

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail



“Birding the Alabama Gulf Coast can be a fantastic experience! This is particularly true during spring migration if a front moves in from the north forcing the migrants down at first landfall onto Dauphin Island or Fort Morgan. Fall migration is equally great and extends over a little longer period allowing birders more time to savor their findings. There are some differences in species that come through during spring and fall.”

*John Porter, Ph.D. and
Executive Director—
Friends of Dauphin Island
Audubon Sanctuary*

Alabama Ornithological Society



Reddish Egret

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The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail
The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, arranged as a series of loops, describes the birding spots most frequented by Alabama birders. Each loop could easily take a half day or more. Detailed directions are provided in a sequential fashion, but it is not necessary to follow the complete loop. Suggestions are given for some of the birds that may be expected at each site. More current information can be obtained by calling the Rare Bird Alerts for Alabama, 205/987 2730 provided by the Alabama Ornithological Society (AOS), and for Northwest Florida/South Alabama, 850/934 6974 provided by Francis M. Weston Audubon Society, Pensacola. On the Internet check the AOS website <http://www.bham.net/aos/> for current information. For further details on this area or other areas in Alabama see *A Birder's Guide to Alabama*, The University of Alabama Press (2000).

Alabama's Gulf Coast is a paradise not only for birders, but for visitors with a variety of interests. We have beautiful gulf beaches, historic homes and fortresses, championship golf courses, world-class fishing and much, much, more.

Hunting also occurs in our area. Hunting season usually runs from October through February, though nonconsumptive use is permitted year round. For more information on hunting or fishing contact the Alabama Game and Fish Division at 334/626 5474.

Reddish Egret



A. Morris ©

We remind all birders to exercise great care in enjoying the birds of our coast; care for the birds and their habitat, care for the property owners who host our avian visitors, and care for other birders. Thank you!

We hope you'll take a look at all this great region has to offer. Please visit one of the welcome centers located on the maps within this trail guide, or contact one of the organizations below and let us help you make plans to come back again and again.

Alabama Gulf Coast
Convention & Visitors Bureau
P.O. Drawer 457
Gulf Shores, AL 36547
800/745 SAND or 334/968 7511
www.gulfshores.com

Mobile Convention &
Visitors Corporation
P.O. Box 204
Mobile, AL 36601-0204
800/5 MOBILE or 334/208 2030
www.mobile.org

These symbols are used for site descriptions in the text and on the accompanying maps.

- ▲ Open for day use
- Open for day use—admission charged
- Open daily—developed camping is available
- ◆ Prior arrangements are required
- ❓ Information
- [x.x] Mileage shown within the brackets is the distance between two points

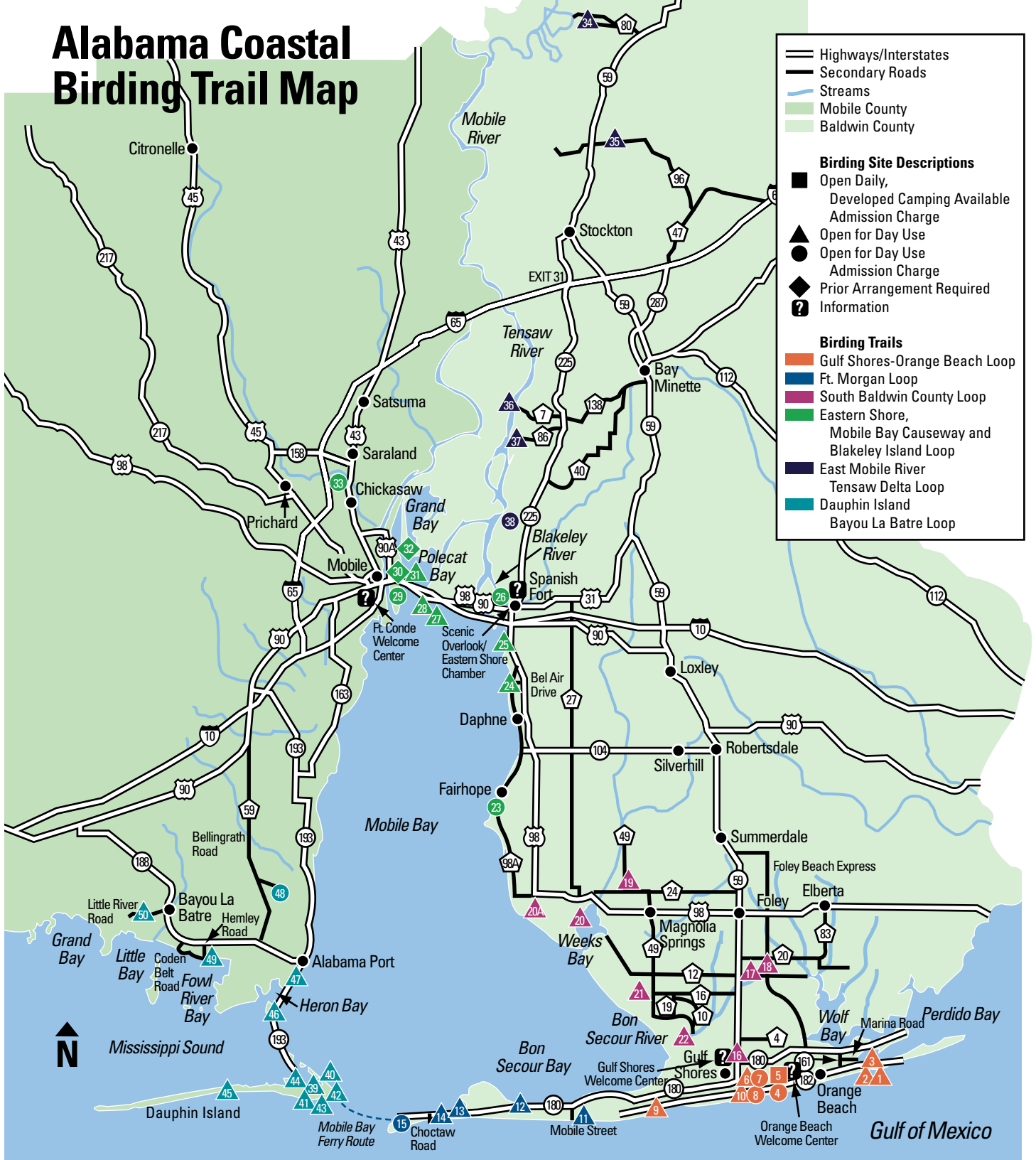


Look for the Reddish Egret logos on the ACBT road signs.



Alabama Coastal Birding Trail logo

Alabama Coastal Birding Trail Map



	Highways/Interstates
	Secondary Roads
	Streams
	Mobile County
	Baldwin County
Birding Site Descriptions	
	Open Daily, Developed Camping Available Admission Charge
	Open for Day Use
	Open for Day Use Admission Charge
	Prior Arrangement Required
	Information
Birding Trails	
	Gulf Shores-Orange Beach Loop
	Ft. Morgan Loop
	South Baldwin County Loop
	Eastern Shore, Mobile Bay Causeway and Blakeley Island Loop
	East Mobile River Tensaw Delta Loop
	Dauphin Island Bayou La Batre Loop



Gulf of Mexico



Tri-colored Heron

Gulf Shores – Orange Beach Loop

Alabama Gulf Coast
Convention and Visitors Bureau
P.O. Drawer 457
Gulf Shores, AL 36547
334/968 7511 or 800/745 SAND

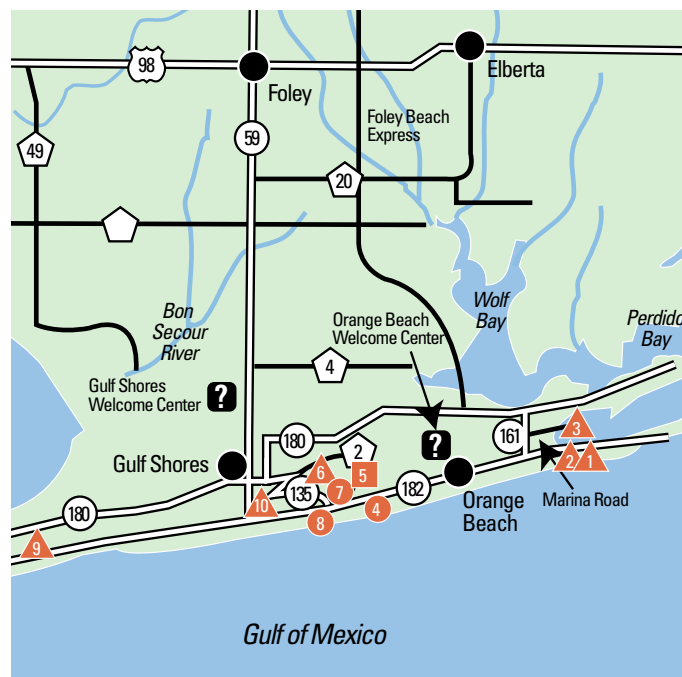
Gulf State Park
20115 Highway 135
Gulf Shores, AL 36542
334/948 7275

Gulf Shores – Orange Beach is a well known resort area with many fine restaurants and accommodations as well as a variety of attractions and recreational opportunities. The Gulf Shores – Orange Beach Loop of the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail begins at the bridge over Perdido Pass, east of AL 59 on AL 182 [8.8].

ACBT 1. ▲

Perdido Pass/Alabama Point – East (Formerly Florida Point when the state border was located at Perdido Pass.) This site is part of Gulf State Park (334/948 7275) and consists of beach and sea oat habitat where there are opportunities for bird observation, fishing, and viewing both Perdido Pass and the Gulf of Mexico. There are no posted hours for this park but overnight camping is not permitted. There are portable restroom facilities at the site.

Snowy Plover, a species on the Watch List, nests in the area, most often found in depressions in the sand away from the water and near the first line of dunes. Alabama Point also provides critical habitat for the federally endangered Perdido Key beach mouse. A wide variety of shorebirds are common in summer, as are wading birds. In winter, numbers of Common Loons feed in the pass during changing tides. An occasional vagrant Pacific or Red-throated Loon may show up in their midst. A spotting scope is usually



Gulf Shores – Orange Beach Loop

needed for the distant waterfowl. After viewing the pass take the loop under the bridge and return to AL 182.

ACBT 2. ▲

Perdido Pass/Alabama Point – West Cross over the bridge traveling west and turn left (south) [0.6] into the parking lot for this portion of the Alabama Point facility. There is a sea wall along this side of the pass with benches. Portable restroom facilities are available. As with the east side no overnight camping is allowed but there are likely to be some fisherman here at any hour of the day or night. This location provides another perspective on the same areas viewed from the east side. Rock jetties extend a considerable distance out into the gulf on this side and can be accessed by walking west along the beach. This is a somewhat perilous venture since the rocks tend to be wet and slippery. The trip out does provide for a better chance to observe the winter seabirds that may be in the area, scoters, phalarope and loons.



Great Egret

ACBT 3. ▲*Boggy Point*

Continue west on AL 182 to AL 161 [2.0], turn right (north) and continue to Marina Road on the right [0.8], turn right (east) and proceed to the end of the peninsula that ends [1.5] at the Boggy Point Boat Launch, an Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources facility. There is a small beach here and an excellent view of Robinson Island to the east, a roosting site for herons and egrets. This location gives an alternate view of Perdido Pass. Return from Boggy Point to AL 161, turn left (south) and retrace your route back to AL 182.

ACBT 4. ●*Gulf State Park Pavilion*

Turn right (west) on AL 182 to the Gulf State Park Pavilion and Beach [3.6] on the left (south). There is a nominal parking fee. This is a large, covered picnic pavilion with tables and benches, restrooms and water fountains. The pavilion closes at sunset. This is another great place to look for seabirds, particularly in winter. Northern Gannet is common off shore during migration. Any flock of loons should be carefully sorted for Red-throated and Pacific. Walk the beaches for plovers and peeps.

ACBT 5. ■*Nature Center –**Gulf State Park Campground*

Continue west on AL 182 to State Park Road (Baldwin County Road 2 “BC 2”), [0.6] and turn right (north), cross the bridge over the boat canal and park on the left (west) side of the road in the grassy area. You may walk Middle Lake Trail along the edge of the canal to Lake Shelby. Groove-bill Ani is a possible winter find in here and look for winter sparrows too.



Red-breasted Merganser



Sandhill Crane

Return to State Park Road turning left (north) and continue a short distance to Campground Road on the right (east). In a short distance you will come to the registration building where non-camping visitors register and pay a small fee. Proceed along the main route, Raccoon Road, to the third turn on the right which is marked for the Nature Center and Camp Pavilion.

The pavilion has restrooms, public phones and a camp store, open six days a week, Monday -Thursday, 7 am to 9 pm and Friday – Saturday, 7 am to 10 pm. The Nature Center is across the parking lot and is open and staffed Monday – Saturday, 9 am to 3 pm. Maps showing the six walking trails in the park and bird lists are available and the naturalist on duty can give you the latest information on birds in the park. In winter check Middle Lake from the pavilion for ducks. Also in winter check the Alligator Marsh Trail for Sandhill Crane.

ACBT 6. ▲*Marsh Bridge*

Return to State Park Road (BC 2), turn right (north) and continue to the intersection with AL 135 [2.5] and bear to the left (south) at the intersection. The park headquarters will be up hill on your right. Continue south on AL 135 one mile to Marsh Bridge, the stream is the effluent from Shelby Lakes and Little Lagoon. Cross the bridge and there is parking on the left. Check for bitterns, rails and winter sparrows.

ACBT 7. ●*Shelby Lake Picnic Grounds*

Continue on AL 135 to the entrance to the picnic grounds [0.9] where there is a nominal admission charge. There are bathhouses, restrooms and a store. The area closes and the gate is locked at sunset. Check the main



Canvasback Duck

lake for waterfowl in winter, an occasional rarity has appeared in the past. Be sure to check the small lagoon southeast of the easternmost parking lot. Jon boats are available for rent at the store but you have to furnish your own motor.

ACBT 8. ●

Gulf State Park Fishing Pier

Exit the picnic area to the left (south) and enter the right lane of AL 135. Go to AL 182 and turn right at the traffic light. Move into the left lane and turn left to the fishing pier in a short distance [0.3]. Park in the parking lot, trying to avoid the places reserved for fisher folk. There is a small admission for sightseeing, including birding. The end of the pier is an excellent viewing point for seabirds especially in winter. Recent Christmas Bird Counts have yielded Red Phalarope and all three scoters at this site.

ACBT 9. ▲

Little Lagoon Pass

Leaving the fishing pier, turn left (west) on AL 182 and drive through the main beach front intersection at AL 59 and continue to the bridge over Little Lagoon Pass [4.2]. There is a parking lot on the right (north) with restrooms. Little Lagoon is now essentially surrounded by development but good birds can be seen from this little park provided by the City of Gulf Shores. From here you may scan a sandbar (north) and part of Little Lagoon. A fair number of gulls, terns, Brown Pelican and occasionally American White Pelican, and shorebirds are generally found here. Your chances for rarities increase during migration; Reddish Egret occurs here regularly.



USFWS

Heron babies

ACBT 10. ▲
Wade Ward Nature Park
 Return east on AL 182 to AL 59, turn left (north) and continue two blocks. On the right (east) is the Wade Ward Nature Park, owned and

operated by the City of Gulf Shores. The park offers scenic boardwalks overlooking canals and coastal salt marshes. A unique rarity in the midst of such a vibrant resort city, it is a relatively new birding site. It offers ideal habitat for bitterns and rails. Public parking is available just south one block east of AL 59 between East Second and East First Avenue.

This is the end of the Gulf Shores – Orange Beach Loop. You may continue northward on AL 59 to the intersection with AL 180 and the beginning of the Fort Morgan Loop or to the north side of the Intracoastal Waterway and the beginning of the South Baldwin County Loop.

Bird Notes

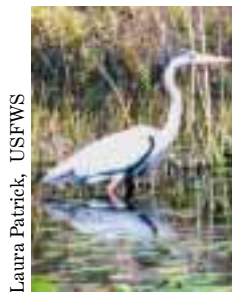
Fort Morgan Loop

Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge
12295 Highway 180
Gulf Shores, AL 36542
334/540 7720

Fort Morgan Historical Park
51 Highway 180 West
Gulf Shores, AL 36542
334/540 7125

The Fort Morgan Loop begins at the intersection of AL 59 and AL 180 in Gulf Shores. Much of the Fort Morgan Peninsula is in the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, and the extreme western end is in the Fort Morgan Historical Park. Other parts of the peninsula are under intense development and much of the access is on private property. Although there are no motels on the peninsula there are rental condominiums, beach houses and bed and breakfast accommodations available. There are only a few service stations and restaurants.

Fort Morgan Loop



Laura Patrick, USFWS

Great Blue Heron

ACBT 11. ▲

Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge
Travel westward from the intersection of AL 59 and AL 180. Pass the Jeff Friend Trail sign on the left (south) and then the refuge office sign, also on the left. You may want to stop at the office for refuge information. Continue on AL 180 until you see the Pine Beach Trail sign on the left (south) [8.8]. Enter the parking lot. An interpretive kiosk here usually has trail maps and bird cards. There is a two-mile trail southeastward to the beach by way of Little Lagoon and Alligator Lake. Birding may not be challenging here but it is an enjoyable walk through pine-oak scrub and marshes and dune scrub.

Just west of the parking lot is Mobile Street an unpaved road leading to a public parking lot near the gulf beach. There are in-holdings in this area so birders should be particularly careful to respect the private property here. The road out to the beach is through marsh and palmetto habitat with the occasional opportunity to observe alligators. Caution is urged in these places, some of which are fenced to provide a healthy reminder not to get too close. There is also good habitat for winter sparrows and some waders along the road. The beach provides a vantage point for Northern Gannett, loons and other seabirds and shorebirds. Return to AL 180.

ACBT 12. ▲

The Pines

Continue westward on AL 180 to the wide open beach and boat ramp at the site known as the Pines [4.0]. This provides the best open view of Bon Secour Bay to the north. If it is a good winter for ducks (cold enough northward to force them south) there can be huge rafts of grebes, ducks and mergansers. Old Squaw and scoters have been observed from this point.



Peregrine Falcon

ACBT 13. ▲*St. Andrews Bay*

Continuing west on AL 180 the pine woods on the right (north) gives way to marsh and open water. There will be a sand track [4.2] leading off to a boat launch with access to view St. Andrews Bay and Mobile Bay beyond. This is a good area for rails and waterbirds. It is also a good area to watch for raptors during fall migration.

ACBT 14. ▲*Pilot Town*

Proceed westward on AL 180 to Pilot Town on the right (north) a development underway between the road and Mobile Bay. Turn right [1.0] on unpaved Choctaw Road and continue north a short distance to Muskogee at the next intersection, turn right over to Cherokee and follow this along the canal to the end of the road. This is all private

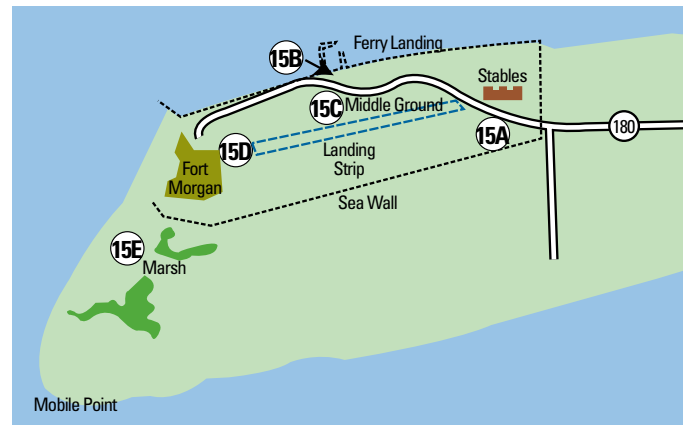
property but there are open spaces to view the bay and inlet. Common Ground Dove is usually here. It is also a good place to watch for swallows as they gather for fall migration.



Tree Swallows

ACBT 15. ●*Fort Morgan*

Fort Morgan [2.0] is located at the western extremity of the peninsula and is an important stopover for spring and fall neotropical migrants. This is a classic migrant trap, and a birding paradise when adverse weather forces birds down in a "fallout," especially in spring. Many vagrant species find their way to this favorite birding spot, which can equal Dauphin Island in excitement. In fall, hundreds of migrating hawks can be



Fort Morgan-ACBT Sites 15A-15E

seen moving west. Winter produces many waterbirds and sparrows. Summer is the slowest season, but can be good for terns. There are restrooms at the ferry landing and at the museum plus a snack bar at the ferry landing.

15A. Stables

Just after the entrance kiosk at the eastern sea wall, park and bird the wooded area on the right known as the Stables[0.2]. This is the best spot in the park for passerine migrants, and should be explored thoroughly. The Hummer/Bird Study Group maintains their banding station in the Stables area each April and October and welcomes visitors.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

15B. Ferry Landing

Following the main road to the west, you reach the landing [0.1] for the ferry to Dauphin Island, where an admission fee is paid to enter the park.

15C. Middle Ground

The brush and scrub opposite the landing are known as the Middle Ground, another good migrant spot. Fields and lawns to the west, between the ferry landing and the museum, are excellent for open-country birds.



Eastern Kingbird



Royal Tern

15D. The Fort

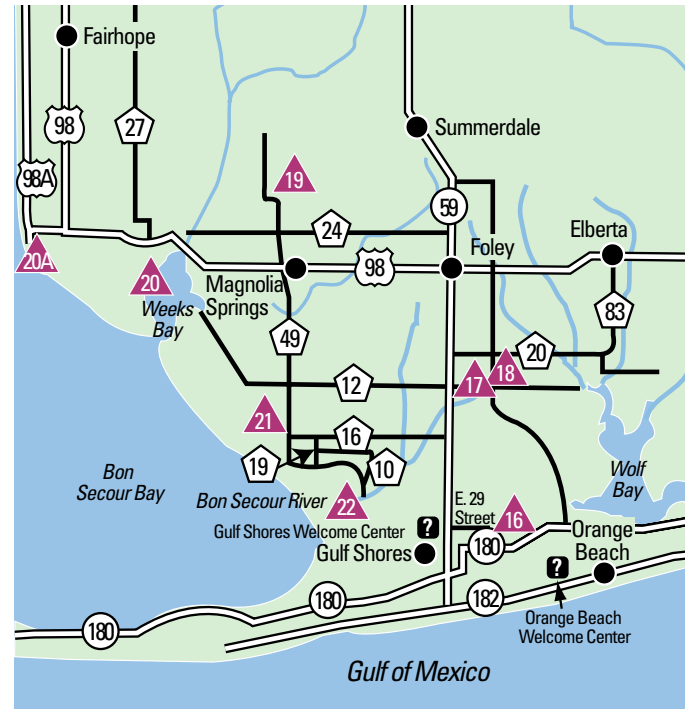
Look around the fort [0.5], especially in oleander bushes, for migrants.

15E. Marsh

The marsh and field area south of the fort can be observed from the sea wall on the south side. *Please take care around the homes here.* Walk to Mobile Point to the south, either along the beach or between the dunes and the marsh. This is a good sea-watching spot, and the point itself is excellent for gulls and terns.

This is the end of the Fort Morgan Loop. At this point you may either return to Gulf Shores, perhaps to rest for the evening, or start the South Baldwin County Loop or you may catch the ferry to begin the Dauphin Island Loop.

Bird Notes



South Baldwin County Loop

South Baldwin County Loop

South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce
104 N. McKenzie Street/Highway 59
P.O. Box 1117
Foley, AL 36536
334/943 3291
www.southbaldwinchamber.com

This loop begins at the intersection of AL 59 and East 29th Avenue, just north of the Intracoastal Waterway in Gulf Shores. It is an inland route with lots of sod farms and other agricultural operations. Prime attractions in this area are Upland and Buff-breasted Sandpipers and winter sparrows. This section is not really a loop but several excursions off AL 59.

ACBT 16. ▲

Mariculture Center

Turn right (east) on East 29th Avenue, go two blocks, turn right (south) onto East 2nd Street, drive two blocks and turn left on Mildred Casey Drive and continue past the industrial park to the Claude Peteet Mariculture Center, a facility operated by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, on the left [1.4]. Ask in the office Monday–Friday, 8 am to 5 pm for permission to bird around the ponds and in the fields. You may find assorted herons, egrets and shorebirds on the ponds, but the best birding here is in the fields for winter sparrows.

ACBT 17. ▲

Sod Farms

Return to AL 59 and turn right (north) and continue northward to BC 12 [4.8]. Turn right (east) and continue eastward. After about a mile you will see fields of grass, sod farms, beginning on the right. Check these carefully during spring and fall migration for Upland and Buff-breasted Sandpipers and for Snow Geese in winter. There are many sod farms in this part of Baldwin County providing opportunities for good birding. *However, do not drive on any of the lanes or dirt trails nor interfere with the operations of the farms.* Observe from the road. A spotting scope gives a definite advantage here. Continue on BC 12, passing the Glenlakes Country Club and subdivision on the left (north) and noting the small lake to the right (south). Check the fields between the lake and the road for winter sparrows if the grass has not been cut recently. In a short distance you will pass Wolf Bay Drive on the right (south) continue past this a few hundred yards to a swampy pond on the left (north) where Lincoln’s Sparrow has been seen in recent winters.



Snow Goose

Glen Smart

ACBT 18. ▲

Glenlakes Country Club

Return along BC 12 (west) to Eagle Lane and turn right, making your way through this charming lakeside neighborhood. Look for waterfowl on the lake in winter, and waders along the stream sides. Check all the open spaces, winter birding here is sometimes rewarding. Continue winding your way northward through the development until you reach BC 20, turn left and continue west along BC 20 to AL 59 [2.9], checking the sod farms as you pass.

ACBT 19. ▲

Magnolia Springs

Landfill

Turn right (north) on AL 59 and continue to US 98 in Foley [2.5]. Turn left (west) and travel west on US 98 to BC 49 in Magnolia Springs [5.0]. Turn right (north) on BC 49 and continue northward, crossing BC 24 after two miles and coming to a sharp turn westward in another 0.5 miles, continue another 0.4 miles to the entrance of the landfill on the right.



Larry W. Richardson

Great Black-backed Gull

This is a county landfill and is open Monday–Saturday, 7 am to 3 pm. Proceed to the second gate and enter the landfill. Park in the parking area and stop by the office to ask permission to bird. *While at this site, take great care not to block or otherwise interfere with the heavy machinery. Do not enter the pit area for any reason. View birds from the roadside only.* Gulls often loaf just north of the pit in a flat place on the way to the public dump. And as you leave the landfill, check the small ponds on the west side of the entrance road for ducks and shorebirds.



Little Blue Heron

ACBT 20. ▲

Weeks Bay

National Estuarine Reserve

Return to Magnolia Springs and turn right (west) on US 98, proceeding some four miles to cross the Fish River and find Weeks Bay National Estuarine Reserve on the left. The interpretive center is only a short distance from the highway and provides restrooms, bird cards and other material. Inquire here about recent sightings. Explore the boardwalk leading to an observation platform viewing Weeks Bay. Hours are Monday–Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm, and Sunday, 1 to 5 pm. For guided tours call 334/928 9792.



American Woodcock

ACBT 20A. ▲

Mullet Point County Park

Exit the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Reserve parking lot and turn left (west) on US 98, continue approximately five miles to Bryant's Landing where US 98 turns abruptly north. Bear to the left on BC 1, and proceed approximately 0.4 miles to the Mullet Point County Park on the right. There is ample parking, portable restrooms and picnic facilities. The Park provides an excellent view of the Bay from an elevated perspective. This has been a good site in the winter for ducks and waterfowl. Scoter are not uncommon here in colder weather.

ACBT 21. ▲

Sod Farms and Fields BC 49

Return to Magnolia Springs, turning right (south) on BC 49, winding through the little village, crossing Magnolia River and continuing south on BC 49, checking the sod farms and fields along the way. In winter, check the large flocks of blackbirds for vagrants, Yellow-headed Blackbird and Bronzed Cowbird are possibilities. Check the shorter grass areas for American Pipit. Shortly after passing BC 16 on the left [4.6]

check the low area on the right for geese, Greater White-fronted and Ross's have been seen here. Continue southward on BC 49 to a turn eastward and a bridge across Skunk Bayou. This is a good spot for American Woodcock at winter twilight and Winter Wren. If you are here in the evening hours it's a good place to try your tapes for owls.

ACBT 22.

Bon Secour Bay

Continue eastward on BC 49, crossing BC 19 [1.4] to BC 10 [2.2]. Turn right (southwest) on BC 10 and continue to River Road, a main street of Bon Secour. Turn right (west) a few hundred yards to the waterfront and a seafood wharf. Park in the parking lot and scan the bay and the small canal next to the parking lot. In winter look for Black-crowned Night Heron in addition to the usual gulls and terns. River Road is about a half mile long, on the waterfront. Return along River Road, continuing past BC 10 to the eastern end. Park in an out-of-the-way location and walk to the shore where you can look northeast up the Bon Secour River. In winter look for Horned Grebe and Eared Grebe is a possibility, plus Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers.



*Black-crowned
Night Heron*

This is the end of the South Baldwin County Loop. Return northward along BC 10 following it as it turns right (east) [2.3] to AL 59 [2.5]. Here you may turn right to return to Gulf Shores or turn left (north) to move on to the Eastern Shore, Mobile Bay Causeway and Blakeley Island Loop.

Bird Notes



*Eastern Shore,
Mobile Bay
Causeway and
Blakeley Island Loop*

Eastern Shore, Mobile Bay Causeway and Blakeley Island Loop

Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Drawer 31D
Daphne AL 36526-0310
334/621 8222 or 334/928 6387
www.eschamber.com

This loop covers part of the Eastern Shore, Fairhope to Daphne, and then crosses Mobile Bay on the Causeway (US 90/98) and continues northward up US 90A to Blakeley Island. The final site is on US 43 and offers an opportunity to take a swamp cruise at the Chickasaw Marina. There are many accommodations for food and lodging in the area particularly around the intersection of US 98 and I-10 at exit 35.



James Mattsson

Lesser Scaup

ACBT 23. ●

Fairhope Municipal Pier and Beach
This loop begins at the municipal pier and beach at the west end of Fairhope Avenue just off US 98A in Fairhope. There is no charge for the pier, but there is a charge for entry to the beach. The pier is a good location for winter ducks, and the parking area for Barred Owl.

ACBT 24. ▲

Daphne Bayfront Park
Return to US 98A turning left (north) and continue along Scenic Route 98A northward through Montrose to Daphne turning left (west) on Bay Front Park Drive [8.0] (at the juncture with US 98). Continue to the waterfront [0.4]. This is a public park (City of Daphne) open daylight hours. Scan the bay for ducks, waders and shorebirds (low tide). Return to US 98A and turn left (north) and continue northward on US 98.

ACBT 25. ▲

D'Olive Bay Overlook
This section is heavily developed commercially. Just before the intersection with I-10 [1.5] there is an overlook on the left (west) behind the Shell service station. This spot provides an excellent view of D'Olive Bay below and farther out into Mobile Bay. Check the bay for ducks in winter as well as wading birds year round. The balance of this loop will generally involve birds at a distance and a scope is very helpful, if not necessary.



Laura Patrick

Mallard Duck

ACBT 26. ●

Meaher State Park
Continue north on US 98 across I-10. You can either turn left (northwest) on US 98 and go to the next site, Meaher State Park (skip to next paragraph for directions to Meaher State Park). Or you can continue straight for a very short distance,

take the next left onto Larry Dee Cawyer Drive and stop at the Scenic Overlook which is atop the hill and surrounded by a rock wall. Area information, restrooms and telephones are available at the Scenic Overlook which is also the location of the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce.



Chipping Sparrow

Return to US 98, turn right this time (still northwest) to the junction with US 90 and US 31 (Mobile Bay Causeway). Proceed westward on US 90/98/31 to the entrance of Meaher State Park on the left (south). Picnic facilities and restrooms are available here and the park closes at sunset. Stop at the gate house to pay a nominal entrance fee and then drive to the shell road about three-tenths mile to the boardwalk trail. Park here (there is a chain across the shell road at this point) and walk on toward the boardwalk that extends out into Mobile Bay. As you approach the boardwalk watch for sparrows. Many wading birds can be seen from the boardwalk, including bitterns and rails. This is a great place for terns, including Gull-billed in summer. On the south side of the island, looking west into the bay there are often ibis. American White Pelican finds this a favorite spot in winter, as do large rafts of ducks.

ACBT 27. ▲

Chacaloochee Bay

Continue westward on US 90 to the open area on both sides [2.0] viewing Chacaloochee Bay to the north and Mobile Bay to the south. *Be extremely careful of the traffic when crossing over.* This is an excellent place for ducks in winter and waders all year on both sides of the road. By far the most numerous will be American Coot which winter here by the tens of thousands. Look for Mottled Duck, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup and Ruddy Duck to mention a few. Look



Blue-winged Teal

to the north end of the bay for American White Pelican and White and Glossy Ibis. There will be several more tempting places to stop as you continue westward. Check them out!



Long-billed Curlew

ACBT 28. ▲

Mobile Bay Mudflats

Continue west under the I-10 interchange. The best viewing at this site is during low tide. Drive to an open spot in the shore vegetation on the left (south) [1.5]. Park

and make your way to the mudflats. This is a good place to look for waders and waterfowl in winter. Long-billed Curlew was found here on one recent Christmas Bird Count.

ACBT 29. ●

Battleship Park

Cross over the bridge going westward and turn into the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park on the left (south) [1.6]. Admission is charged per vehicle to enter the park which entitles you to use the restrooms in the gift shop. The open lawns of the park can be excellent for shorebirds particularly after a rain. A Long-billed Curlew has been reliable here for several winters. Bear to the right as you drive into the park and toward the southwest you will see a paved walkway leading to an observation deck (currently under repair) overlooking Pinto Pass. During low tide this area is filled with herons, egrets, and occasionally ibis, especially in late summer. Black-necked Stilt may be around almost any time of the year at low tide. Gull-billed Tern is here in summer and Least Bittern often fly across from one marshy area to the next. During migration the mudflats are filled with shorebirds. Look for dabbling ducks in the shallows and bay ducks farther out in the deeper water to the south.

There may be numbers of Yellow-crowned Night Herons here with many immatures in late summer and Black-crowned year round. Continue around to the parking lot to the east side along the bay, checking for gulls and terns. At the extreme north end, park and survey the lawn from this vantage point for the curlew and any plovers that you might have missed from the other side.

ACBT 30. ◆

North Pinto Disposal Area

Return to US 90/98 and turn left (west) continuing to a closed gate on the left (south) [0.3] leading up to the top of a dike. *Follow the instructions given under ACBT 32 to notify Alabama State Docks before birding this site.* Park out of the traffic on the left and walk up the dike. This is a dredge refuse disposal area, frequently graded and turned to hasten drying of the mud, but there is usually some water in the ponds. When there is water this can be an excellent shorebird spot especially during migration, with sandpipers, yellowlegs and dowitchers being seen regularly. If there is appreciable water in the winter there may be ducks.

ACBT 31. ▲

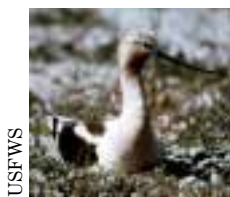
Polecat Bay

Continue northwesterly on US 90/98 to the traffic light at the Bankhead Tunnel [0.7], where the exit from I-10 merges. Pull to the side of the road and park on the shoulder well out of the traffic. Walk toward the water. This spot gives an excellent view northward to Polecat Bay. At low tide there will be an appreciable mud flat here with lots of shorebirds during migration. In the winter months there will be a good sampling of ducks from this point. Osprey have nested on the light pole above the ramp for the past several years.



Osprey

Charlie Hiedecker



USFWS

American Avocet
(winter plumage)

ACBT 32. ◆

Blakeley Island Mud Ponds

Go north on US 90A. The ponds on the dikes at Blakeley Island are the premier shorebirding spots in the state. Spring and fall migration can offer looks at hundreds of shorebirds. It is a reliable place to see a variety of ducks in winter. The shallow ponds along the road as you approach the dikes are often good for shorebirds. The ponds continue under the bridge, and these may be reached by turning left at the approach to the bridge.

Warning! *This is a former industrial waste treatment site and the waters in these ponds can be extremely caustic. The ponds are currently used for the disposal of dredge materials by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Alabama State Docks. Do not leave the road or the tops of the dikes for any reason!*

Entry to the upper ponds is by permit only and requires the annual submission of a liability waiver form to the Alabama State Docks and notification of a visit beforehand. Weekdays call 334/441 7085, weekends 334/441 7777 to notify the docks of your intention to visit. You may download the required forms from the Alabama Ornithological Society (AOS) web site at <http://www.bham.net/aos/>. The forms may also be obtained at the visitor's centers in Gulf Shores and Orange Beach or at Fort Conde in Mobile. The forms may be mailed to the Alabama State Docks (the address is on the forms) or faxed to: 334/441 7255. The AOS web page also has a map indicating which ponds are currently open to visitors.

Insect repellent is in order. Be advised; any of the following trips are potentially long, hard, hot walks, so prepare accordingly.



Blakeley Island
Mud Ponds

32A. South Blakeley Disposal Area ◆
Continue north on US 90A to access point A [1.3]. Park well off the road near the locked gate across from the “Bender Yard 9” sign, and *leave your permit sheet visible on the front dash*. Bear to the right as you walk on the dirt road leading southeast to the diked pond. At the top of the dike scan the large ponds in various stages of management; you must stay on the perimeter dikes. Best areas usually are in the northwest and southwest corners of the pond.



American Avocet
(summer plumage)

Mike Boylan



Yellow-crowned
Night Heron

Larry W. Richardson

32B. Mud Lakes ◆
Continue northward from the traffic light to the locked gate [1.8], access point B, park well out of the way, and walk the dirt road up the dike. Continue east on the dike road, *remembering not to leave the dike for any reason*. The best areas for birding usually are lake numbers 1 and 5 to the south and north of this dike as you first approach from the west.

32C. North Blakeley Disposal Area ◆
Continue northward on US 90A to access point C at the foot of the Cochrane-Africatown USA bridge, where you will note a road to the left (west) with a sign indicating “Alabama State Docks.” Follow this under the bridge, carefully examining any birds that may be in the canals. As road veers left, take the second dirt right which leads east to a locked gate at the base of a dike to the left. Climb the dike to check the area, which under the proper conditions, may produce waterfowl and shorebirds.

ACBT 33. ●
Mobile Tensaw Delta Swamp Tour
Return to US 90A and turn left (north) crossing the Cochrane-Africatown USA bridge and continuing to the intersection with US 43 [2.0]. Turn right (north) and continue through Chickasaw to the Chickasaw Marina on the left (west) [6.0]. Wildland Expeditions provides swamp tours up Chickasabogue Creek exploring parts of the 200,000-acre Mobile Tensaw Delta aboard the “Gator Bait”. The tour takes about two hours and is narrated by Captain Gene Burrell who points out the birds and wildlife along the way. Tours depart at 8 am, 10 am and 2 pm. There is a fee for the tour. Reservations are recommended. For more information call 334/460 8206.



Snowy Egret

David Hall

This is the end of the Eastern Shore, Mobile Bay Causeway and Blakeley Island Loop. To proceed on to the East Mobile River – Tensaw Delta Loop, continue north on US 43 to AL 158. Turn left (west) on AL 158 to I-65. Go North on I-65. As you cross over the Mobile River, you will have a spectacular view of the water and forest land below. Continue to AL 225 at exit 31, where you will go north on AL 225. Or you can return to US 90A and go south to the intersection of US 90 and I-10. Head west on I-10 to do the Dauphin Island – Bayou La Batre Loop. Drive on I-10 to the west side of Mobile to exit 17-A, AL 193 South. Go south on AL 193 to Dauphin Island. Skip over a few pages to the Dauphin Island – Bayou La Batre Loop section of this guide for further directions to the birding sites in this loop.

Bird Notes



East Mobile River – Tensaw Delta Loop

East Mobile River – Tensaw Delta Loop

North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce
 301 McMeans Ave.
 P.O. Box 310
 Bay Minette, AL 36507
 334/937 5665
www.northbaldwinchamber.com

This loop begins at the intersection of I-65 and AL 225 just south of Stockton, AL. In this area northeast of Mobile, the waters of the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers merge into the tangled Mobile Delta. Though best explored by boat, these bottomlands can be accessed at several points along the eastern periphery from AL

225 and AL 59. The main attraction for birders is the abundance of breeding songbirds; other species such as large waders and kites also can be seen. Early May is the best time to do this loop. Start at the northern extreme of this loop, near Fort Mimms where good woodland birding may be found and then work your way southward. Insect repellent is a must!

ACBT 34. ▲

Holly Creek Landing

From exit 31 on I-65 drive north on AL 225 to Stockton where AL 225 joins AL 59 [3.7]. Continue northward on AL 59 to BC 80 [13.0] and turn left (west) on BC 80. To reach Holly Creek Landing veer right on Uniontown Road off BC 80 [1.4]. Uniontown Road becomes Holly Creek Landing Road at the intersection with Holly Creek Road [1.4]. Continue west on Holly Creek Landing Road, past a road to the right (north) to the river camp, onto Holly Creek Landing [1.7]. This is really back country so prepare accordingly. The final portion of this road is best for birding, though it is unpaved and may be flooded if the water level is high. Breeding Acadian Flycatcher and Swainson's Warbler are likely finds here in spring.

ACBT 35. ▲

BC 96 & Bachman's Sparrow

Return to AL 59 and go south to BC 96 [7.4]. Bachman's Sparrow is present in the open pine woods along BC 96 just east of AL 59. After the first mile, check the woods on either side of the road for the next half mile. *Please respect private property in this area. Don't cross the fences!*



Barred Owl



Bachman's Sparrow



Mississippi Kite

ACBT 36. ▲

Cliff's Landing

One of the best spots in Alabama to view Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites, spring and summer, is at Cliff's Landing south of I-65. Return to AL 59. Continue southward back through Stockton, bearing right onto AL 225, cross I-65 [9.0] to Cliff's Landing Road (BC 7) [6.6] on the right (west). Drive west on BC 7 from AL 225 [1.7] and turn into the large parking lot. Look for kites and other raptors across the river to the west, with best light in the morning. Return to AL 225.

ACBT 37. ▲

Mobile Tensaw Delta

Wildlife Management Area

Located along the east bank of the Tensaw River is an 850-acre parcel of the Mobile Tensaw Delta Wildlife

Management Area. Purchased by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway mitigation this area is managed by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. To reach the area continue

southward on AL 225 to BC 86 on the right (west) [1.9]. Turn onto BC 86 and continue to a fork in the road [0.8] and bear left and continue to the wildlife management area at the end of the road [2.9]. A variety of habitats may be found on this area including flooded hardwood bottoms along the river to upland hardwoods and pines. Also located on the wildlife management area is a lake and



White Ibis

USFWS

USFWS

USFWS

Nick Milam

peripheral freshwater marshes. During the nesting season common species include Red-shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula and Prothonotary Warbler. Swallow-tailed Kite may be spotted flying along the river banks just above the tree line. Hunting season on the management area runs from mid-October to the end of February, though nonconsumptive use is permitted year round. For more information contact the Alabama Wildlife and Fresh Water Fisheries Division at 334/626 5474, P.O. Box 7245, Spanish Fort, AL 36577.



Wood Thrush

ACBT 38. ●
Historic Blakeley State Park
 Return to AL 225 and continue southward to the park entrance [7.5] on the right (west). Turn right and get park information at the welcome station. Follow the road into the site. Park hours are 9 am to 5 pm daily and a nominal admission fee is charged. The park gives easy access to the usual woodland species in a pleasant setting.

This is the end of the East Mobile River – Tensaw Delta Loop. Return to AL 225 turn right and continue southward to I-10 and head west. Continue west on I-10 to exit 17-A, AL 193 South, to Dauphin Island. Go south on 193 to the beginning of the Dauphin Island – Bayou La Batre Loop.

Bird Notes



Dauphin Island –
 Bayou La Batre Loop

Dauphin Island – Bayou La Batre Loop

Friends of the Dauphin Island
 Audubon Sanctuary, Inc.
 P. O. Box 1295
 Dauphin Island, AL 36528
 334/861 2120
www.gulfinfo.com/dibird

Town of Dauphin Island
 P. O. Box 610
 Dauphin Island, AL 36528
 334/861 5524
www.gulfinfo.com/ditown

Dauphin Island is one of the most popular places on the Gulf Coast for birding during spring migration. The Dauphin Island bird card lists 345 species, about 85 percent of the state list. As a classic migrant trap it can be an overwhelming experience during a spring fall out when a cold front moving southward brings rain and northerly winds causing birds to literally fall from the sky. Birding can

be equally good in the fall but seems to linger longer. Motels are conveniently located for birding as are several excellent restaurants. Check with either of the above contacts for further information.

The loop begins at the water tower on Dauphin Island, at the southern end of AL 193, covers the forested east portion of the island, then the western portion. The loop then continues across the bridge and causeway to the mainland and travels west on AL 188 to Bayou La Batre.

ACBT 39. ▲
Shell Mound

From the water tower drive east on Bienville Boulevard to Iberville Street [0.3], turn left and you will see the Shell Mound straight ahead of you, to the north. Park on the shoulder anywhere and explore the mound, an ancient Indian shell

*Dauphin Island-
ACBT Sites 39-45*

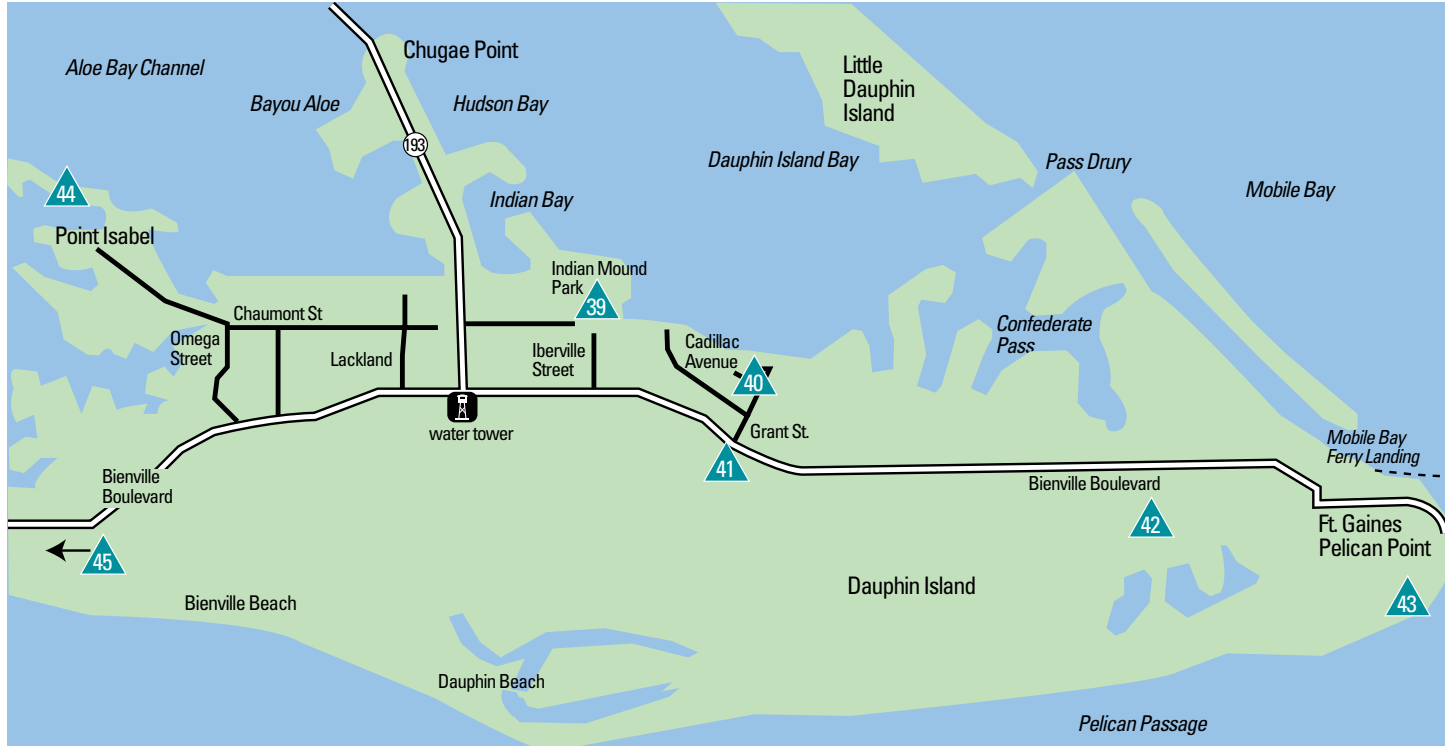


USFWS

Painting Bunting

midden. The park is managed by the Marine Resources Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, whose offices are on the back side (northeast corner) of the park. Check in the office for a tide table, it will be

invaluable in birding for shorebirds and waders. The ancient live oaks provide the insects and cover that the neotropical migrants depend on at their first landfall. It is not unusual to see 20 species of warblers here on a good day. Check the information box at the north side of the mound for recent bird sightings and a bird card for the island. Look northward from here across the field to the feeders on the edge of the lawn. Check for Bronzed Cowbird as well as Shiney Cowbird that show up occasionally.





Prothonotary Warbler

ACBT 40. ▲

Goat Trees

After leaving the Shell Mound turn left (east) at the first road and continue east on Cadillac Avenue to Grant Street [0.4]. Park on the shoulder out of the traffic and bird the large oaks on the left. Migrants frequently feed in these trees.

ACBT 41. ▲

Cadillac Square

Turn right (south) on Grant Street and return to Bienville Boulevard, across the street you will see Cadillac Square, a large park with lots of old live oaks, picnic tables and restrooms. It is also a good place to bird. In the spring of 1998, Black-whiskered Vireo was here for several days.

ACBT 42. ▲

Dauphin Island

Audubon Sanctuary

Continue eastward on Bienville Boulevard crossing Audubon Street to the Dauphin Island Audubon Bird Sanctuary [0.9]. Turn right into the parking area [100 yds.] During peak migration in mid-April, you may have to park in the median on Bienville Boulevard. Check the information box in the parking lot for brochures and study the map. The sanctuary has 164 acres of largely maritime pine forest with several miles of trails. Passerines prefer the oak grove of the Banding Area to the extreme east end of the Campground Trail and the south boundary of the swamp along the Dune Edge Trail. Swainson's Warbler is frequently found at the Banding Area and Black-whiskered Vireo may be found there occasionally.

ACBT 43. ▲

Pelican Point

Continue eastward along Bienville Boulevard past the ferry landing. You may want to pause here for the restrooms and/or look at the far

shore for waders, shorebirds and seabirds. Ferry landings are always good for gulls and terns. Continue past the Estuarium and on around the east end of Fort Gaines to the parking lot at the end of the road [0.9]. This spot provides an excellent view of the Gulf of Mexico and Mobile Pass.

Check the jetties for shorebirds. Ruddy Turnstone and Black-bellied Plover are common. Marbled Godwit and Red Knot are fairly regular in spring along the shore. Bobolinks frequent the field and underbrush between the road and the fort during migration.

ACBT 44. ▲

Airport

Return along Bienville Boulevard back to the water tower. Continue to the next intersection and turn right on Lackland after passing the town hall on the left. Proceed on Lackland two blocks to Chaumont, turn left (west) and continue on Chaumont to Omega Street. Bear to the right on the approach to the airport where there is marsh on both sides of the road. Continue to the end of the road and park. Observe the no trespassing signs for the airport proper. Though this is a small general aviation strip there is frequent helicopter traffic out to the gas wells in the gulf.

Check the marshes carefully for rails. Clapper Rail is common, Virginia and Sora are fairly common though secretive in fall and winter. Yellow Rail is very rare in winter as is Black Rail most of the year. Also check the marshes for Seaside and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows. Check the ponds and sandbars to the north for Reddish Egret. In winter scan the bay for ducks; Horned and Eared Grebe, scaup, Bufflehead, and mergansers. Old Squaw is an occasional visitor. During spring and



Scarlet Tanager



Black Rail

fall migration check the brush and trees for passerines, particularly after a front with strong west winds. This is the time and place for possible vagrants.

ACBT 45. ▲

West End

Return to Omega Street, turn right (south) and proceed to Bienville Boulevard. Turn right (west) on Bienville and continue westward after the boulevard turns to two lanes.

American Kestrel is common on the wires during winter. The canals along the western portion of the drive are tidal and frequently host egrets, herons and ibis. There is one record of White-faced Ibis along here. Access to the western end of the island has been restricted. Beyond St. Stevens Street there are cross streets leading to the gulf on the south and the Mississippi Sound on the north. You may use these to scan the gulf for seabirds particularly after a storm when the likelihood of boobies and gannets is greatest. The sandbars on the sound side are ephemeral, changing with the storms. They frequently host large numbers of gulls and terns, so check them out carefully. Check the vacant lots for Seaside and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows. Return to the water tower.

Note: The above description of the West End was written before Hurricane Georges (September 1998). This portion of Dauphin Island was entirely overwashed by the storm surge depositing large volumes of sand, resulting in a beach from shore to shore. At this writing there are no canals along the road, but many new sand bars and inlets. Birding the area will be different but still good.



American Kestrel

David Menke, USFWS

ACBT 46. ▲

Cedar Point

From the water tower proceed north on Le Moyne Drive (AL 193) across the bridge to the mainland, carefully driving and looking at the same time. Do not stop on the bridge, although the sandbars and shoals will be full of birds at low tide. When you reach the end of the bridge at Cedar Point [4.3] pull over and park on the shoulder, facing the east. Check any sandbars that may be visible. Cross the road to the parking lot on the southwest side and check the sandbar to the west. It may have some seabirds as well as waders. Whimbrel has favored this spot in the fall. Continue along the causeway toward the mainland and shortly you cross Heron Bay Cutoff Bridge and the bait shop on the right (east). Check any terns you see cruising over the marsh; Gull-billed Tern favors this area in spring and summer.

ACBT 47. ▲

Bayfront Park

Continue northward on AL 193 to Bayfront Park on the right (east). This is a relatively new county park that affords a good view of the open bay with some marsh habitat. Although it is an untried birding spot it has good prospects. There are picnic tables and portable restrooms.

ACBT 48. ●

Bellingrath Gardens

Continue northward on AL 193 to Alabama Port and the intersection with AL 188. Bear left (west) on AL 188 and continue to Bellingrath Road [2.9]. Turn right (north) on Bellingrath Road, continue to the first turn to the right into the gardens [4.0] and proceed to the parking lot [1.0]. The gardens have not been birded heavily in recent years but offered good birding in earlier years. Bellingrath Garden's literature lists 130 bird species. The entire 900-acre



Green Heron

USFWS



Northern Parula

USFWS

complex is a bird sanctuary and there is an observation tower overlooking the Fowl River and salt marsh. Cruises through the waters of the Fowl River aboard the Southern Belle are available at 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. The gardens open at 8 am, closing time is seasonal. Call Bellingrath Gardens at 334/973 2217 for admission costs to the gardens and the river cruise. Return to Bellingrath Road, turn left (south) and continue back to AL 188.



Laura Patrick

Black Skimmers

ACBT 49. ▲
Coden Belt Road

Turn right (west) and proceed to Clark Road [3.7] in Coden, and turn left (south) and follow the road to the water's edge. Continue westward on Coden Belt Road. There will be a few sandbars exposed at low tide which may be good for shorebirds, gulls and terns. Occasionally a large flock of Black Skimmers can be viewed out over the water. Dunlin and Red Knot may be found in winter on the sandbars. If it's a cold winter there may be bay ducks out on the water.

ACBT 50. ▲
Bayou La Batre Ponds

Following Coden Belt Road you will return to AL 188 at the bridge over Coden Bayou. Turn left (west) and continue westward on AL 188 through Bayou La Batre. At the first stop light after crossing the draw bridge over the bayou on Wintzell Avenue (AL 188) turn left (west) onto Little River Road and follow it to a fork [1.0] where Little River Road becomes unpaved and Powell bears left as a paved road. Continue on Little River Road to the elevated dikes on the right. These ponds, built in 1996, are managed by the U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers for the town of Bayou La Batre and are used to store the material dredged from the Bayou La Batre channel.



Larry W. Richardson

Eared Grebe

A scope is essential here. Although there will be signs of traffic on the dike, please do not drive on the dike. Climb to the top and walk the eastern dike. Although this pond has been

nearly filled with dredge refuse material, there is water in the far, northern end. This pond has been terrific for shorebirds since the second year after it was built.

American Avocet and Black-necked Stilt have been present year round as well as dowitchers, yellowlegs and the ever present Willet. Least Tern has nested on the flat sands. Walk the eastern dike to get a better view, the birds have been fairly cooperative. There may be some ducks on the open water, mostly Mallard. There is a dike running north and south partially dividing the ponds, with much deeper water on the western end.

You may walk the path along the southern dike past the dividing dike to gain a view of the western pond or walk back down to your vehicle and drive to the other end. There will be shorebirds along the edges of this pond but the main attraction here is the waterfowl. In winter there will be large numbers of ducks out on the water; teal, scaup, Northern Shoveler, Hooded Merganser and Ruddy Duck. It is expected that as time goes by more and more ducks will find these ponds.

This is the end of the Dauphin Island – Bayou La Batre Loop.

Hopefully your tour of the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail was a memorable experience and you will return again and again to enjoy the extraordinary birdlife of our area.

Return to AL 188 in Bayou La Batre. To head for I-10 and Mississippi, turn left (north) and take AL 188 to Grand Bay and I-10. To retrace your path, turn right (south) and continue eastward on AL 188 to Alabama Port and the intersection with AL 193. At this point you may turn left (north) and return to I-10 and Mobile. Or, you can turn right (south) and return to Dauphin Island. You may want to stay on the island or take the ferry to Ft. Morgan.

Bird Notes

ACBT Partners

The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail is an exciting cooperative effort that has involved an impressive mix of partners to date, including:

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Coastal Programs Office – Wildlife and Fresh Water Fisheries Division

Alabama Department of Transportation

Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau

Alabama Ornithological Society

Baldwin and Mobile County Governments

Baldwin and Mobile County Municipalities

Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge

Dauphin Island Development Office

Federal Highway Administration

Friends of Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuary, Inc.

Gulf State Park

Mobile Convention and Visitors Corporation

Partners in Flight

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Special thanks to all chambers of commerce within Baldwin County, Alabama, individuals and organizations for whom this project would not be possible.

Other partners are expected to join the effort as the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail project proceeds.

The printing of this brochure was made possible through a grant from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).



USFWS

Common Yellowthroat



USFWS

Indigo Bunting

American Birding Association's Code of Birding Ethics

Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment, and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first.

Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.



USFWS
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Respect the law and the rights of others.

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

- 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.
- 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 can be minimized and permission has been obtained from private land-owners.
- 1(d) Stay on roads, trails and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.
- 2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.
- 2(b) Follow all laws, rules and regulations governing the use of roads and public areas.
- 2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.
- 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

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



John Dindo
Reddish Egret

exposed to predation from cats or other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

For Participants:

- 4(a) Respect the interest, rights and skills of fellow birders as well as those of people participating in legitimate outdoor activities. 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 behavior continues, document it and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

For Group Leaders:

- 4(c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.
- 4(d) Keep group to a size that limits impact on the environment and does not interfere with others using the same area.
- 4(e) Ensure that everyone in the group knows 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—distribute it and teach it to others. Additional copies of the *Code of Birding Ethics* can be obtained from:

American Birding Association
P.O. Box 6599
Colorado Springs, CO 80934-6599
800/850 2473 or 719/578 1614
member@aba.org

This ABA Code of Birding Ethics may be reprinted, reproduced and distributed without restriction. Please acknowledge the role of ABA in developing and promoting this code.



Laura Patrick, USFWS

Brown Pelican



K. King

Royal Tern

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American People.

Credits

The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail was originally the brain-child of Bob Reid, birder by avocation, conservationist, avid supporter of *Partners in Flight* and member of the Alabama Ornithological Society (AOS). After talking to Madge Lindsay of Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail fame at a *Partners in Flight* meeting, Bob came home and passed out assignments for an Alabama Coastal Birding Trail to coastal members of AOS ... and told them to send their material to us. As we were making scant progress, Larry Goldman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, became the state coordinator for *Partners in Flight*, and things began to move, especially when Connie Dickard joined his staff. Then Herb Malone, President and CEO of the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau discovered ecotourism and birders and things really took off. Through the efforts of all these participants and a grant from Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail has become a reality. No work on birding in Alabama can be complete without the contributions of Dr. Greg Jackson, pre-eminent Alabama birder, and “keeper of the records.” ...Thanks Greg for your important part in this work.

John & Jackie Porter, Editors
Dauphin Island, August 1998

**Alabama Gulf Coast
Convention & Visitors Bureau
P.O. Drawer 457
Gulf Shores, AL 36547
800/745 SAND or 334/968 7511
www.gulfshores.com**

**Mobile Convention &
Visitors Corporation
P.O. Box 204
Mobile, AL 36601 0204
800/5 MOBILE or 334/208 2030
www.mobile.org**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Daphne Field Office
P.O. Box 1190
1208-B Main Street
Daphne, AL 36526
334/441 5181
www.fws.gov**

May 2001

