

Greenville County Bird Club Trip Report

- Date:** October 26 – 28, 2007
- Location:** Savannah GA area / Lowcountry SC
- Comments:** Submitted by JB Hines, Trip Leader

Six members of the GCBC enjoyed the October 26-28, 2007 outing to the Savannah area. Part of the group arrived on Friday and birded at Hunting Island SP in the rain. Although conditions were bad, they found 3 species (Painted Bunting, R-b Gull & Royal Tern) not seen again on the trip.

Fortunately the weather cleared by Saturday morning and we had a beautiful day of birding at Donnelly, Bear Island (observation deck & Mary's House Pond) and Fish Haul Creek Park at Hilton Head Island. At Donnelly we found two families of B-b Whistling-Ducks. One pair had ~8 newly hatched chicks and the other pair had 7 juvenile ducklings probably capable of flight. I would strongly recommend a visit to the Fish Haul Creek Park for anyone visiting HHI. The mudflats behind the beach are very extensive at low tide and had a lot of shorebirds, waders, gulls & terns. You could easily spend a half day birding this location.

A cold front passed through on Saturday night followed by a cool and windy Sunday morning, which made for less than ideal birding conditions at Savannah NWR. We were able to find Purple Gallinules, Marsh & Winter Wrens & a late Am. Redstart along the tour road. It appears that the refuge is being managed a little more actively than in recent years. Some excavation work is underway and overgrown dike trails are being cleared. As recently as 5 or 6 years ago this was a much better place to bird because more of the impoundments were filled and the brush was burned regularly. Hopefully it will have more impoundments filled for waterfowl in the future.

Some of our group stopped at the Bluff Unit of the Santee NWR on the way home. The water level is extremely low in Lake Marion and Canty Bay is practically dry. We did not find much there and I would suggest waiting until water levels rise before visiting this location.

We found 101 species for the weekend, which is well below the 120 that we got on the same weekend in 2006. We also did this trip at the end of October 2003 and found 108 species then. I believe two factors contributed to the lower count, the weather and not having access to the GA DOT spoil site which we visited on both previous trips. I hope we can get back on the spoil site next year.

Good birding,
JB

Bird List:

Species:

Pied-billed Grebe
Brown Pelican
Double-crested Cormorant
Anhinga
American Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
White Ibis
Glossy Ibis
Wood Stork
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Green-winged Teal
Mottled Duck
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Ring-necked Duck
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
Merlin
Clapper Rail

Purple Gallinule
Common Moorhen
American Coot
Black-bellied Plover
Killdeer
American Oystercatcher
Greater Yellowlegs
Willet
Marbled Godwit
Sanderling
Western Sandpiper
Wilson's Snipe
Laughing Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Caspian Tern
Royal Tern
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Eastern Phoebe
Tree Swallow
Blue Jay
American Crow
Fish Crow
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
Winter Wren
Marsh Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
Loggerhead Shrike

European Starling
White-eyed Vireo
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Pine Warbler
Palm Warbler
American Redstart
Common Yellowthroat
Northern Cardinal
Indigo Bunting
Painted Bunting
Eastern Towhee
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Boat-tailed Grackle
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow