



Field Guides Tour Report

Florida 2019

Apr 27, 2019 to May 5, 2019
Doug Gochfeld & Jesse Fagan

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



Our day trip to the Dry Tortugas is unquestionably one of the highlights of the tour, and not only is there a possibility of a good showing of passerine migrants, but it provides an excellent chance to study several species which do not breed anywhere else in the mainland USA, like these Bridled Terns who cared not about our presence when there were more important things afoot. Photo by guide Doug Gochfeld.

This was our second running of this tour to the varied wilds of South Florida, and it was a wonderful trip indeed, with an energetic and fun group that helped make it a blast every step of the way. We were in smiles the entire tour. It was also special for me for a couple of reasons. The first being it was the first time that Doug and I had worked together, and we really enjoyed that long-anticipated experience. Secondly, it was my first time birding the lower peninsula of Florida, and so, like you all, I had the pleasure of new birds in new areas. So, pardon me if this introduction becomes a little Jesse-centric, but I just can't help but relate some of my favorite moments.

It started off with delicious Cuban-influenced food in Miami, where it is hard (nay, impossible!) to avoid the lively Cuban/Latin vibes of this area. There is lots of Spanish being spoken here. Good food was certainly a common theme throughout this tour. From the Cubans (The best variation on grilled ham and cheese? Perhaps!), fresh seafood (including a Caesar salad with big cuts of seared Yellowfin Tuna) and grilled grouper, hushpuppies and fried okra, we certainly ate well on this trip. Plus, Doug and I did a pretty nice picnic lunch, wouldn't you say? But, enough about food. We headed south from Miami on the famous beach highway A1A, and needed only one stop for Mangrove Cuckoo. And what memorable looks we had! It seemed stuck on its perch just over our heads for hours (okay, it was more like 10 minutes). Scope views anyone? More scope views anyone? We continued south a few hours and set up our base for several days midway down the Florida Keys in the small town of Marathon. This proved to be a nice jumping off point for day trips to various sites in the Key West area and in between. This included several nights of searching for Antillean Nighthawk, which was fleeting at the local airport, but with some sleuthing from Doug we found an awesome site to watch them dance around, call, and, at least once, hear the impressive booming dive. The Dry Tortugas run was other-worldly. So many unique species, but it was really the numbers of individual birds which were most impressive. Thousands of Brown Noddies standing around while we scanned with scopes for one Black Noddy. Needless to say, after 2 hours of that I was dreaming of a big cold drink with a small umbrella. I loved the Dry Tortugas. There were Merlins hunting, warblers hiding, Bridled Terns at arms-length, and the marvel of small passerine migration always at the back of your mind.

We then headed north and crossed the famous Everglades (a lifer destination for me), complete with a recitation from Marjorie Stoneman Douglas's "River of Grass" by Bob, and enjoyed several Snail Kites en route to Ft. Meyers. We birded the coast with impressive shorebird numbers and had Florida Scrub-Jays nearly feeding from our hands. The Gopher Tortoises along the road nearby were equally as cool! We made a stop at Seven-Mile

Swamp and scanned the high blue skies for Short-tailed Hawk (no luck, darn!). However, the main event in this part of the world was our morning spent in the reverent air of the Florida flatwoods (pineywoods). The chorus of the Bachman's Sparrow, the shy, endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and an awfully confused King Rail [confused as in, didn't he/she know it was a RAIL, and it was supposed to timidly call from out of sight incessantly never showing itself and leaving disappointed faces all around? It didn't, and so we had effusively delighted faces all around- which really was the theme of the tour]. We finished up crossing the grand peninsula ticking off Smooth-billed Ani at Lake Okeechobee, Shiny Cowbird (memorable spot, huh?), waiting out an end-of-days-level rainstorm before coming out from under our rain gear to enjoy a magical evening of colonial waterbirds, and finally fighting Miami traffic (though we fought it to the tune of a Key West Quail-Dove at the last moment!).

Thanks for coming along. Thanks for being Field Guides fans and thanks for being an awesome group. Doug and I really enjoyed guiding y'all and look forward to seeing you again in the near future. Until then, (you know what to do) bird on.

For Doug and Jesse,

Jesse aka Motmot (from Puerto Maldonado, Peru)

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – These were common on our eastbound drive across the state and in West Palm Beach, but we also had one fly by us over the mangroves on Sugarloaf Key, which was perhaps the first record of the species for the Florida Keys (there were no prior eBird records).

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – A distant pair of these was perched out in the heat shimmer at Harney Canal during our Ani stop.

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – We saw a few of these in various canals and drainage ditches along the settled portions of our route. These are almost certainly from domestic stock, and live in these bodies of water year round, unlike their wild migrant cousins. [I]

EGYPTIAN GOOSE (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*) – Another species that has established itself in south Florida; we saw a couple on a golf course while driving through Miami on day one, and then had some obscenely cooperative ones at Evergreen Cemetery on our final day. [I]

MUSCOVY DUCK (*Cairina moschata*) – This is, for some odd reason, considered ABA countable, and we saw these ducks of recently domestic ancestry all over the place in south Florida. [I]

MOTTLED DUCK (*Anas fulvigula*) – Fewer of these Mallard lookalikes than expected, but seen on three of the final four days.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail).

NORTHERN BOBWHITE (*Colinus virginianus*) – We heard many of these at Babcock-Webb, but we never found any close enough to lay eyes on. [*]

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies).

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – As we were leaving Harney Canal.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves).

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Seen well, with many of the blackish color palette in the keys. [I]

WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON (*Patagioenas leucocephala*) – We had these unique pigeons on Sugarloaf Key, Key West, and some other spots in the central and southern keys. We got some very good views of these southern Florida specialties. This is one of only two species in its seventeen species genus to occur in the ABA area.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – We were surrounded by the sweet purring of this widespread non-native dove every day and everywhere we went. [I]

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – Our Key West day was when we had our best views of this diminutive columbid with the striking orange wings.

KEY WEST QUAIL-DOVE (*Geotrygon chrysia*) – Our final big target, and one which, after making us sweat it out for quite a while, allowed itself to be found by Bob and Donna after it dropped off a mid-day roost and onto the dark forest floor. After some more sweating we were able to find a narrow angle where we could look through the forest and have a clear line to see this motionless vagrant. Everybody even got scope views eventually, before it wandered off. George, Janie, Bob, and Bill all agreed that this was one of their favorite birds of the trip, with Bob pointing out that it was the experience of having to find it that made it all the more special.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Seen in several places, with the best views coming on the final two days along the east coast.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – An every day of the tour bird!

Cuculidae (Cuckoos).

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) – One of Doug P.'s favorites of the trip was this Smooth-billed Ani that we were able to opportunistically twitch at the Harney Pond Canal in the northwestern corner of Lake Okeechobee. We were prepared for a reasonable vigil for this oft-skulky (in the US) species, but were overjoyed when we found it teed up on top of a bush in plain sight upon our arrival. It hung around for quite a while, allowing us to drink it in via the scopes.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus americanus*) – Some folks connected with one of these at Evergreen Cemetery in Fort Lauderdale, our final birding stop of the tour, meaning that the tour was bookended by two different species of *Coccyzus* cuckoos.

MANGROVE CUCKOO (*Coccyzus minor*) – One of the major listing draws to South Florida, this species is often a real devil to try and find. However, we succeeded in obtaining excellent views of calling birds on our very first morning of birding, right in the Miami area. This made the top 3 lists of Doug P., Carol, George, and Bill. It was truly an excellent start to the tour!

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies).

COMMON NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles minor*) – A great dawn show at Babcock-Webb of birds flying around over the pines and calling frequently. The show even continued until a couple of hours past sunrise- an odd thing for these crepuscular birds!

ANTILLEAN NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles gundlachii*) – What a wonderful experience! After finding only a silent nighthawk flying around the Marathon airport on our first try, we then connected with a couple of very showy birds calling and even displaying farther south along the keys a couple of nights later. One even landed briefly on the ground nearly at our feet. This spectacular experience made the favorite birds and moments lists of Muriel, Joan, Kevin, Ned, Carol, Bob, Allison, Bill, and George- more than half the group!

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*) – These aerial insectivores were hawking insects over birding locations in Fort Myers and West Palm.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

KING RAIL (NORTHERN) (*Rallus elegans elegans*) – A really special experience with a very confiding pair of these which we stumbled across at Babcock Webb. This was memorable not only because it was somewhat of a surprise, but because of the excellent views of it and how vocal they were as well! It was made three people's top 3 lists (Bob, Kevin, Janie), and contributed to the pineywoods morning being among the favorite overall experiences for several folks including both guides!

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – We encountered this widespread species of southern marshes on several days during our travels.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinica*) – We finally connected with these on our next-to-last day in West Palm.

GRAY-HEADED SWAMPHEN (*Porphyrio poliocephalus*) – This introduced exotic was seen at a couple of spots on the day we cut across the state from Fort Myers to West Palm. [H]

Aramidae (Limpkin)

LIMPKIN (*Aramus guarauna*) – Good views in several places in the western part of the state and on our drive across the state, with the best looks coming in beautiful morning light at Harns Marsh.

Gruidae (Cranes)

SANDHILL CRANE (*Antigone canadensis*) – Babcock Webb and Harns Marsh.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – West Palm and on the drive across the state.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Most anywhere with reasonable shorebird habitat, even at freshwater.

WILSON'S PLOVER (*Charadrius wilsonia*) – We had very nice views of these at both Key West and Fort Myers.

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – Several locations, including good numbers flying around the dike at Harney Canal.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Territorial birds around Marathon, then several other locations including Babcock Webb.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – Several locations along our coastal travel, especially in the Keys, and also some rather tame birds at Fort Jefferson.

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*) – The mudflats on Lake Okeechobee at Harney Canal produced several of these- a nice surprise addition to our ani chase!

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – Key West and Fort Myers.

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) – The Fort Myers mudflats.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Seen in most of the locations we covered that had good shorebird habitat.

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*) – Key West, Fort Myers, Harney Canal.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – One of these lingerers was mixed into the flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers on the mudflats at Fort Myers.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*) – A couple of spots in the keys and then coastal Fort Myers as well.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*) – A lone bird at Wako.

WILLET (EASTERN) (*Tringa semipalmata semipalmata*) – One of these shorter-billed, short-legged darker willets was perched up on a mangrove tree surveying its breeding territory as we drove around the Saddlebunch Keys.

WILLET (WESTERN) (*Tringa semipalmata inornata*) – The big pale subspecies that is a common winterer here, but doesn't breed. We connected with a couple of lingering individuals on the mudflats adjacent to Fort Myers.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – Sanibel and Harney Canal.

Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)

POMARINE JAEGER (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) – A surprise was an adult or near-adult at Fort Jefferson. It was mostly floating around off the coaling docks, and it was harassed by a Magnificent Frigatebird at one point, though it was able to fend off that attack.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Abundant.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – A couple of these late lingering non-breeders were along the coast at Fort Zachary Taylor.

BROWN NODDY (*Anous stolidus*) – One of the major draws of the Dry Tortugas for birders is the mixed colony of Sooty Terns and Brown Noddies, but especially the noddies, which are exceptionally rarely seen elsewhere in the continental US.

SOOTY TERN (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) – One of the show-stopping spectacles of the tour is the massive colony of Sooty Terns at Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas. Not only is the visual spectacle a can't miss, but it is an auditory spectacle as well.

BRIDLED TERN (*Onychoprion anaethetus*) – One of Doug C.'s top three of the trip, and with good reason! This is the only place they breed in the ABA area, and they can sometimes be difficult here. We did quite well with them, seeing a dozen individuals, and they put on a behavioral show too,

including courtship and even copulation!

LEAST TERN (*Sternula antillarum*) – Our smallest tern, we saw these cute (but vicious if you get close to their nests!) ones most days of the tour, with some especially good looks around Key West

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – As we drove across the state, one of our STA stops produced perched Caspian Tern.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Key West, Sanibel, Hollywood.

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – Indigenous Park on Key West, the ferry to the Tortugas, and then on our day around Sanibel.

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rynchops niger*) – On the roof of a building as we pulled out of Key West harbor, and then another large flock perched in one of the STAs as we crossed the state a few days later.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

WOOD STORK (*Mycteria americana*) – The nesting colony in West Palm was certainly our best experience with the species. Seeing and hearing (and smelling!) birds of all ages cavorting at close range was fascinating.

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – Their distribution is very tied to the coast in Florida, like Brown Pelican, so we saw them every day except for the one when we didn't see the ocean for a while.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

MASKED BOOBY (*Sula dactylatra*) – Around a hundred of these, including some fluffy but large youngsters, were on station at Hospital Key as we took a swing by there on our way to Garden Key. Hospital Key is the only place the species breeds in the ABA area.

BROWN BOOBY (ATLANTIC) (*Sula leucogaster leucogaster*) – One of these was seen quite well as it plunge dived around the ship on our way out to the Tortugas, and then we had a couple of additional distant ones at other junctures of the ride, including at least one standing with the Masked Boobies on Hospital Key.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*) – Our only representative of the darters was well represented on our tour, showing for us every single day. Their raptor-like flight profile always keeps one on ones toes as you make your way through Florida.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Abundant throughout.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – A battalion of these flew over at the Harney Canal viewing area, while we were looking at the Ani.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Common on every day except for our day crossing the state, when we saw zero! This helps to illustrate just how much of a saltwater obligate the species is.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

LEAST BITTERN (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – A couple of these showed briefly at Harns Marsh, and then we had a couple that cooperated more to our liking in West Palm.

GREAT BLUE HERON (BLUE FORM) (*Ardea herodias herodias*) – Key West and then the mainland, but none seen in the Middle or Upper Keys.

GREAT BLUE HERON (WHITE FORM) (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*) – Several in the Key West vicinity.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – These are ordinarily overlooked by birders in this part of the world because of the species' abundance. However, the one that was displaying at Wakodahatchee was provided for one of the most diverting experiences of the trip, and was behaving in a way that neither guide had even seen before!

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Common.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – Fort Myers and West Palm gave us the majority of these for our trip.

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*) – Some especially confiding ones at Wakodahatchee.

REDDISH EGRET (*Egretta rufescens*) – Our best experience was near Sanibel, where we had one displaying the species' trademark aggressive foraging technique.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Abundant, and we even saw some northbound migrants flying over the ship as we motored through the straits of Florida.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – Numerous, with the most memorable one being a still-fluffy juvenile on the breakwall of the harbor in Key West that we saw as we cruised out towards the ocean aboard the Yankee Freedom.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – On our penultimate day we finally caught up to this widespread species.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – Most folks caught up to this species in the mangroves at Spanish River Park.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*) – Common and bold.

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – Widespread in appropriate wetland habitat, with our first ones coming on Key West.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Platalea ajaja*) – Donna and Bob had one from the vehicles as we drove across Tamiami Trail, but then the whole group was gifted with excellent views at STA-1.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Plentiful.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Plentiful as well, though maybe a tick less plentiful than the previous species.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Perhaps the most widespread raptor in south Florida.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*) – Several while in transit across the state, but the closest views were of a bird coursing back and forth low over the mangroves at Bunche Beach.

SNAIL KITE (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) – Great views of a couple of individuals along Tamiami Trail, and then brief or distant encounters subsequently.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – A mild surprise was one of these flying over Fort Jefferson. They're typically farther north by this time of year, though Fort Jefferson serves up a songbird buffet for species predators like this.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – Jesse's van had one of these on our first full day of birding.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – Seen in several locations. The species is doing well in Florida.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (EXTIMUS) (*Buteo lineatus extimus*) – We saw several of these distinctive "Florida" Red-shouldered Hawks in the northern keys and driving to the west coast.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – A brief view of a bird flying between hammocks at Key Largo.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – A couple of these on our Fort Myers day.

Strigidae (Owls)

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops asio*) – A nice showing of one on a roost in the upper keys was a fortuitous encounter.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – Nice daytime sightings on back-to-back days at Babcock Webb and then the Red-headed Woodpecker spot.

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – Watching the antics of these confiding birds (especially the goofy youngsters) was a delight, and made even more interesting by the incongruent backdrop of multi-million dollar vacation homes.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – In the southern keys on our second day.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) – We acted on a tip from a local birder and friend of Jesse's and found a pair of these drop-dead gorgeous woodpeckers as we left the Fort Myers area.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes carolinus*) – A common resident of many habitats (trees, utility poles etc.) in Florida.

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates pubescens*) – A few spots farther north on the second part of the tour.

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER (*Dryobates borealis*) – We encountered this high-priority target at Babcock-Webb early upon our arrival, and got some good scope views for a few minutes before it moved on.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates villosus*) – Babcock Webb provided our best views.

PILEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – We had one of these big boys at one of our earlier stops on our cross-state drive, and then had another one fly over the road a bit later.

NORTHERN FLICKER (YELLOW-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus auratus*) – Big Cypress and Babcock Webb.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – We tracked down a couple of these on our drive across the state.

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – Terrorizing passerines inside the fort on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – Patrolling the skies over Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

MONK PARAKEET (*Myiopsitta monachus*) – Flybys on our final day. [I]

YELLOW-CHEVRONED PARAKEET (*Brotogeris chiriri*) – Flying over the hotel on our first morning, and diagnostically photographed by Donna. [I]

NANDAY PARAKEET (*Aratinga nenday*) – We lucked upon a flock of the these flying over as we drove through Fort Lauderdale, and then were able to track them down to where they were perched. [I]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – Common any type of forest along the route, from hardwood hammock, to cypress, to open pine forest.

GRAY KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) – Common from Miami to the Keys, and then we had it again in Dania Beach.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – A few in the Ft. Myers and West Palm areas.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*) – A few folks had one of these up on Key Largo.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – We had this more familiar northern congener of Black-whiskered on several days.

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO (*Vireo altiloquus*) – We had excellent luck tracking this species down this year. We had these in Miami, the Dry Tortugas, the Lower Keys, Key Largo, and even Spanish River Park way up north.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – Quite a few around Fort Myers and West Palm.

FLORIDA SCRUB-JAY (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) – We had a couple of very confiding individuals around Fort Myers. This is a species that is highly threatened by development (destruction) of its habitat in Florida. This is also one of only a couple of state-endemic birds in the US, and Florida's only one, [E]

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – A few of these as we transited around Big Cypress and Fort Myers, including at Babcock Webb.

FISH CROW (*Corvus ossifragus*) – Very common in most spots.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – Several spots, including at the martin house at Wakodahatchee.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Dry Tortugas.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Fort Zach and the Dry Tortugas.

CAVE SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon fulva*) – We took a brief sojourn on our way from Miami to Marathon to experience a colony of these Caribbean Cave Swallows on our very first birding day. This is the only region where this taxon breeds in the US.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – Six-Mile Cypress Slough Preserve.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH (*Sitta pusilla*) – We found these at a nest hole at Babcock-Webb, and they were absolutely adorable.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – An excellent experience with one of these charismatic wrens at Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – Six Mile Cypress.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – Babcock-Webb.

VEERY (*Catharus fuscescens*) – Briefly at Fort Zachary Taylor.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Both the Forts and Sanibel Light.

BROWN THRASHER (*Toxostoma rufum*) – Real good views at Babcock-Webb, and then some at Spanish River Park too.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Very common, and with some excellent vocal arrays.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Abundant. [I]

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) – These introduced exotics were fairly common around our hotel in Miami, and we also had them on day two in the keys, and then again when we came back through Homestead. [I]

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – We heard these at Fort Zachary Taylor, and some may have laid eyes on them as well. [*]

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows)

BACHMAN'S SPARROW (*Peucaea aestivalis*) – Great views and audio at Babcock-Webb, and one of the top three birds for both Allison and Donna. Another part of the magical morning experience in the pineywoods.

EASTERN TOWHEE (WHITE-EYED) (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus rileyi*) – The southern white-eyed rileyi form showed well for us at Babcock-Webb

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

BOBOLINK (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) – An unseen bird flew over calling at the Tortugas, but then we had a gorgeous male perched out in the open at Harns Marsh.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*) – Babcock-Webb and then again as we drove across the state to the east.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Common and widespread.

SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – We connected with a male hanging around the Semi-Chi Rice Mill as we made our way across the state from Fort Myers to West Palm.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – A few at the beginning and end of the tour.

COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – Widespread, making it possible to study the differences between this and the next species.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*) – All over. Really fun to watch their antics and breeding displays.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – We connected with these in a couple of places, but the most cooperative was at Six Mile Cypress Slough.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – We had a couple of these around the Fort Myers area.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – Widespread.

TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – Fort Zach and the Dry Tortugas.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Common and widespread through our tour route.

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*) – Some folks got on a female at Fort Jeff in the Dry Tortugas.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – Most Days.

CAPE MAY WARBLER (*Setophaga tigrina*) – Cape May Warblers pass through Florida in large numbers in spring, and this tour gave us some insight into that, as we saw them most days, and it was one of the most common species we encountered. We were also able to study the entire range of variation from drab immatures or females to boldly contrasting, red-cheeked males.

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – Every single day of the tour, including some eye-popping males.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER (*Setophaga magnolia*) – Fort Zach.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – During our Keys day.

BLACKPOLL WARBLER (*Setophaga striata*) – Several spot in the keys including Windley Key and Key Largo, with our best views of this late-migrating species at Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER (*Setophaga caerulescens*) – Miami, Dry Tortugas, and Key Largo.

PALM WARBLER (WESTERN) (*Setophaga palmarum palmarum*) – Windley Key and then several other spots through the keys and also in the Tortugas.

PINE WARBLER (*Setophaga pinus*) – Babcock-Webb.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Setophaga dominica*) – George had one of these at Fort Jefferson, and several other folks caught up to the species at Evergreen Cemetery on the final day.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Setophaga discolor*) – Excellent views of singing birds in both Miami and in the Keys.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*) – Fort Zach.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – We ran into these on every day of the tour.

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – We had several plumages of these in the Florida Keys and at Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Every day, yippee. [I]

MAMMALS

MARSH RABBIT (*Sylvilagus palustris*) – Roadside around Fort Myers and then around the marsh at Wakodahatchee.

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – Some saw this near the Semi-Chi Rice Mill.

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – We had these in the northern sections of the route, around Miami and Ft. Myers.

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*) – We had several of these just offshore at Sanibel Lighthouse.

NORTHERN RACCOON (*Procyon lotor*) – Brief views in Miami and then at the Marathon Airport.

NORTH AMERICAN RIVER OTTER (*Lontra canadensis*) – An adorable and exciting surprise at Harns Marsh! We observed a family of these including a very small youngster being grabbed by the scruff of its neck by one of the parents in order to transport it deeper into the safety of the marsh once they realized we were present. Very cool!

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Babcock Webb and a few other places around the Fort Myers area.

KEY (WHITE-TAILED) DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus clavium*) – Excellent close views of these small, localized, and endangered deer in the central keys, the last stronghold of the species on earth.

Herps

BROWN ANOLE (*Anolis sagrei*) – The most common of the introduced reptiles we ran into, we saw these most days of the tour. [I]

GREEN ANOLE (CAROLINA ANOLE) (*Anolis carolinensis*) – Had these over the first couple of days of the tour.

RED-HEADED ROCK AGAMA (*Agama agama*) – At the Cave Swallow colony around Homestead for some. [I]

GREEN IGUANA (*Iguana iguana*) – We saw these on about half the days of the tour. They have proliferated exceptionally fast and widely over South Florida over the past couple of decades, and are now abundant. We saw some humongous ones, especially around Key West. [I]

STRIPED BASILISK (*Basiliscus vittatus*) – Some saw this lizard at Wakodahatchee. [I]

NORTHERN CURLY-TAILED LIZARD (*Leiocephalus carinatus armouri*) – We had several of these in the Keys, with the most memorable ones being at Fort Zach. [I]

AMERICAN ALLIGATOR (*Alligator mississippiensis*) – Big numbers at Big Cypress, and at least a couple at Six Mile Slough Preserve.

FLORIDA SOFTSHELL TURTLE (*Apalone ferox*) – Big Cypress.

GOPHER TORTOISE (*Gopherus polyphemus*) – We lucked into a couple of these moving around their Florida scrub habitat in the Ft. Myers area. The species is threatened by development of their Florida scrub habitat, along with species such as Florida Scrub-Jay and Florida Burrowing Owl.

LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE (*Caretta caretta*) – We had a couple of sea turtles during our cruise back to Key West from the Dry Tortugas, and the ones we saw and/or photographed well enough to identify were this species.

AMERICAN GREEN TREEFROG (*Hyla cinerea*) – Photographed by Donna at Babcock-Webb.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 163 bird taxa and 8 mammal taxa