

Greenville County Bird Club Trip Report

- Dates:** December 11 - 13, 2009
- Locations:** Piers near Myrtle Beach, Huntington Beach State Park, Santee Coastal Reserve WMA, Georgetown waste water Treatment Plant.
- Leader:** Paul Serridge
- Comments:** Submitted by Paul Serridge

The poor weather forecast for the weekend caused several potential participants to decide not to make the trip to the coast. Too bad – the weather was good on both Friday and Saturday and they missed some very good birds!

On Friday afternoon 6 GCBC members started at Garden City Pier where an adult male Common Eider afforded excellent close-up views and some great photographs. 4 of us continued on to visit 4 other piers: Myrtle Beach State Park, Springmaid, Apache Campground, and finally Cherry Grove Beach. We did not see any more sea ducks but had good views of Red-throated and Common Loons, and lots of Northern Gannets, most in full adult plumage. A Loggerhead Shrike was seen in the parking area at MBSP pier.

On Saturday we were joined by local birders Steve and Barbara Thomas at Huntington Beach State Park. We covered all areas of the park. The star birds of the day were a Western Kingbird near Atalaya, Cave Swallows and a White-winged Scoter from the carriageway, Redheads and Wood Storks on Mullet Pond, a Clapper Rail at the Ed. Center boardwalk, and an immature male Common Eider at the jetty. The sandy point to the west of the jetty was not well populated by birds and we did not see the expected Am. Oystercatchers there. Consequently, late afternoon we drove to the boardwalk at Murrells Inlet where we found 3 Am. Oystercatchers.

Sunday was rather wet but we went to Santee Coastal Reserve WMA hoping that the rain would stop. It did stop long enough to search for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers along the entrance dirt road. We did not find any but did see lots of Pine Warblers (every shade of plumage from drab gray to bright yellow) and a Brown-headed Nuthatch. The rain then came down hard and so the only birding we did was from the

car -2 immature Bald Eagles, and we added Little Blue Heron and Snowy Egret to the trip list.

We made a quick stop in Georgetown to check out the pools at the Waste water Treatment Plant. There were hundreds of gulls, the Bonaparte's being the last bird to add to our list.

In summary, the total list of species (76) was smaller than expected because of the rain on Sunday. On the other hand we saw some excellent birds.

Photos of the adult male Common Eider and the Western Kingbird can be found at http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/gallery/coei_womble.html and http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/gallery/weki_womble.html