

Trip Report — Louisiana: Yellow Rails & Crawfish Tails 2024

October 31-November 4, 2024 with Dan Lane



Hard to deny that the main target was also one of the most popular birds of the Yellow Rail tour!
Photo by guide Dan Lane.

Autumn in Cajun country can be variable: some years it's hot, like a continuation of summer, others, it's full of cold fronts bringing migrants down from the North on a conveyor belt of wind. This year, it was more the former. It had been another dry year overall, and although our tour began with what appeared to be a cold front, the winds following it were not from the North, but from the East, which does not usually result in much turnover in southbound migrants. We had to shift our schedule around to be sure we would make the best of the weather and birds, so we started in the pine woods in the western part of the state our first day. The second day, we ventured into

the Rice Country, birding roadsides and fields in the morning, and then joining the rice harvest scene in the afternoon with our goal of seeing the mythical Yellow Rail. Later that afternoon, we visited Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge for waterfowl and a few other birds of interest. Finally, on Sunday, we visited the SW corner of Louisiana, Cameron Parish, birding beaches, cheniers, and marshland to see what was present. In all, we actually had some pretty good success with our main targets and some late migrants to boot! Our list was around 145 species, and we also had ample opportunity to try some of the local cuisine.



Kathy Neugebauer got this moody photo of a wintering male Vermilion Flycatcher on a dead lotus stalk at Lacassine Pool.

As one would expect, the bird that really burned a memory into the minds of the group was an amazing experience with a Yellow Rail on the ground! We could all gather around (with other participants of the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival) and get amazing views of a bird that had landed in the cut rice. Other things that folks voted to be favorite experiences were, the group itself (awww) and being able to ride on the rice combines. A few mammal experiences were memorable, such as the bottlenose dolphins in the Calcasieu River while we were in Cameron, and Raccoons that some folks spotted. Of course, other birds also made the cut, such as our views of a sleepy Barred Owl in the bottomland woods of Kisatchie National Forest, the oodles of both Black-bellied and Fulvous whistling-ducks and the Vermilion Flycatcher we enjoyed at Lacassine Pool, and several denizens of the salt marshes of the coast such as the two saltmarsh sparrows (Seaside and Nelson's) and several Clapper Rails that eventually gave us some good views. Finally, one of our final birds in Cameron was a White-winged Dove that we nearly drove by, but stopped to study its subtle beauty.



The Louisiana state bird, Brown Pelican, resting on a piling in the Calcasieu River seems a quintessentially Louisiana scene. Photo by Kathy Neugebauer.

Thanks everyone for joining me for a weekend of birding in my adopted home state! I hope you got a feel for what Louisiana is about and understand why it is an excellent birding destination in the fall, winter, and spring, with migrants and wintering birds (waterfowl, waders, blackbirds, and small landbirds) providing plenty to look at!

Perhaps we will see one another again in the future somewhere in the field! Keep them binoculars near at hand meanwhile!

Laissez les bon oiseaux rouler!



Louisiana hosts an incredible diversity of migrants, both waterbirds and landbirds. This Marbled Godwit was a surprise in the rice fields, but is more usual on the beach. Photo by Dan Lane.

Mammals:

Marsh Rice Rat (*Oryzomys palustris*)

Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)

Northern Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

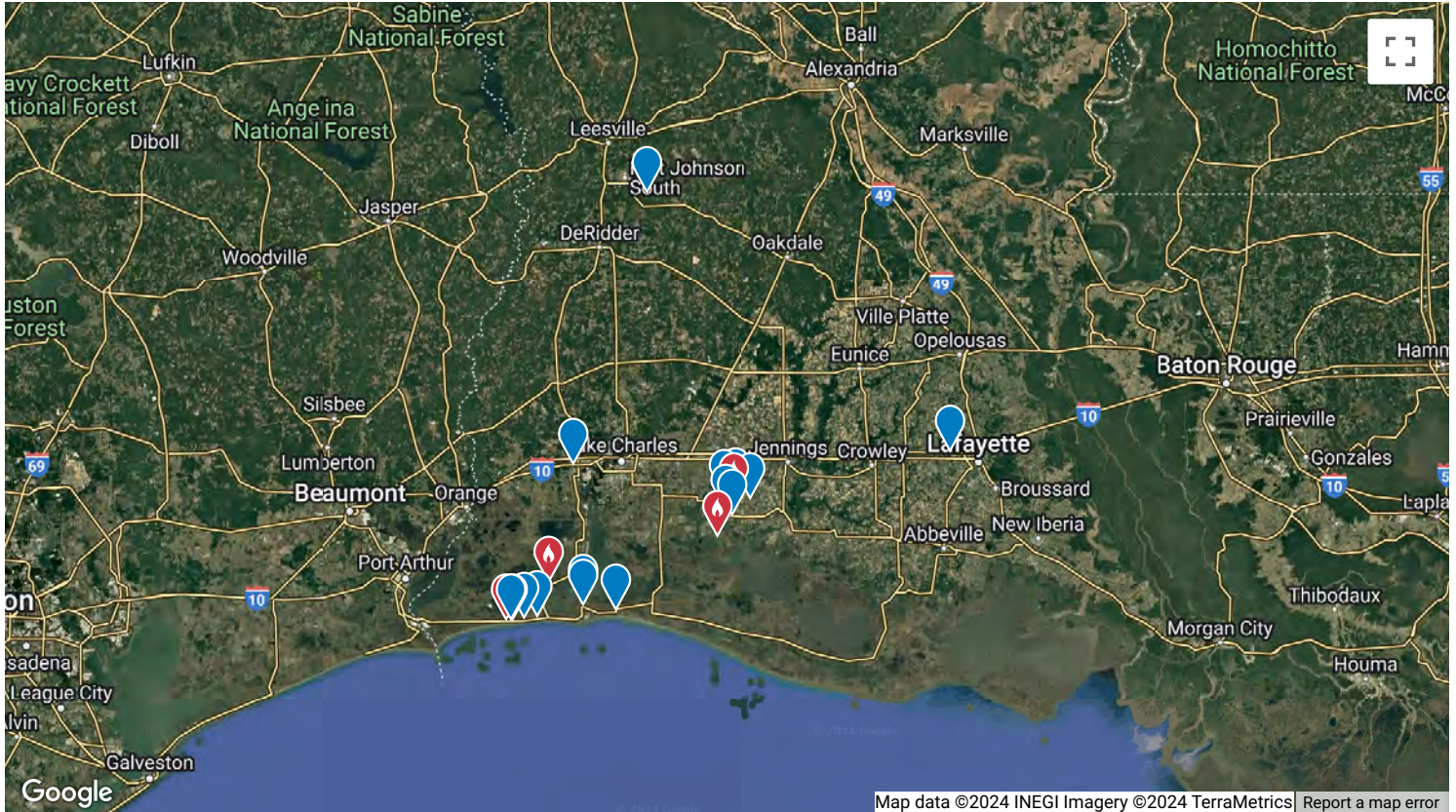
You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/289929>

Dan (the Barbet)

Field Guides' Louisiana: Yellow Rails and Crawfish Tails tour 2024 with Dan Lane



1 – 3 Nov 2024 (3 days) Link-only



Louisiana, United States

Calcasieu | Cameron | Jefferson Davis | Lafayette | Vernon

Daniel Lane



For a narrative summary of this tour, including a Field Guides photo gallery and additional media for this trip...



















 145





















 19

























 7

























Species Observed
























[Show all details](#)

























2000	Black-bellied Whistling-Duck <i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>	▶  1
18	Fulvous Whistling-Duck <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>	▶  2  1
1	Snow Goose <i>Anser caerulescens</i>	▶  1
74	Greater White-fronted Goose <i>Anser albifrons</i>	▶  3
1	Wood Duck <i>Aix sponsa</i>	▶  1
50	Blue-winged Teal <i>Spatula discors</i>	▶  2
10	Northern Shoveler <i>Spatula clypeata</i>	▶  1
20	Gadwall <i>Mareca strepera</i>	▶  1
13	Mottled Duck <i>Anas fulvigula</i>	▶  3
52	Northern Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>	▶  2
2020	Green-winged Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	▶  2
35	Ring-necked Duck <i>Aythya collaris</i>	▶  1
25	Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i> *	▶  1
3	Eurasian Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	▶  2
1	Inca Dove <i>Columbina inca</i>	▶  1
1	White-winged Dove <i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	▶  1
33	Mourning Dove <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	▶  3
1	Common Nighthawk <i>Chordeiles minor</i>	▶  3  1
3	King Rail <i>Rallus elegans</i>	▶  1
5	Clapper Rail <i>Rallus crepitans</i>	▶  1
2	Virginia Rail <i>Rallus limicola</i>	▶  2

1	Sora <i>Porzana carolina</i>	▶  1
20	Common Gallinule <i>Gallinula galeata</i>	▶  1
50	American Coot <i>Fulica americana</i>	▶  1
3	Purple Gallinule <i>Porphyrio martinica</i>	▶  2  1
3	Yellow Rail <i>Coturnicops noveboracensis</i>	▶  1
1	Limpkin <i>Aramus guarauna</i>	▶  1
150	Black-necked Stilt <i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	▶  1
33	American Avocet <i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	▶  3
15	Black-bellied Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	▶  3
16	Killdeer <i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	▶  4
4	Semipalmated Plover <i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	▶  1
1	Piping Plover <i>Charadrius melodus</i>	▶  1
6	Snowy Plover <i>Anarhynchus nivosus</i>	▶  1
1	Marbled Godwit <i>Limosa fedoa</i>	▶  3  1
55	Long-billed Dowitcher <i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	▶  2
7	Wilson's Snipe <i>Gallinago delicata</i>	▶  3
1	Spotted Sandpiper <i>Actitis macularius</i>	▶  1
37	Lesser Yellowlegs <i>Tringa flavipes</i>	▶  4
2	Willet <i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	▶  2
9	Greater Yellowlegs <i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	▶  4
17	Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	▶  2
25	Stilt Sandpiper <i>Calidris himantopus</i>	▶  2
25	Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	▶  2
1	Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	▶  1

29	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	▶		3
143	Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>	▶		6
7	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	▶		3
27	American Herring Gull	<i>Larus smithsonianus</i>	▶		3
3	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	▶		2
21	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	▶		3
74	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	▶		5
52	Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>	▶		3
20	Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	▶		2
2	Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>	▶		1
1	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>	▶		1
16	Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum brasilianum</i>	▶		2
210	White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>	▶		4
4	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>	▶		1
2	Roseate Spoonbill	<i>Platalea ajaja</i>	▶		1
1	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	▶	 	1
1	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	▶		1
4	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	▶		2
4	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	▶		3
2	Western Cattle-Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	▶		1
9	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	▶		4
6	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	▶		5
39	American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	▶		2

13	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	▶  3
6	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	▶  3
2	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	▶  2
9	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>	▶  6
5	Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	▶  4
1	Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>	▶  1
2	Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	▶  1
1	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	▶  1
1	Barred Owl	<i>Strix varia</i>	▶  1
2	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	▶  2
1	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	▶  1
9	Red-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	▶  3
3	Downy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>	▶  3
2	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates borealis</i>	▶  1
1	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates villosus</i>	▶  1
2	Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	▶  1
4	Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara plancus</i>	▶  3
9	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	▶  4
3	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	▶  3
1	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	▶  1
1	Eastern Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>	▶  1
16	Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	▶  7
3	Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	▶  3  2

1	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	▶  1
2	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Tyrannus forficatus</i>	▶  1
1	White-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo griseus</i>	▶  1
2	Blue-headed Vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>	▶  2
4	Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	▶  2
12	Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	▶  3
5	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	▶  1
100	Fish Crow	<i>Corvus ossifragus</i>	▶  1
13	Carolina Chickadee	<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>	▶  3
4	Tufted Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>	▶  1
241	Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	▶  5
1	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	▶  1
5	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	▶  4
15	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Corthylio calendula</i>	▶  5
11	Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>	▶  2
10	Brown-headed Nuthatch	<i>Sitta pusilla</i>	▶  1
31	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	▶  4
8	Northern House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	▶  4
3	Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus stellaris</i>	▶  2
4	Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	▶  2
11	Carolina Wren	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	▶  3
81	European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> *	▶  3
1	Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	▶  1

2	Brown Thrasher <i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	▶  2
8	Northern Mockingbird <i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	▶  5
3	Hermit Thrush <i>Catharus guttatus</i>	▶  1
1	American Pipit <i>Anthus rubescens</i>	▶  1
3	Bachman's Sparrow <i>Peucaea aestivalis</i>	▶  1
4	Chipping Sparrow <i>Spizella passerina</i>	▶  1
2	White-crowned Sparrow <i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	▶  1
1	White-throated Sparrow <i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	▶  1
4	Seaside Sparrow <i>Ammospiza maritima</i>	▶  1
1	Nelson's Sparrow <i>Ammospiza nelsoni</i>	▶  1
32	Savannah Sparrow <i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	▶  4
1	Song Sparrow <i>Melospiza melodia</i>	▶  1
6	Swamp Sparrow <i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	▶  3
1	Eastern Meadowlark <i>Sturnella magna</i>	▶  1
1640	Red-winged Blackbird <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	▶  7
3	Bronzed Cowbird <i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	▶  2  1
330	Brown-headed Cowbird <i>Molothrus ater</i>	▶  3
5	Common Grackle <i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>	▶  1
192	Boat-tailed Grackle <i>Quiscalus major</i>	▶  7
84	Great-tailed Grackle <i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	▶  4
1	Black-and-white Warbler <i>Mniotilta varia</i>	▶  1
1	Tennessee Warbler <i>Leiothlypis peregrina</i>	▶  1
1	Orange-crowned Warbler <i>Leiothlypis celata</i>	▶  1

- 8 **Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas* ▶ 🗑️ 4
 - 1 **American Redstart** *Setophaga ruticilla* ▶ 🗑️ 1
 - 2 **Magnolia Warbler** *Setophaga magnolia* ▶ 🗑️ 1
 - 9 **Pine Warbler** *Setophaga pinus* ▶ 🗑️ 1
 - 38 **Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata* ▶ 🗑️ 3
 - 1 **Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla* ▶ 🗑️ 1
 - 13 **Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis* ▶ 🗑️ 4
 - 6 **Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea* ▶ 🗑️ 2
- ADDITIONAL TAXA
- 4340 **Glossy/White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus/chihi* ▶ 🗑️ 4
 - 70 **Boat-tailed/Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus major/mexicanus* ▶ 🗑️ 2
-