

Bird TREKS

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

CAMERON PARISH & the GULF COAST

For coastal migrants, local specialties & just a bit of Texas!

Dates Friday, 7 April through Friday, 14 April 2017: 8 days and 7 nights

We'll visit **Cameron Parish**, the state's premier birding locale, with its vast marshlands and beautiful, bird-filled beaches. It is famous for migrants, rarities, and intriguing breeding birds.

Ancient wooded ridges known as **cheniers** that can abound with migrant songbirds. Because of its position in the very center of the **Mississippi flyway**, nearly HALF of eastern North America's migratory songbirds pass through **Louisiana** each spring. This is the **Louisiana** counterpart of High Island, Texas, without the crowds of people.

Sabine NWR, Holly Beach, Lacassine NWR, and Louisiana's famous **rice and crawdad fields** for shorebirds, waterfowl, long-legged waders, and rails.

You can expect **175 or more species** on this incredible tour. A complete list of the species seen on previous tours is available on our website:

<http://www.birdtreks.com/birds-previously-seen/LACP.pdf>

SPECIAL OFFER!

You may wish to combine the **Southwest Louisiana Tour** with a week on **Dauphin Island** and the **Alabama Gulf Coast**. The dates for Alabama are 15 - 22 April 2017, immediately following the Louisiana tour. You will receive a **\$200 discount** if you participate in both tours. See our separate Alabama itinerary for more details.



Least Terns are common on the Gulf Coast, along with many additional tern species.

- - Tom Amico

[Target species are on page 2]

A sampling of Cajun Avian Specialties includes . . .

American White Pelican	Black Tern
Neotropic Cormorant	Inca Dove
Anhinga	Barn Owl
Least Bittern	Pileated Woodpecker
White-faced Ibis	Red-cockaded Woodpecker
Roseate Spoonbill	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Marsh Wren
Mottled Duck	Loggerhead Shrike
Swallow-tailed Kite	Yellow-throated Vireo
Mississippi Kite	Golden-winged Warbler
Peregrine Falcon	Blue-winged Warbler
King Rail	Prothonotary Warbler
Sora	Blackburnian Warbler
Purple Gallinule	Yellow-throated Warbler
Wilson's Plover	Hooded Warbler
Piping Plover	Summer Tanager
Long-billed Curlew	Dickcissel
Gull-billed Tern	Bachman's Sparrow
Sandwich Tern	Yellow-headed Blackbird



A mixed flock of **Indigo Buntings** and **Blue Grosbeaks** may contain a **Painted Bunting**, or even a beautifully marked **Dickcissel**.

- - Tom Amico

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

7 - 14 April 2017

Day Agenda

- 1 Meet at the Lafayette, Louisiana Airport at about noon, where the tour begins. It was great to return to this beautiful area after Hurricane Rita in 2007 and 2008, and the birding was excellent. Now, years later, we are going back after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and helping to pump money into the local economy with our presence. Our first stop will be nearby Lake Martin for the impressive **long-legged wader rookery**, **Roseate Spoonbills**, and nesting **Prothonotary Warblers**. We may also see **Barred Owl**, **Red-shouldered Hawk**, **Anhinga**, **Northern Parula**, and our first of many **American Alligators**, which can be quite large. We'll spend the first night in Lafayette.
- 2 This morning we'll bird our way southwest to the Gulf Coast, looking for **Wilson's Phalarope**, **Purple Gallinule**, and **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** along the way. We will spend the full day birding in Louisiana's famed marshlands and beaches, concentrating on the expansive Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. Target species include **Neotropic Cormorant**, **Fulvous Whistling-Duck**, **Purple Gallinule**, and **Least Bittern**. We will see **King Rails**, often with black, downy young. On past tours we found a **Western Grebe** swimming in the Gulf, and a small flock of **Black Scoters** migrating along the coast. Our next four nights will be in the Gulf Coast town of Cameron.

[Day 3 begins on page 3]

- 3 Today we'll drive east to Oak Grove and Grand Chenier to look for **Neotropical migrants, Barn Owl, and Least Bittern**. Whenever the proper weather conditions prevail, we will abandon our afternoon plans and bird the nearest chenier. Northerly winds can bring down thousands of Gulf migrants, and the trees may be alive with **warblers, vireos, thrushes, tanagers, grosbeaks, and other songbirds**. Fallouts such as these have produced first state records including **Townsend's Warbler, Hepatic Tanager, and Hooded Oriole**. Let the north winds blow! Our second night in Cameron.
- 4 We will spend a full day in the coastal refuges including the famed Rockefeller and Cameron-Prairie National Wildlife Refuges. Here we may find **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Dickcissel, Painted Bunting, and a nice variety of waterfowl**. Some time spent scoping rice fields could produce a few **Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits, Franklin's Gull, and many other aquatic species**. We'll search for **Crested Caracara**, the northernmost population on the continent. Whenever we have a free hour early or late in the day, East Jetty Beach, just a mile south of Cameron, is excellent for **shorebirds, gulls, and terns**. Oak groves in and near Cameron can yield interesting **songbirds, including White-crowned Sparrow and Summer Tanager**. Our third night in Cameron.
- 5 This may be a good day to drive into East Texas to visit Sea Rim State Park and Sabine Woods (pronounced suh BEAN'). On a previous tour we planned our visit with the mid-day arrival of a cold front and a brief, heavy rain. This resulted in the fallout of hundreds of Neotropical migrants: **50 Orchard Orioles, 75 Indigo Buntings, half a dozen Painted Buntings, FOUR Cerulean Warblers, Western Kingbirds, Philadelphia and Yellow-throated Vireos, almost 20 different warblers, and many more wonderful birds**. It was quite an afternoon! Last year we found a roosting **Chuck-will's-widow** at Sabine Woods. What a great bird. Our fourth and final night in the coastal town of Cameron.
- 6 A return to Holly Beach may yield a few **seabirds** such as a **Parasitic Jaeger or Northern Gannet**. Rarities in the Holly Beach area during recent spring migrations include **Masked Duck, Tropical Kingbird, and Shiny Cowbird**, among many others. Sabine Lake and Blue Buck Pond are good for **Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, and a variety of waterfowl**. By now we should have seen **Inca Dove, White-winged Dove, and Eurasian Collared-Dove**. Other possibilities include **Anhinga, Summer Tanager, and Brown-headed Nuthatch**. We'll drive north and spend the night in the town of Lake Charles, 40 miles from the coast.
- 7 Today's birding will be an inland loop through Calcasieu and Beauregard Parishes. We'll look for **Mississippi and Swallow-tailed Kites** at Niblett's Bluff, **Greater Roadrunner** at Old River, and pine forest specialties such as **Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, Pine Warbler, and Brown-headed Nuthatch** in Kisatchie National Forest. The river bottoms may yield **Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Swainson's and Prothonotary Warblers**. A second night in Lake Charles.

[Day 8 and important details are on page 4]

- 8 Our final morning will be open for anything we want to do. If we missed **Red-cockaded Woodpecker** yesterday, there will be more time to look for it this morning. If our target species cooperated, then another search of the rice fields may yield an unusual shorebird such as a **Curlew Sandpiper** or **Ruff**. We will spend several hours at a turf farm, landfill, and adjacent back roads to look for **Crested Caracara**, **Swainson's Hawk**, **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, and **Buff-breasted and Upland Sandpipers**. We found a **Lark Sparrow** here last year, quite unusual for this region. After lunch we'll drive to Lafayette Airport, where this fantastic tour ends. Or, hopefully you will join me on the drive to Mobile and on to Dauphin Island, Alabama. That drive last year produced a large flock of **Sandhill Cranes**, a **Red-headed Woodpecker**, and an adult **Bald Eagle**!

For a map of the Louisiana Tour, click on this link, or cut and paste into your browser:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=zDJlwFKF8JcU.kGpuyKggmK88>

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Leader The Bird Treks Tour to **SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA** will be led by **Bob Schutsky**. Bob has lots of experience with all of the target species, having led many previous tours to Louisiana and nearby Texas, Alabama, Florida, and Mexico. He knows how to time the birding with the weather for the best possible results.

Price \$2395 per person based upon double occupancy. Single accommodations are available for an extra charge of \$455. We will take a maximum of seven participants. On rare occasion we may extend the maximum to ten participants.

NOTE There is a **\$200 discount** if you also participate in the **Dauphin Island Alabama Tour**, which immediately follows the Louisiana Tour.

Includes Expert guide service, entrance fees, all ground transportation within Louisiana and Texas, **ALL meals**, and lodging for seven nights. **ALL tips** are also included in the tour fee, except for anything that you may wish to give to your tour leader(s).

Does not include cost of airfare to and from Lafayette, Louisiana. Bird Treks will, upon request, help you obtain the least expensive air transportation. Also not included are the cost of alcoholic beverages and items of a personal nature.



Roseate Spoonbill

- - *Jeanne Kern, 2016 participant*

Deposit A \$500 deposit will assure your space on the tour. The balance is due 7 February 2017. Please send your deposit **SOON** to avoid disappointment and to secure your spot on the tour.

[Final details are on page 5]

Extra Services We offer the services of our exclusive BIRD TREKS travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel. Lori has 32 years of experience in the travel industry and is a veteran birder. Contact her at Bailey Travel / Travel Time, **717-855-2128**, at her direct line, **717-855-2128**, or e-mail her at lori@trvltime.com. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free telephone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There may be a small fee for these services.

Refund & Cancellation Policy With written notice more than 60 days prior to the first day of the tour, 100% of your deposit will be refunded, minus a \$75 service fee. With 30-60 days notice, you will receive a 50% refund of the full cost of the tour. No refund can be made with less than 30 days notice. You will receive a full refund if you provide a replacement for your spot on the tour. No partial refund can be given once the tour begins. We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment. Contact **Allianz Global Assistance** and mention **BIRD TREKS, ACCAM # F021096**. You can apply via the Internet at this website: www.allianztravelinsurance.com, or phone toll-free at **1-866-884-3556**.



We are likely to find a **Barn Owl**.
- - *Jim & Deva Burns, Natural Impacts*

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