photography©

Kentucky Warbler
Oporornis formosus

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April; September–mid-October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: This warbler is probably much more common during spring and fall migration than currently documented.

Photo courtesy of
Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Common Yellowthroat

Geothlypis trichas

Status:	Possible permanent resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Uncommon year round, but common in April, May, and October
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Maritime forest, brackish and freshwater marsh, pine savanna
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: Although this species has been found here year round, no specific individuals have been documented as year round residents.

"I am an educator and a life-long resident of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. My husband, Moe, and I always seek opportunities to experience the natural beauty and wildlife of our coastal area. One of our most enjoyable experiences occurred on a nature-tourism adventure at the Grand Bay Reserve that involved bird banding on a forested midden adjacent to Bayou Cumbest. This adventure was extremely fun and educational. We can't wait to experience more outdoor activities at the Reserve in the future."

Rose Pouriraji, Educator

Birding Adventure – Photos courtesy of the Pouriraji's ©

Photo courtesy of Donna McDonald-Bailey ©

Hooded Warbler
Wilsonia citrina

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	April–mid May; September–mid-October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest, swamps and bottomland hardwoods

Best locations: Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island, Escatawpa Trail

Notes: Though considered a migrant, this species may nest on parts of the Grand Bay NWR.

Photo courtesy of Dave Hawkins Photography ©

Yellow-breasted Chat
Icteria virens

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	April–mid-October
Habitat:	Pine savanna during summer; maritime forest during spring & fall

Best locations: Bayou Heron Road, Coastal Resources Center Savannas, Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: A cacophonous racket coming from an overgrown savanna indicates the presence of this species.

female

Photos courtesy of George Housley, Jr. ©

TANAGERS

Summer Tanager

Piranga rubra

Status:	Summer resident; nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–mid-October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Road, Coastal Resources Center Savannas, Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: This tanager is most frequently detected by hearing its characteristic "piki-tuk" call.

male

Photo courtesy of Donna McDonald-Bailey ©

Scarlet Tanager

Piranga olivacea

Status:	Transient
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	April–mid-May; September–mid-October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest
Best locations:	Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: If the weather turns sour on an April morning, it's time to go birding. These fireballs will make you forget it's raining.

Bachman's Sparrow

Aimophila aestivalis

Status:	Permanent resident, possibly nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Rare
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	Escatawpa Trail, Bayou Heron Road

Notes: Although common in upland pine flatwood habitats such as the DeSoto National Forest, this species is infrequently seen in the Grand Bay area.

Photo courtesy of Eric Soehren, Alabama DCNR-State Lands Division ©

Henslow's Sparrow
Ammodramus henslowii

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	October–March
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	Coastal Resources Center Savannas, Power Line Right-of-Way

Notes: This species is usually only found in recently burned (within the last three years) grass-dominated pine savannas.

Photo courtesy of Jake Walker ©

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Ammodramus nelsoni

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	October–May
Habitat:	Salt marsh, typically near the beachfront
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Grand Battures, Point aux Chenes

Notes: A look at this secretive sparrow is well worth the effort required to find it. Prepare to get muddy to find these beauties.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

"A fisherman's report of seven Peregrine Falcons attacking ducks by Bangs Island seemed outlandish, but worth investigation. When I arrived by boat the next afternoon, a falcon darted after a Horned Grebe I had just flushed. The falcon missed, but when I headed up Bangs Bayou it followed, and attacked each bird scared up by the boat until it caught one. I then knew why the fisherman had mistaken one falcon for seven: This bird had learned to follow boats to help it hunt. For the past three winters, this falcon has provided the most exhilarating birding experiences of my life."

Jake Walker, Research Technician
Grand Bay NERR

Seaside Sparrow
Ammodramus maritimus

Status:	Permanent resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Salt marsh
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, all marsh south of the tree-line

Notes: The best time to find these sparrows is between March and August, when they sing while perched up in the marsh grasses. Their song sounds like a raspy Red-winged Blackbird.

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Swamp Sparrow
Melospiza georgiana

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Common
When found:	October–April
Habitat:	Pine flatwoods and savanna; salt, brackish, and freshwater marsh
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Bayou Heron Road, Hawkes' Marsh, Oak Grove Birding Trail

Photo courtesy of Sharon Milligan ©

Notes: This is by far the most common sparrow you will see when birding from the roads and trails.

Blue Grosbeak

Passerine caerulea

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	April–October
Habitat:	Pine savanna during summer; maritime forest during spring & fall
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Road, Coastal Resources Center Savannas, Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: This species prefers savannas with scattered shrubs in the understory.

immature male Photo courtesy of George Housley, Jr. ©

male Photo courtesy of George Housley, Jr. ©

Indigo Bunting

Passerina cyanea

Status:	Summer resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	April–October
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest during spring and fall; pine savanna during summer
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Road, Coastal Resources Center Savannas, Oak Grove Birding Trail, Kenny's Island

Notes: Big flocks of up to 50 Indigo Buntings are not uncommon during April and October. They can often be seen at the side of the road eating seeds or grit.

Brewer's Blackbird
Euphagus cyanocephalus

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	November–February
Habitat:	Roosts on power lines or in pine trees
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch

Notes: On most winter nights, 200-500 Brewer's Blackbirds roost on the wires at the boat launch or in the trees nearby.

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Boat-tailed Grackle
Quiscalus major

Status:	Permanent resident, nests elsewhere
Abundance:	Uncommon
When found:	Year round, but absent in June
Habitat:	Salt marsh
Best locations:	Point aux Chenes

Notes: One flock of 50-100 female and immature Boat-tailed Grackles can usually be found in the Point aux Chenes marshes. We do not know where they breed.

female

Photos courtesy of Olivia Graves ©

male

Photo courtesy of Dave Hawkins Photography ©

Orchard Oriole

Icterus spurius

Status:	Summer resident, nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	April–August
Habitat:	Oak hammock, maritime forest during spring and fall; pine savanna during summer
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Road, Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Kenny's Island, Oak Grove Birding Trail

Notes: Orchard Orioles usually nest in the shrubs around the Bayou Heron boat launch.

"Observing and documenting the diversity of birdlife at the Grand Bay NERR, from Clapper Rails and Seaside Sparrows breeding in the marshes to wintering Henslow's Sparrows found in wet pine savannas, are some of my most relaxing and pleasurable day-to-day activities."

Mark S. Woodrey, Ph.D.
Senior Research Associate/Research Coordinator
Mississippi State University/Grand Bay NERR

Mark Woodrey with Clapper Rail – Photo courtesy of Jake Walker ©

Appendix 1

CODE OF BIRDING ETHICS

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

1(a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.

1(b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.

Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas, or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area;

Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.

Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

1(c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized, and permission has been obtained from private land-owners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

1(d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law, and the rights of others.

2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.

2(b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.

2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

3(a) Keep dispensers, water, and food clean, and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.

3(b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

3(c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations spelled out in Items #1 and #2, has responsibilities as a Group Member.

4(a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

4(b) If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation, and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action, and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it, and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

Group Leader Responsibilities [amateur and professional trips and tours].

4(c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.

4(d) Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment, and does not interfere with others using the same area.

4(e) Ensure everyone in the group knows of and practices this code.

4(f) Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g. no tape recorders allowed).

4(g) Acknowledge that professional tour companies bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of birds and the benefits of public knowledge ahead of the company's commercial interests. Ideally, leaders should keep track of tour sightings, document unusual occurrences, and submit records to appropriate organizations.

Please Follow this Code and Distribute and Teach it to Others

The American Birding Association's Code of Birding Ethics may be freely reproduced for distribution/dissemination. Please acknowledge the role of ABA in developing and promoting this code with a link to the ABA website using the url http://www.aba.org. Thank you.

Additional Resources

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WEBSITES

American Birding Association:
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Audubon Mississippi:
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Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology:
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Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve:
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http://www.fws.gov/grandbay/; accessed 15 February 2009

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Mississippi Department of Marine Resources:
http://www.dmr.state.ms.us/; accessed 15 February 2009

Mississippi State University – Coastal Research and Extension Center:
http://www.msstate.edu/dept/crec/crec.html; accessed 15 February 2009

Mississippi Museum of Natural Science:
http://museum.mdwfp.com/; accessed 15 February 2009

Partners in Flight:
http://www.partnersinflight.org/; accessed 15 February 2009

Checklist

A checklist to the birds of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and vicinity. Species are listed in taxonomic order according to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds, 7th ed. (1998), including changes made in the 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, and 49th supplements to the checklist (2000-2008). An * following the common name indicates a species known to nest at the Grand Bay NERR. Abbreviations used in the checklist are defined as follows:

Seasons

- Sp- Spring (Mar-May)
- Su- Summer (June-August)
- F- Fall (September-November)
- W- Winter (December-February)

Seasonal Abundance

- C- Common (more than 10 individuals per day; almost certain to be seen or heard)
- FC- Fairly Common (1-10 individuals per day; may be overlooked)
- U- Uncommon (several records; occasionally seen or heard, but most often missed)
- R- Rare (few records; not expected to be seen or heard)

Residency Status

- P- Permanent Resident (present year round)
- W- Winter Resident (species that occur in the winter and migrate north for the summer)
- S- Summer Resident (species that occur in the summer and migrate south for the winter)
- T- Transient (species that migrate through the Grand Bay NERR, but do not stay for long)

Habitat Types

- BA- Bays
- BY- Bayous
- MS- Mississippi Sound
- SI- Shell Islands/Bars
- SB- Sand Beaches
- PS- Pine Savannas/Flatwoods
- FO- Fly-over
- FM- Freshwater Marshes
- SM- Salt Marshes/Brackish Marshes
- MD- Mud/Sand Flats
- SP- Salt Pannes
- MF- Maritime Forests
- OH- Oak Hammocks

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
Greater White-fronted Goose	*Anser albifrons*			U		T	FO
Snow Goose	*Chen caerulescens*			U		T	FO
Canada Goose	*Branta canadensis*			R		T	FO
Wood Duck	*Aix sponsa*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	FM
Gadwall	*Anas strepera*	U			FC	W	BA, BY
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	U		U	FC	W	FM
Mottled Duck*	*Anas fulvigula*	C	C	C	C	P	FM,SM,BY
Blue-winged Teal	*Anas discors*	FC		FC	U	T	FM,BA,BY
Northern Shoveler	*Anas clypeata*	U		U	R	W	BA,BY
Northern Pintail	*Anas acuta*				U	W	BY
Green-winged Teal	*Anas crecca*	U		U	FC	W	FM
Canvasback	*Aythya valisineria*				R	W	BA
Redhead	*Aythya americana*	U		U	C	W	BA,MS
Ring-necked Duck	*Aythya collaris*				R	W	BA
Greater Scaup	*Aythya marila*	R		R	U	W	BA,BY,MS
Lesser Scaup	*Aythya affinis*	FC		U	C	W	BA,MS
Surf Scoter	*Melanitta perspicillata*				U	W	BA, MS
White-winged Scoter	*Melanitta fusca*				R	W	BA, MS
Black Scoter	*Melanitta nigra*				R	W	BA, MS
Long-tailed Duck	*Clangula hyemalis*				R	W	BA, MS
Bufflehead	*Bucephala albeola*	FC			C	W	BA,MS
Common Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*	U			U	W	BA
Hooded Merganser	*Lophodytes cucullatus*	FC			C	W	BA,BY,FM
Red-breasted Merganser	*Mergus serrator*	C			C	W	BA,BY
Ruddy Duck	*Oxyura jamaicensis*				R	W	BY,SM
Wild Turkey	*Meleagris gallopavo*	R	R	R	R	P	MF,OH,PS
Northern Bobwhite*	*Colinus virginianus*	FC	FC	R	R	P	PS
Common Loon	*Gavia immer*	FC	R	U	C	W	BA,BY

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
Pied-billed Grebe	*Podilymbus podiceps*	FC		FC	FC	W	BY,FM
Horned Grebe	*Podiceps auritus*	C			C	W	BA,BY
Eared Grebe	*Podiceps nigricollis*	U			FC	W	BA,BY
Northern Gannet	*Morus bassanus*	FC		FC	C	W	MS,BA
American White Pelican	*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*	C	R	C	C	W	BA,BY,SI
Brown Pelican	*Pelecanus occidentalis*	C	C	C	C	P	BA,BY,SI
Double-crested Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax auritus*	C	R	C	C	W	BA,BY
Anhinga	*Anhinga anhinga*	U	U	U	R	P	FM
Magnificent Frigatebird	*Fregata magnificens*	U	U	U		T	MS,BA
American Bittern	*Botaurus lentiginosus*	U		U	U	W	FM,SM
Least Bittern*	*Ixobrychus exilis*	FC	FC			S	SM
Great Blue Heron*	*Ardea herodias*	C	C	C	C	P	FM,SM,BY,MF
Great Egret	*Ardea alba*	C	C	C	C	P	FM,SM,BY,MF
Snowy Egret	*Egretta thula*	C	C	C	C	P	SM,BY
Little Blue Heron	*Egretta caerulea*	FC	FC	FC	U	P	SM,BY
Tricolored Heron	*Egretta tricolor*	C	C	C	C	P	SM,BY
Reddish Egret	*Egretta rufescens*	FC	U	FC	FC	P	SM,BA, MD
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	FC	FC			S	SM
Green Heron*	*Butorides virescens*	FC	FC			S	FM,SM
Black-crowned Night-Heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax*	U	FC	FC	U	P	SM, MF
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	*Nyctanassa violacea*		C	C		S	SM, MF
White Ibis	*Eudocimus albus*	FC	C	FC	U	P	SM
Roseate Spoonbill	*Platalea ajaja*		R	R		T	SM
Wood Stork	*Mycteria americana*		R	R		T	SM
Black Vulture	*Coragyps atratus*	U	U	U	U	P	FO
Turkey Vulture	*Cathartes aura*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	FO
Osprey*	*Pandion haliaetus*	C	C	C	C	P	BA,BY,SM,FM,PS
Swallow-tailed Kite	*Elanoides forficatus*	R	R			T	FO

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
Mississippi Kite	*Ictinia mississippiensis*	R		R		T	FO
Bald Eagle*	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	FC		FC	FC	W	BA,BY,MF
Northern Harrier	*Circus cyaneus*	FC		FC	C	W	SM
Sharp-shinned Hawk	*Accipiter striatus*	R		R	R	W	PS,OH,MF
Cooper's Hawk	*Accipiter cooperii*	U		U	U	W	PS,OH,MF
Red-shouldered Hawk	*Buteo lineatus*	FC	U	FC	FC	P	PS,OH,MF
Broad-winged Hawk	*Buteo platypterus*	U		U		T	FO
Red-tailed Hawk*	*Buteo jamaicensis*	FC	U	FC	FC	P	PS,OH,MF,SM
Golden Eagle	*Aquila chrysaetos*			R		T	FO
American Kestrel	*Falco sparverius*	U		U	FC	W	PS,SM
Merlin	*Falco columbarius*	R		R	R	W	BA, SI
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*	U		U	FC	W	BA,SI,SP
Yellow Rail	*Coturnicops noveboracensis*	R		R	R	W	PS,FM,SM
Black Rail	*Laterallus jamaicensis*	R		R	R	W	SM
Clapper Rail*	*Rallus longirostris*	C	C	C	C	P	SM
King Rail	*Rallus elegans*				R	W	FM
Virginia Rail	*Rallus limicola*	R		R	R	W	SM,FM
Sora	*Porzana carolina*	FC		FC	R	W	SM,FM
American Coot	*Fulica americana*	U		U	U	W	BA,BY
Sandhill Crane	*Grus canadensis*			R		T	PS
Black-bellied Plover	*Pluvialis squatarola*	C	R	C	C	W	SB,SP,SI,MD
American Golden-Plover	*Pluvialis dominica*	U				T	SP
Wilson's Plover*	*Charadrius wilsonia*	FC	FC			S	SB,SP,SI
Semipalmated Plover	*Charadrius semipalmatus*	C	R	C	C	W	SB,SP,SI,MD
Piping Plover	*Charadrius melodus*				R	W	SB,MD
Killdeer*	*Charadrius vociferus*	FC	R	FC	FC	P	FM,SM,MD
American Oystercatcher*	*Haematopus palliatus*	FC	U	FC	FC	P	SB,SI,MD
Black-necked Stilt	*Himantopus mexicanus*		U	FC	R	S	SI

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
American Avocet	*Recurvirostra americana*	R		U	R	T	SI
Spotted Sandpiper	*Actitis macularius*	U		U	R	T	SI
Solitary Sandpiper	*Tringa solitaria*	U		U		T	FM
Greater Yellowlegs	*Tringa melanoleuca*	C		C	C	W	FM,SM,MD
Willet*	*Tringa semipalmata*	C	C	C	C	P	SM,SP,MD
Lesser Yellowlegs	*Tringa flavipes*	FC		FC	FC	W	FM,SM,MD
Whimbrel	*Numenius phaeopus*	FC	U			T	SP,SI
Long-billed Curlew	*Numenius americanus*	U		U		T	SP,SI
Marbled Godwit	*Limosa fedoa*	U		U	U	W	SI,MD
Ruddy Turnstone	*Arenaria interpres*	FC		FC	FC	W	SI,MD
Red Knot	*Calidris canutus*	R		R	R	T	MD
Sanderling	*Calidris alba*	FC		FC	FC	W	SB,MD
Semipalmated Sandpiper	*Calidris pusilla*	C		C		T	MD,SP
Western Sandpiper	*Calidris mauri*	C		C	C	W	MD,SP
Least Sandpiper	*Calidris minutilla*	C		C	C	W	MD,SP,SM
White-rumped Sandpiper	*Calidris fuscicollis*	R				T	MD
Baird's Sandpiper	*Calidris bairdii*			R		T	SP
Pectoral Sandpiper	*Calidris melanotos*	FC		FC		T	SP,MD
Dunlin	*Calidris alpina*	C	R	C	C	W	MD,SI,SP
Stilt Sandpiper	*Calidris himantopus*			R		T	MD,SI
Short-billed Dowitcher	*Limnodromus griseus*	C		C	C	W	MD,SM
Long-billed Dowitcher	*Limnodromus scolopaceus*	FC		FC	FC	W	MD,FM,SM
Wilson's Snipe	*Gallinago delicata*	FC		FC	FC	W	SM,FM,PS
American Woodcock	*Scolopax minor*	R			R	W	FM,PS
Bonaparte's Gull	*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*				FC	W	BA,MS,MD
Laughing Gull	*Leucophaeus atricilla*	C	FC	C	C	P	SI,BA,BY,MD
Ring-billed Gull	*Larus delawarensis*	C	U	FC	C	W	BA,BY,SI,MD
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	FC		U	FC	W	BA,MS,SI,MD

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
Glaucous Gull	*Larus hyperboreus*				R	W	MD, SI
Least Tern*	*Sternula antillarum*	C	C	FC		S	BA,BY,SB
Gull-billed Tern*	*Gelochelidon nilotica*	FC	FC			S	SB,SP,SM
Caspian Tern	*Hydroprogne caspia*	FC	U	FC	U	P	BA,SI,SB
Black Tern	*Chlidonias niger*		FC	FC		T	BA,SB
Common Tern*	*Sterna hirundo*	U	U			S	BA,SB
Forster's Tern	*Sterna forsteri*	C	FC	C	C	P	BA,BY,SB,SI,MD
Royal Tern	*Thalasseus maximus*	C	FC	C	C	P	BA,BY,SI,MD
Sandwich Tern	*Thalasseus sandvicensis*	FC	FC	FC		S	BA,SB
Black Skimmer*	*Rynchops niger*	C	C	C	U	P	BA,SB
Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	R			R	T	FO
Eurasian Collared-Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	R		R	R	T	FO
White-winged Dove	*Zenaida asiatica*			R		T	MF
Mourning Dove*	*Zenaida macroura*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	PS,OH,MF
Common Ground-Dove	*Columbina passerina*				R	T	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	FC		FC		T	OH,MF
Black-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*	R				T	OH, MF
Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*	R	R	R	R	P	PS,SM,FM
Eastern Screech-Owl	*Megascops asio*	R	R	R	R	P	OH,MF
Great Horned Owl*	*Bubo virginianus*	R	R	R	R	P	OH,MF,PS
Barred Owl	*Strix varia*	R	R	R	R	P	OH,MF
Short-eared Owl	*Asio flammeus*				R	W	SM
Common Nighthawk*	*Chordeiles minor*	C	C			S	PS
Chuck-will's-widow	*Caprimulgus carolinensis*	R		R		T	PS,OH
Chimney Swift	*Chaetura pelagica*	C	C	C		S	FO
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	*Archilochus colubris*	FC	FC	FC		S	OH,MF,PS
Belted Kingfisher	*Megaceryle alcyon*	FC		FC	FC	W	BY,FM
Red-headed Woodpecker*	*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*	FC	FC	R	R	P	PS

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
Red-bellied Woodpecker*	*Melanerpes carolinus*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	PS,OH,MF
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	*Sphyrapicus varius*	FC		FC	FC	W	OH,MF
Downy Woodpecker	*Picoides pubescens*	U		U	U	W	OH,MF
Hairy Woodpecker	*Picoides villosus*	R		R	R	W	OH,MF
Northern Flicker	*Colaptes auratus*	FC		FC	FC	W	OH,MF,PS
Pileated Woodpecker	*Dryocopus pileatus*	FC		FC	FC	W	OH,MF
Olive-sided Flycatcher	*Contopus cooperi*			R		T	PS
Western Wood-Pewee	*Contopus sordidulus*			R		T	MF
Eastern Wood-Pewee	*Contopus virens*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Acadian Flycatcher	*Empidonax virescens*			U		T	OH,MF
Least Flycatcher	*Empidonax minimus*			U		T	OH,MF
Eastern Phoebe	*Sayornis phoebe*	FC		FC	FC	W	OH,MF,PS
Great Crested Flycatcher*	*Myiarchus crinitus*	FC	FC	FC		S	OH,MF
Eastern Kingbird*	*Tyrannus tyrannus*	FC	FC	FC		S	OH,MF,PS
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	*Tyrannus forficatus*			R		T	MF
Loggerhead Shrike*	*Lanius ludovicianus*	U	U	U	U	P	PS
White-eyed Vireo*	*Vireo griseus*	FC	U	FC	U	P	OH,MF,PS
Yellow-throated Vireo	*Vireo flavifrons*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Blue-headed Vireo	*Vireo solitarius*	FC		U	U	W	OH,MF,PS
Warbling Vireo	*Vireo gilvus*	R		R		T	OH, MF
Philadelphia Vireo	*Vireo philadelphicus*	R		R		T	OH,MF
Red-eyed Vireo	*Vireo olivaceus*	FC		FC		T	OH,MF, PS
Blue Jay*	*Cyanocitta cristata*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	OH,MF,PS
American Crow	*Corvus brachyrhynchos*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	FO
Fish Crow	*Corvus ossifragus*	FC	FC	FC	U	P	FO
Horned Lark	*Eremophila alpestris*				R	W	
Purple Martin	*Progne subis*	C	C			S	FO
Tree Swallow	*Tachycineta bicolor*	C		C	C	W	FM,SM

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
Northern Rough-winged Swallow*	*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*	FC	U	FC		S	FO
Bank Swallow	*Riparia riparia*	U		U		T	FO
Cliff Swallow*	*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*	U		U		T	FO
Cave Swallow	*Petrochelidon fulva*			R		T	FO
Barn Swallow*	*Hirundo rustica*	C	C	C		S	FO
Carolina Chickadee	*Poecile carolinensis*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	OH,MF,PS
Tufted Titmouse	*Baeolophus bicolor*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	OH,MF,PS
Brown-headed Nuthatch*	*Sitta pusilla*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	PS
Brown Creeper	*Certhia americana*			U	U	W	OH,MF
Carolina Wren*	*Thryothorus ludovicianus*	C	C	C	C	P	OH,MF,PS
House Wren	*Troglodytes aedon*	FC		FC	FC	W	OH,MF,PS
Winter Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*				R	W	PS
Sedge Wren	*Cistothorus platensis*	FC		FC	C	W	PS,FM,SM
Marsh Wren	*Cistothorus palustris*	FC		FC	C	W	SM
Golden-crowned Kinglet	*Regulus satrapa*	FC			FC	W	OH,MF,PS
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	*Regulus calendula*	C			C	W	OH,MF,PS
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*	*Polioptila caerulea*	FC	U	FC	U	P	OH,MF
Eastern Bluebird*	*Sialia sialis*	C	C	C	C	P	PS
Veery	*Catharus fuscescens*	R				T	OH,MF
Gray-cheeked Thrush	*Catharus minimus*	R				T	OH,MF
Swainson's Thrush	*Catharus ustulatus*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Hermit Thrush	*Catharus guttatus*	U		U	C	W	OH,MF,PS
Wood Thrush	*Hylocichla mustelina*	FC		FC		T	OH,MF
American Robin	*Turdus migratorius*				C	W	OH,MF,PS
Gray Catbird	*Dumetella carolinensis*	U		U	FC	W	OH,MF,PS
Northern Mockingbird*	*Mimus polyglottos*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	OH,MF,PS
Brown Thrasher*	*Toxostoma rufum*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	OH,MF,PS
European Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	R		R	R	T	FO

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
American Pipit	*Anthus rubescens*			U	R	W	FO
Cedar Waxwing	*Bombycilla cedrorum*	FC			C	W	OH,MF,PS
Blue-winged Warbler	*Vermivora pinus*	U				T	OH,MF
Tennessee Warbler	*Vermivora peregrina*	U		FC		T	OH,MF
Orange-crowned Warbler	*Vermivora celata*				FC	W	OH,MF,PS
Nashville Warbler	*Vermivora ruficapilla*			R		T	OH,MF
Northern Parula*	*Parula americana*	FC	FC	FC		T	OH,MF
Yellow Warbler	*Dendroica petechia*	U		FC		T	OH,MF
Chestnut-sided Warbler	*Dendroica pensylvanica*			U		T	OH,MF
Magnolia Warbler	*Dendroica magnolia*	U		FC		T	OH,MF
Cape May Warbler	*Dendroica tigrina*			R		T	OH,MF
Black-throated Blue Warbler	*Dendroica caerulescens*			R		T	OH,MF
Yellow-rumped Warbler	*Dendroica coronata*	FC		FC	C	W	OH,MF,PS
Black-throated Green Warbler	*Dendroica virens*	U		FC		T	OH,MF
Blackburnian Warbler	*Dendroica fusca*	U		FC		T	OH,MF
Yellow-throated Warbler	*Dendroica dominica*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Pine Warbler*	*Dendroica pinus*	C	C	C	C	P	PS,MF
Prairie Warbler	*Dendroica discolor*	U		FC		T	PS,MF
Palm Warbler	*Dendroica palmarum*	FC		FC	C	W	PS,MF
Bay-breasted Warbler	*Dendroica castanea*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Cerulean Warbler	*Dendroica cerulea*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Black-and-white Warbler	*Mniotilta varia*	FC		FC		T	OH,MF
American Redstart	*Setophaga ruticilla*	FC		FC		T	OH,MF
Prothonotary Warbler*	*Protonotaria citrea*	FC	FC	FC		T	OH,MF,FM
Worm-eating Warbler	*Helmitheros vermivorum*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Swainson's Warbler	*Limnothlypis swainsonii*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Ovenbird	*Seiurus aurocapilla*	U				T	OH,MF
Northern Waterthrush	*Seiurus noveboracensis*	U		U		T	OH,MF

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
Louisiana Waterthrush	*Seiurus motacilla*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Kentucky Warbler	*Oporornis formosus*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Mourning Warbler	*Oporornis philadlphia*			R		T	OH,MF
Common Yellowthroat*	*Geothlypis trichas*	FC	FC	FC	U	P	MF,FM,SM,PS
Hooded Warbler	*Wilsonia citrina*	FC		FC		T	OH,MF
Wilson's Warbler	*Wilsonia pusilla*			U		T	OH,MF
Canada Warbler	*Wilsonia canadensis*			U		T	OH,MF
Yellow-breasted Chat*	*Icteria virens*	FC	FC	FC		S	PS,MF
Summer Tanager	*Piranga rubra*	FC	U	FC		S	OH,MF
Scarlet Tanager	*Piranga olivacea*	U		U		T	OH,MF
Eastern Towhee*	*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*	FC	U	FC	FC	P	OH,MF,PS
Bachman's Sparrow	*Aimophila aestivalis*	R	R	R	R	P	PS
Chipping Sparrow	*Spizella passerina*				U	W	PS
Field Sparrow	*Spizella pusilla*			U		T	PS
Vesper Sparrow	*Pooecetes gramineus*				R	W	PS
Savannah Sparrow	*Passerculus sandwichensis*	FC			FC	W	PS,SB,SM,SP
Grasshopper Sparrow	*Ammodramus savannarum*				R	W	PS
Henslow's Sparrow	*Ammodramus henslowii*	FC			FC	W	PS
Le Conte's Sparrow	*Ammodramus leconteii*				U	W	PS
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow	*Ammodramus nelsoni*	FC		FC	FC	W	SM
Seaside Sparrow*	*Ammodramus maritimus*	C	C	C	C	P	SM
Fox Sparrow	*Passerella iliaca*				R	W	PS
Song Sparrow	*Melospiza melodia*	FC		FC	C	W	PS,MF
Lincoln's Sparrow	*Melospiza lincolnii*	R		R	R	W	PS
Swamp Sparrow	*Melospiza georgiana*	C		C	C	W	PS,FM,SM
White-throated Sparrow	*Zonotrichia albicollis*	C		C	C	W	PS,OH,MF
White-crowned Sparrow	*Zonotrichia leucophrys*				R	W	PS
Dark-eyed Junco	*Junco hyemalis*				R	W	PS

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Status	Type
Northern Cardinal*	*Cardinalis cardinalis*	FC	FC	FC	FC	P	OH,MF,PS
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	*Pheucticus ludovicianus*	U				T	OH,MF
Blue Grosbeak*	*Passerina caerulea*	FC	FC	FC		S	PS,MF
Indigo Bunting*	*Passerina cyanea*	FC	FC	FC		S	OH,MF,PS
Painted Bunting	*Passerina ciris*	U				T	OH,MF
Dickcissel	*Spiza americana*			U		T	MF
Red-winged Blackbird*	*Agelaius phoeniceus*	C	C	C	C	P	FM,SM
Eastern Meadowlark*	*Sturnella magna*	FC	FC	FC	FC	W	PS,SM
Brewer's Blackbird	*Euphagus cyanocephalus*				U	W	FO
Common Grackle	*Quiscalus quiscula*	FC	FC		U	S	MF
Boat-tailed Grackle	*Quiscalus major*	U	U	U	U	P	SM,FM
Brown-headed Cowbird	*Molothrus ater*	U				T	PS,MF
Orchard Oriole*	*Icterus spurius*	FC	FC			S	OH,MF,PS
Baltimore Oriole	*Icterus galbula*	U		U		T	OH,MF
House Finch	*Carpodacus mexicanus*			U		P	PS
American Goldfinch	*Carduelis tristis*	FC		FC	FC	W	PS

BE A CITIZEN SCIENTIST

Birders in boat – Photo courtesy of Joe Ravita ©

A publicly accessible database of all birds reported from the Grand Bay NERR/NWR is maintained on the website, www.ebird.org. Please consider reporting sightings of all birds, no matter how common or rare, through this site. Additionally, please stop by the Coastal Resources Center, and record any interesting sightings on our Observations Board. Thank you!

"One of the finest existing representatives of wet pine savanna can be found within the Grand Bay NERR and NWR along coastal Mississippi. Proper stewardship has played a vital role in maintaining the ecological integrity of this system that in turn supports a large suite of floral and faunal species that are bound to it. A striking example of this is the abundance of wintering Henslow's Sparrows that occur here annually. To my knowledge, no other place in the entire region supports so many individuals of this declining species. It is certainly one of the last remaining preserves along the coast that one could visit and feel as though they have stepped back in time... a naturalist's delight!"

Eric Soehren, Alabama DCNR-State Lands Division

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