

## Greenville County Bird Club Trip Report

**Dates:** February 29 – March 2, 2008

**Locations & Leaders** Donnelley WMA and Bear Island WMA – leader was Jeff Mollenhauer (SC Audubon)

Huntington Beach State Park – leader was Paul Serridge

Santee Coastal WMA – leader was JB Hines

**Comments:** **Outing Photos Follow Bird List Below**

Eight GCBC members took part in the weekend trip to 4 major SC coastal birding sites. On Friday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, Jeff Mollenhauer led GCBC members, together with 2 birders from Charleston, on an excellent tour of Donnelley and Bear Island WMAs. Highlights included a large number of Tundra Swans (100 +), a very cooperative Sora (which obligingly stayed out in the open for several minutes, allowing plenty of opportunity for photographs), Bald Eagles, Wood Storks, several duck species including Mottled Duck, many, very iridescent Glossy Ibis (17 at the edge of one impoundment alone), several flocks of mixed shorebirds, a Loggerhead Shrike, 7 White Pelicans and 5 Warbler species (Yellow-throated, Black-and-white, Palm, Pine and Yellow-rumped). The count at the end of a very good day's birding was 104 species!

For the visit to Huntington Beach State Park on Saturday, led by Paul Serridge, we were joined by 2 visiting birders from Upstate New York. Although the day was warm and sunny, a strong wind kept many species down and birding was far less productive than it had been on Friday. Mullet Pond held 7 Mute Swans but only a few ducks and herons. The feeders at the Education Center had been removed for repainting and the jetty was devoid of birds apart from 2 Ruddy Turnstones and a couple of Savannah Sparrows (Ipswich race). Fortunately, a walk along the drive leading from Atalaya produced excellent views of adult Black-crowned Night-herons, the only ones seen over the weekend. From the beach, the group was able to observe many adult Northern Gannets, both Common and Red-throated Loons, small flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls (efforts to turn one of them into a Black-headed Gull were unsuccessful!) and multiple flocks of Horned Grebes. All were very close to the beach.

The Horned Grebes provided some excitement when it was thought that a Red-necked Grebe, and then an Eared Grebe were among them. However, after careful observation (and much consultation of the Peterson and Sibley Guides) it was decided that they were all Horned Grebes in different plumage stages. The point at the western end of the jetty had held hundreds of mixed shorebirds on Tuesday but, apart from a few American Oystercatchers, they were not there on Saturday! Good looks at 3 Piping Plovers on the nearby mud-flats (together with several Semi-palmated and Black-bellied Plovers) somewhat compensated for the lack of other shorebirds. The group visited the open areas and feeders at the park camp-site, unsuccessfully trying to locate a Common Ground-dove, which would have been a life-bird for Brian Barchus.

On Sunday JB Hines led the trip to the Santee Coastal Reserve south of Georgetown. We were joined by friends Steve and Barbara Thomas from Socastee. Even before leaving, the wetland area behind the hotel had yielded several Wilson's Snipe, Killdeer and 3 warbler species. On the entrance road to the reserve we stopped to look for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and after only a few minutes were treated to good views of two of the birds, several times very close together on the same tree. Life-bird for Brian! Unfortunately, it was a little too early in the year to find the elusive Bachman's Sparrows. They are almost impossible to find when they are not singing. A walk on the bike-hike trail produced several duck species, including Northern Pintail, several Bald Eagles, a few shorebirds, a brief look at a passing Merlin and 3 White Pelicans. The ducks were all very flighty and stayed away from us. Also, the strong, persistent wind made observation through the 'scopes somewhat difficult.

All-in-all it had been a productive and enjoyable 3 day trip. The final species count (including a few reported on the drives to and from the coast) totaled an impressive 141 (see complete list below). The list includes Common Ground Dove (Brian got his second lifer!) and Brewer's Blackbird which were seen by 4 of the group in Bowman on the drive back to Greenville on Sunday afternoon.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the trip. We should do it again! The relatively low numbers of species at HBSP and at the Santee Coastal WMA may have been a result of the dates of the trip. Perhaps next year we should consider moving this trip back to early February.

Paul Serridge

**Bird List:**

Species:

Canada Goose  
Mute Swan  
Tundra Swan  
Wood Duck  
Gadwall  
American Wigeon  
American Black Duck  
Mottled Duck  
Mallard  
Blue-winged Teal  
Green-winged Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
Northern Pintail  
Ring-necked Duck  
Lesser Scaup  
Black Scoter  
Bufflehead  
Hooded Merganser  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Ruddy Duck  
Red-throated Loon  
Common Loon  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Horned Grebe  
Northern Gannet  
American White Pelican  
Brown Pelican  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Anhinga  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Snowy Egret  
Little Blue Heron  
Tricolored Heron  
Black-crowned Night Heron  
White Ibis

Glossy Ibis  
Wood Stork  
Black Vulture  
Turkey Vulture  
Osprey  
Bald Eagle  
Northern Harrier  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
American Kestrel  
Merlin  
Wild Turkey  
Clapper Rail  
Virginia Rail  
Sora  
Common Moorhen  
American Coot  
Sandhill Crane  
Black-bellied Plover  
Semipalmated Plover  
Piping Plover  
Killdeer  
American Oystercatcher  
American Avocet  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Willet  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Sanderling  
Western Sandpiper  
Dunlin  
Short-billed Dowitcher  
Wilson's Snipe  
Laughing Gull  
Bonaparte's Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Great Black-backed Gull  
Caspian Tern  
Forster's Tern  
Rock Pigeon  
Eurasian Collared Dove  
Mourning Dove  
Common Ground Dove  
Great Horned Owl  
Barred Owl

Belted Kingfisher  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Red-cockaded Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
Eastern Phoebe  
Loggerhead Shrike  
White-eyed Vireo  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Fish Crow  
Purple Martin  
Tree Swallow  
Carolina Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Brown-headed Nuthatch  
Carolina Wren  
House Wren  
Marsh Wren  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Eastern Bluebird  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Northern Mockingbird  
Brown Thrasher  
European Starling  
American Pipit  
Cedar Waxwing  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Yellow-throated Warbler  
Pine Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Black and White Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Eastern Towhee  
Chipping Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Fox Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow

White-throated Sparrow  
Northern Cardinal  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Brewer's Blackbird  
Boat-tailed Grackle  
Common Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
House Finch  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Northern Cardinal  
Rusty Blackbird  
House Finch  
House Sparrow



Red cockaded woodpecker / photo by Louis Womble