

Greenville County Bird Club Trip Report

Dates: October 24 - 26, 2008

Locations: Donnelley WMA, Botany Bay Plantation WMA, Dungannon Plantation Heritage Preserve.



photo taken by JB Hines on Saturday at Botany Bay Plantation. Birders are as follows (from left to right): Chip, Paul (back to camera), Cindy (back to camera), Sara, Denise, Louis, Jane, Barbara.

Leader JB Hines, Paul Serridge

Nine club members (Denise Dupon, Chip Gilbert, Sara Gilbert, JB Hines, Jane Kramer, Barbara and Paul Serridge, Louis and Cindy Womble) participated in a 3 day trip to 3 areas in the southern coastal region of the state. Four of us stopped at the Orangeburg Sod Farms on the way to Walterboro. The fields were very dry, parched in some places, and the absence of shorebirds was not really a surprise. However, we had great looks at a Peregrine Falcon which flew across the dirt road just in front of us and then perched in a field. Unfortunately, it didn't stay long enough for us to get cameras out of the car. Shortly afterwards we had similarly good looks at a perched Loggerhead Shrike. It was a good start to the trip.

On Friday morning it started to rain around 7.45 as we were driving to Donnelley. The rain continued all day! It did not let up until 9.30 that night. Consequently, the birding at Donnelley was disappointing. The birds had more sense than we did – they found shelter and stayed still. It was hard to

focus on any birds while trying to hold up a golf umbrella! The only time we were out of the rain was when the Donnelley staff allowed us to use a barn-like building as a shelter while we ate lunch. We stayed there for over an hour. From the doorway we spotted several bluebirds, an American Kestrel and a few Pine Warblers. After lunch we paid a short visit to Mary's House Pond at Bear Island WMA but there were no ducks. The rain was getting heavier and at 1.30 we decided to give up and returned to our hotel. The day's total was a slim 48 species, one of those being a Killdeer over the hotel in Walterboro.

By Saturday the weather had improved considerably – no rain! We visited the Botany Bay Plantation WMA where JB led us on the 3 mile driving tour around the extensive wildlife area and then on a half mile out and back walk across a causeway to a beach. The birding was quite good (72 species) but we were low on counts of shorebirds, gulls and terns. Botany Bay is certainly worth a second visit, perhaps in the spring.

Sunday's trip to Dungannon Plantation Heritage Preserve, a first for the GCBC, resulted in a disappointingly low count of only 28 species. The weather was ideal and the Preserve was really a beautiful place but at this season the birds are not apparently attracted to it. It will be worth a visit in April through June when the Wood Storks will, or should be nesting there.

In all we listed 86 species, a much lower total than we were expecting, in large part because of the really bad weather on Friday.

The attached Excel file shows all the species reported during the outing. I have added an extra column which shows 18 more species reported by JB Hines at Donnelley, Bear Island and Botany Bay in the 4 or 5 days prior to the GCBC outing. Given better weather on Friday (and a little luck) we could have surpassed 100 species during the outing. Maybe next time...

Bird List:

Species:

See separate Excel File