



Field Guides Tour Report

Louisiana: Yellow Rails & Crawfish Tails II 2019

Nov 7, 2019 to Nov 11, 2019

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



Although the emphasis on this trip is to indeed see Yellow Rails and spend time in rice country, did you know that we also visit some very different habitat such as the pine forests in Kisatchie National Forest? This interesting habitat is home to several specialties including Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Bachman's Sparrow. Here's our group enjoying outstanding looks at a tame Bachman's Sparrow on our first morning. Photo by participant Don Faulkner.

A Bachman's Sparrow sitting quietly in a bush, dozens of Yellow Rails flushing from in front of the combine, a trio of Inca Doves huddled together, Snowy Plovers running on the beach, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers squealing overhead... for being such a short trip, we really did see a lot of amazing stuff on this Louisiana tour! The weather was kind to us, providing a couple of stunningly beautiful mornings, the rain held off, the rice harvest went without a hitch, it was a lot of fun!

Our first morning, albeit chilly and cloudy, gave us a chance to visit Kisatchie National Forest where we explored the pine forests for specialties and we came away with some good ones like Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in the first 10 minutes, hoards of Brown-headed Nuthatches, and even a sneaky Bachman's Sparrow that gave us looks that couldn't be beat! In DeRidder, we had a complete bonus when we were able to relocate the out-of-range Northern Wheatear! And on a final visit to Kisatchie, we were even able to look at a Barred Owl eye-to-eye.

The following day we explored the shorelines of Cameron Parish. At Sabine National Wildlife Refuge we were greeted by Marsh Wrens, a sneaky LeConte's Sparrow, Roseate Spoonbills flying overhead, and even a brave Sora feeding within view. Once on the beach, we sorted through shorebirds like Piping and Snowy plover, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, American Avocet, and even a Long-billed Curlew. Our lunch stop was birdy too and we found a rare Broad-winged Hawk overhead. The town of Holly Beach was full of new things for us like Lark Sparrow, Western Kingbird, and the evil-looking Bronzed Cowbirds with their red eyes. A ferry ride gave us chances to watch dolphins, a visit to a saltmarsh netted a sneaky Clapper Rail and Nelson's Sparrow, and a dusk-visit to Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge was filled with birds. The evening sky was full of Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, and the ponds were full of ducks.

Our final day in the rice fields near Thornwell was a magical one. We joined Donna and Steve (and a slew of researchers) as we witnessed the rice harvest first-hand. For those riding on the combine, we tallied 40+ Yellow Rails! On the ground, folks had good looks from the ATV and the researchers even caught a couple. The other rails were fascinating too and we saw tons of Soras, Virginia Rails, and were even treated to a couple of King Rails.

All-in-all, this was a fantastic but short tour through some key habitats of Louisiana. Chris and I had a great time sharing some of these sights and sounds with you and we hope you made a lot of fun memories. A major thanks to Steve and Donna for their help making the rice harvest a success, and

a shout-out to Tina in the office who worked on all the logistics.

Thank you all for coming along and until our paths meet again, good birding!

-- Cory

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)

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – As we were approaching Cameron Prairie NWR, a few of these were seen in flight off to our right. This is a great sighting of a species we don't often see on this tour.

SNOW GOOSE (*Anser caerulescens*) – One of the more amazing sights on the entire trip was watching the flocks of these black-and-white geese lift off out of the rice fields near Thornwell.

ROSS'S GOOSE (*Anser rossii*) – Mixed in with the previous species at Cameron Prairie NWR, a few of these tiny geese were also found. Compared to the Snow Geese, these have smaller, more triangular bills, shorter necks, and are much smaller overall.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*) – More numerous than the previous species, but not as common as the Snow Geese, these were also mixed in at Cameron Prairie NWR on our second day.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Spatula discors*) – We had our best luck with ducks, including this dabbling, at Cameron Prairie NWR. At this time of year, they're just starting to molt into their fine breeding plumage.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*) – This dabbling wears a pretty impressive and distinctive bill! These were seen at Cameron Prairie mixed with all the other ducks.

GADWALL (*Mareca strepera*) – Only a few of these dabblers were seen at Cameron Prairie near dusk on our 2nd day.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Mareca americana*) – A very handsome dabbling duck species! Just a few were at Cameron Prairie during our visit.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Usually a classic and common duck species. For us, however, they weren't exactly abundant. We ended up seeing some at Cameron Prairie NWR though.

MOTTLED DUCK (GULF COAST) (*Anas fulvigula maculosa*) – We were able to see the very dark body color paired with the bright white undersides of the wings as these took off at Cameron Prairie NWR.

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – What's the one dabbling we DIDN'T see on the Pintail Loop? No matter, we saw a flyover flock of these thin-necked ducks on our final day.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – Cameron Prairie NWR also hosted a few of these tiny dabblers.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Although they weren't common, a few of these tiny grebes were seen swimming in a ditch at Cameron Prairie NWR.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Common in urban areas. [I]

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Although less common than the previous species, this introduced dove was also seen in urban areas. [I]

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – A tiny, scaly-looking dove that we found along Niblett Road. We were at the far eastern edge of the range for that species.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaidura macroura*) – A couple of these were seen nicely from our Red-headed Woodpecker stop in Welsh on our 2nd day.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaidura macroura*) – Familiar in a variety of habitats, this long-tailed dove was seen on 2/3 of our days.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

KING RAIL (*Rallus elegans*) – For a few folks riding the combine, we were lucky to spot 10+ of these big rails in the wetter rice fields near Thornwell. We saw one flush and hit the mistnet that the researchers had put up... but it kicked itself out and ran away!

CLAPPER RAIL (*Rallus crepitans*) – This sneaky saltwater rail wasn't shy when it came to vocalizing but they sure didn't want to come out into view! A couple folks caught a quick glimpse as one snuck behind the vegetation near the town of Cameron.

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus limicola*) – This small rail was the second-most common species of rail in the fields near Thornwell. The researchers caught a bunch of them too!

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) – This rail was by-far the most common species of rail present in the wet rice fields near Thornwell. Over the course of 3-4 hours, more than a hundred or two were seen from the combine. Earlier in the trip, we had scope views of one at the trailhead at Sabine NWR.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – The marsh loop trail at Sabine NWR was good for this gallinule that was formerly called Common Moorhen.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Just a couple of these white-billed rails were seen at Sabine NWR.

YELLOW RAIL (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) – Success! Our final day of tour took us to the rice fields near Thornwell. We all got to experience Yellow Rails in different ways; some rode the combine and got to see dozens flush from right in front of us, some chased them down via ATV, and others watched from the ground. The researchers even caught a couple of these secretive guys! All in all, it was a great experience out there thanks to Donna, Steve, and the gang.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Our first sighting of this tall and lanky shorebird came from the Cameron Ferry. However, we saw lots more in the flooded fields on Marceaux Road and near Thornwell.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Gobs and gobs of these were standing in tight flocks on the beach at Holly Beach.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Although they weren't sporting their black-bellied plumage at this time of year, a couple of these big plovers were seen along Holly Beach and Marceaux Road.

SNOWY PLOVER (*Charadrius nivosus*) – Among the shorebirds we saw, these pale plovers were surely one of the highlights. We ended up having quite a few along the sandy beaches near Holly Beach.

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – Alongside the other plovers, this migrant was also seen on the sandy beaches of Holly Beach. These are small but with a slightly darker brown back and a complete black breast band.

PIPING PLOVER (*Charadrius melodus*) – This was another uncommon plover that we connected with near Holly Beach. We ended up with just one sighting.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – A large, common, and familiar plover that we encountered a number of times.

Scolopaciidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) – A huge, sandy brown shorebird was seen sleeping on the beach west of Holly Beach. Once it woke up and lifted its bill, there was no doubt!

MARbled GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*) – A pretty uncommon wader here, this large shorebird was foraging in a field along Marceaux Road in rice country. The bill of this species is long, slightly upturned, and with a bright pink base.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – A number of these migrants were foraging along the beaches we drove alongside on our second day. Often, it seemed that they were loosely associated with Sanderlings.

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*) – Some of the flooded fields in rice country hosted this interesting sandpiper. They stand taller than peeps, have fairly long legs and bills, but are smaller than the dowitchers and yellowlegs they often hang out with.

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – Very pale in nonbreeding plumage, these beach-loving shorebirds were sprinting along the waters edge near Holly Beach. At times, there were large, tight flocks all snoozing together.

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) – This was another medium-sized shorebird that we found in flooded rice fields. Between a peep and yellowlegs in size, the most noticeable thing was probably the dull brown plumage overall and the long drooping bill.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – The smallest shorebird, this tiny peep was picking along the ground at spots like Marceaux Road and Cameron Prairie NWR.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – A wintering peep species that we encountered a couple of times. Larger and paler than the Least, these have a relatively long bill with a droop.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – There were a couple of flooded rice fields near Thornwell that were loaded with this straight-billed shorebird. They feed by probing and have that distinct sewing machine movement.

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*) – Sharp eyes in the second van spotted a frozen snipe in a roadside ditch. We later found more in various flooded fields such as Cameron Prairie NWR and Marceaux Road.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – Only a few of us got eyes on this tail-bobbing shorebird near the ferry crossing.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – A sturdy *Tringa* that was present in wetlands and marshes on a couple of our days.

WILLET (WESTERN) (*Tringa semipalmata inornata*) – This large and gray *Tringa* was foraging along the sandy shores near Holly Beach.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – The best views of this slender shorebird was in the flooded fields of Niblett Road and Marceaux Road.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Abundant along the coast where they were the most common gull.

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) – Only a couple of these migrants were seen mixed in with the Laughing Gulls along the coast. These will probably continue to migrate farther south this winter.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – A few of the gull flocks along the beach had a few of these familiar guys mixed in.

HERRING GULL (AMERICAN) (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) – This was the largest species of gull we saw on tour. They were mixed in with all the other gulls on the beaches west of Holly Beach.

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – This interesting species is more of a marsh tern than an open ocean tern. We spied a trio of these sitting in the flooded field on Marceaux Road.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – A few of these big guys were seen on the 2nd day when we went down along the coast.

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*) – A smaller species of tern compared to the following and previous species, this common species was seen swooping and diving in waterways near Holly Beach, the ferry crossing, and near Cameron.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*) – These were easy to pick out by their long and orange bills, their white foreheads, and shaggy crests. We only saw these along the beach.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

WOOD STORK (*Mycteria americana*) – Although pretty rare, Don managed to get a photo of a few of these that flew by at Sabine NWR.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*) – One of these snake-necked swamp-dwellers was seen by only a few of us near the hotel.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – This tour enjoyed two species of cormorants including this one which shows white along the edge of the face as well as being smaller and longer-tailed.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – This is probably the most familiar cormorant in the country and we had a couple views on our 2nd and 3rd days.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – We looked up on our 2nd day to see several huge flocks of these large black-and-white pelicans soaring overhead.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Only along the saltwater habitats on our 2nd day, these were fairly common for us as they often soared down the shoreline.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – Generally an uncommon and hard bird to see. Still, a few of us on the combine watched as we flushed 3+ of these secretive herons from the wet rice fields near Thornwell.

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Fairly common in a variety of wet habitats.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Like the previous species, these large white herons were common and we tallied them daily.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Another common species, these smaller egrets have yellow feet (and parts of their legs are yellow too which we noted).

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – We saw some non-blue Little Blue Herons at Cameron Prairie NWR. The youngsters are white for a year before they start molting into their adult plumage.

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*) – A medium-sized, slender heron that sometimes goes by the old name Louisiana Heron.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – These small herons were common in a few fields where there were cattle, what a shocker!

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – We drove by a ditch near Marceaux Road where a flock of these flushed out from beside us.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*) – Swarms and swarms of these seemingly followed us around through the flooded rice fields! There was no shortage of this species throughout our trip.

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – The gargantuan flock near the rice fields in Thornwell were out of this world! We could hardly believe our eyes when we turned the corner and saw thousands upon thousands of these dark ibis crammed in the fields.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Platalea ajaja*) – A colorful addition to the mix of waders we saw, these pink gems were gorgeous as they flew by in morning light at Sabine NWR as well as the ones at Cameron Prairie NWR.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Only a couple of these were spotted overhead on our first day at the DeRidder airport.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – A common and daily occurrence.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – We found ourselves around a lot of water and that meant being around a lot of Osprey! These fish-eating raptors were fairly common along the coast.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus hudsonius*) – Seen several times in open, grassy, and marshy habitat.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – A wintering species here, this small Accipiter has a shorter, squared-off tail compared to the following species.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – This bird-eating raptor was spotted a couple of times including at the Sabine NWR loop trail.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – It's always a treat to see these massive birds and we succeeded in doing so each of the three days of our tour.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platyterus*) – Although this small Buteo migrates through in good numbers in the fall, it's very rare for them to linger so long into November. We had nice looks at one overhead during our lunch at Peveto Woods on our 2nd day.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Generally speaking, these were by far our most common raptor on the trip and some days we tallied more than 50. As you see below, there are a variety of subspecies possible.

RED-TAILED HAWK (BOREALIS) (*Buteo jamaicensis borealis*) – This is the typical eastern type with a normal red tail and a fairly prominent dark belly band.

RED-TAILED HAWK (KRIDER'S) (*Buteo jamaicensis kriderii*) – This subspecies is very pale overall including a mostly white head and a white base to the tail. What a striking bird! We encountered a couple of these on our 2nd and 3rd days.

RED-TAILED HAWK (FUERTESI) (*Buteo jamaicensis fuertesi*) – This southwestern type was spotted at least once near the Red-headed Woodpecker spot in Welsh. These have essentially no markings on the breast.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*) – Well this was a surprise! We were birding along the beach west of Holly Beach when we spotted one of these slowly flying out over the coastal prairie. I'm guessing something must have flushed it from its roost as they're usually strictly nocturnal.

Strigidae (Owls)

BARRED OWL (*Strix varia*) – It was fun getting to hear and then finally see these owls in Kisatchie National Forest! At one point, they really started hootin' it up.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – It seems like we passed one of these every mile along a stretch near Sabine NWR. They loved to sit on the power-lines to watch for fish below.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – This wintering woodpecker was detected a couple of times; first at Kisatchie NF and then again along Niblett Road.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) – Not a very common species in that part of Louisiana but we had a special spot near Welsh that is reliable for them.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes carolinus*) – Although they initially kept out of view somewhat, this eastern woodpecker finally showed itself at Kisatchie NF.

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates pubescens*) – Not all that common, our best looks came from our first stop on our first day in the pinewoods.

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER (*Dryobates borealis*) – A terrific target species for this quick Louisiana tour. A woodpecker that has gone through massive declines in recent decades, this species is closely tied to the pine forests that it relies on. We had great looks right away in Kisatchie National Forest and at one point we even had 3 in view at the same time!

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates villosus*) – We had a quick encounter with one near the Barred Owl spot in Kisatchie National Forest.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – This interesting raptor gave us numerous good looks including one that hunted in the rice fields alongside the combine! On our way out that afternoon, one was perched on a telephone pole that allowed us to drive right up next to it.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – A common falcon for us in open habitats.

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – Only a few folks caught a glimpse of this falcon on our second day alongside the beach.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – One of these impressive raptors was seen at the rice fields on our final day. We had one earlier in the trip too but it was a quick drive-by.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – These wintering flycatchers were pretty common and we saw them at a number of spots.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – A couple of these fun flycatchers were scoped along Niblett Road on our final morning.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – Although pretty rare to be around, and this late in the season, one of these flycatchers was on a power-line in the town of Holly Beach on our 2nd day.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – Although they will winter near Holly Beach in small numbers, it's still really cool when we happen upon some. We found one sitting on a fence just west of town.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Fairly common for us along the coast and Niblett Road.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*) – There was a quick glimpse in Kisatchie NF and then a couple folks found and photographed one in Welsh during lunch on our final day.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – Fairly common throughout the trip.

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – Common, tallied every day.

FISH CROW (*Corvus ossifragus*) – Definitely less common than the previous species, this small crow was tallied only on our 1st day when we found a large flock near DeRidder.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – This was the only swallow on our trip. We found a couple fields that had massive swarms overhead, easily numbering into the thousands or tens of thousands.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Poecile carolinensis*) – Several sightings in the more forested habitats on tour. Perhaps our best look though came from Niblett Road where a couple were checking out a cavity in the telephone pole.

TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – Seen and heard pretty well the first day in Kisatchie National Forest.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH (*Sitta pusilla*) – Our only nuthatch on tour but it was a good one. This southeast specialty was seen very nicely a number of times in the pine forests of Kisatchie National Forest. After we keyed into their calls and songs, nary a stop lacked them!

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*) – A quality bird for this tour, one of these little guys was seen climbing up a tree trunk in Kisatchie NF.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – A fairly common sound, this little wren was spotted a couple of times too including along Niblett Road.

WINTER WREN (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) – The downed logs along the creek in Kisatchie National Forest was where this little secretive mouse-of-a-bird liked to hang out.

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*) – We found ourselves in prime country for this grass-loving wren and we ended up seeing a number of these and quite well too!

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) – Sabine NWR had a trail through the marsh where we saw this cattail-loving species.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – Although a very common sound, they can be quite hard to see when you want to! We caught glimpses along Niblett Road.

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – Good views were had along Niblett Road.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus satrapa*) – This wintering species made a brief appearance along the road in Kisatchie NF. You had to look quick though, and high up; this species seems to love treetops.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – A common species for us, these little flitty guys were tallied every day.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – This was hands-down the most surprising sighting of the trip! Our visit to the town of DeRidder was well-timed; a lost wheatear was found at the airport there the day before our visit! We stopped in after lunch and had wonderful views as it foraged from the top of equipment, fences, a dumpster, lights, etc. It turns out, that day was the final day it was seen so we were very lucky indeed!

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – One of these was seen on a powerline at the DeRidder airport as well as a couple others near the hotel.
HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – One of these thrushes was calling from the shadows during our picnic lunch at Peveto Woods. However, it remained out of sight. [✱]
AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*) – Only a couple of these thrushes were seen but one on the ground in the town of Holly Beach showed very nicely.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Although the mewing calls weren't uncommon, this mostly-gray bird was pretty hard to actually lay eyes on! We caught a glimpse or two along Niblett Road.
NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Fairly common, these were seen around the hotel, in towns, etc.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Common in urban areas. [I]

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows)

BACHMAN'S SPARROW (*Peucaea aestivalis*) – We had outstanding looks at this southeastern specialty in Kisatchie NF. This pine-forest species is very secretive in the nonbreeding season but we somehow found an individual that didn't mind perching in the same spot for 15 minutes!
CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – A couple of these popped into view at spots like Sabine NWR. However, they weren't abundant on this trip.
FIELD SPARROW (*Spizella pusilla*) – We found one of these Spizellas along Niblett Road mixed with Savannah, Swamp, and White-crowned sparrows.
LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*) – Although a fairly rare bird on this tour, we managed to find one on a lawn in Holly Beach.
DARK-EYED JUNCO (SLATE-COLORED) (*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*) – This is another fairly uncommon sparrow on this tour but we crossed paths with one along the trail at Sabine NWR.
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) – A few of these popped up for us along Niblett Road alongside a few other sparrows.
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – Although they stayed out of view for most of us along Niblett Road, they were giving some song snippets which were nice to hear.
LECONTE'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus leconteii*) – Although not a species we see every time, we chanced into one at Sabine NWR and it even allowed scope views for a few moments. This can be a very tough species to find and see well.
NELSON'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) – Just like the previous species, these can be a real doozie to see! We worked and worked at it in the saltmarshes near Cameron and finally managed a few quick looks.
SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Fairly common throughout and especially places like Niblett Road.
SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*) – Not abundant, only a few of these boldly-marked sparrows were seen including along Niblett Road and the DeRidder airport.
SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*) – Our final morning along Niblett Road provided a few looks at this species in the tall grass along the fence.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*) – A few of these songsters were heard and then scoped along Niblett Road on our final morning.
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – A fairly common species for us on our 2nd and 3rd day.
BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – It was a treat to see this species mixed in with the Brown-headed in Holly Beach. Compared to that species, these are slightly larger, thicker-necked, with a red eye, and more gloss on the wings.
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – There were a couple of large flocks that we sifted through in Holly Beach.
COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – Outnumbered by the following two species, this shorter-tailed grackle was eventually found on our 3rd morning along Niblett Road.
BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*) – These dark-eyed and large-tailed grackles tended to be seen along the coast.
GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – The pale eyes were really noticeable during our views of these in Welsh on our 2nd day. They weren't hard to find, just head to the nearest gas station!

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – Somewhat plainly-marked, this warbler was spotted a few times on our 2nd and 3rd days at places like Sabine NWR.
COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – A denizen of marshes and grassy areas, this masked warbler popped into view nicely at Niblett Road.
PALM WARBLER (*Setophaga palmarum*) – Chris keyed in on this guy at the saltmarshes near Cameron. It came a little closer which was nice allowing for us to get decent views.
PINE WARBLER (*Setophaga pinus*) – An abundant bird during our first day in Kisatchie National Forest. For a landscape dominated by pines, it made sense!
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (MYRTLE) (*Setophaga coronata coronata*) – This common wintering warbler was seen each of our three days, although not in huge numbers.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – It's not a trip to the southeast without this bright red companion.
INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – A single bird was seen briefly at Sabine NWR but it didn't stick around long.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Seen a few times at gas stations and the like. [II]

MAMMALS

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – At least one of these was called out as we were driving through a town.

FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus niger*) – With a more reddish color overall, including the bushy tail, one of these darted in front of the first van during one of our drives.

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*) – What a show! We all enjoyed watching these as we took the ferry over to Cameron. How many were there? 15? 20? We even saw them from the saltmarsh stop.

WILD BOAR (*Sus scrofa*) – A few folks saw these black youngsters scamper off the road in the Kisatchie National Forest. This problematic and invasive species can now be found in every parish. [1]

Herps

GREEN ANOLE (CAROLINA ANOLE) (*Anolis carolinensis*) – Some folks saw this at Peveto Woods on our 2nd day.

WESTERN RIBBON SNAKE (*Thamnophis proximus*) – Some folks saw a garter snake, most likely this species.

AMERICAN ALLIGATOR (*Alligator mississippiensis*) – We weren't sure it was going to be warm enough for these to be out of the water but we did indeed find some at Cameron Prairie NWR.

AMERICAN GREEN TREEFROG (*Hyla cinerea*) – One of these was seen inside a pitstop building at Peveto Woods on our 2nd day.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 152 bird taxa and 4 mammal taxa