



Trip Report for Huntington Beach State Park and Georgetown Areas. 15-19 April 2026

submitted by Jim Gant

Trip Coordinator(s): Anne Presnell

Locations: Huntington Beach State Park, Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center, Santee Coastal Reserve, Hampton Plantation State Park, Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge-Hasty Point, Brookgreen Botanical Gardens, and Murrells Inlet Boardwalk

Temperature: 60's – 80's

Weather: Partly Cloudy to Sunny

Target Bird(s), if any:

Number of participants: 25

Bird List: The list is a total from all locations.

Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Mottled Duck, White-winged Scoter, Wild Turkey, Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, King Rail, Clapper Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Black-necked Stilt, American Oystercatcher, Black-bellied Plover, Killdeer, Hudsonian Whimbrel, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Sanderling, Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, Laughing Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Black Skimmer, Least Tern, Forster's Tern, Sandwich Tern, Royal Tern, Pied-billed Grebe, Wood Stork, Anhinga, Double-crested Cormorant, White Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Least Bittern, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Snowy Egret, Green Heron, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Brown Pelican, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Swallow-tailed Kite, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Purple Martin, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Marsh Wren, Carolina Wren, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, House Finch, American Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Yellow-breasted Chat, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Boat-tailed Grackle, Ovenbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Parula, Pine Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Blue Grosbeak, Painted Bunting; for a total of **120 Species**. Also, please see the eBird Trip Report at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/507646>.

Comments: (such as, notable birds seen, interesting bird or animal behavior, condition of the birding site, participant comments):

This was a great year for our annual trip to South Carolina and the areas listed above. The number folks on our trip grew to 25 this year. Anne Presnell again did a fantastic job planning, coordinating and organizing this trip. Jim Eldrett also did an excellent job organizing our dinner arrangements. But what also made this trip great was everyone's participation in spotting birds and helping others see them, and overall, just helping one another.

We were again able to include a visit to the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center. However, we could only do so by going there on Thursday instead of the usual Friday that we have done in the past. To accommodate this, we had to expand our trip length by one day. So, a part of our group traveled on Wednesday, 15 April to arrive in time. Several of those chose to arrive early on Wednesday to do some birding mostly in Huntington Beach State Park and the Murrells Inlet area.

On Thursday morning, this group of 14 (the number allowed for each tour) traveled to the South Island Public Boat Landing to begin our adventure. After our orientation we began our birding at various sites including wetland areas and the Longleaf Pine area where we hoped to see a Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Although we saw some nesting sites, we did not see any. We had a great time for a little over 4 hours, seeing or hearing 64 species. While this group was enjoying our birding adventure, the remainder were traveling south to the Murrells Inlet area. Again, some arrived early and did some birding. That evening, we had our usual full group meeting for dinner at the Hanser House Restaurant, where we enjoyed great food and discussed our plans for the next days.

On Friday, we visited Huntington Beach State Park. We actually began birding as we came across the causeway after entering the park. After we gathered together, we began our birding on the Carriage Trail where we watch the birds along the trail, and on the Mallard Pond and Mullet Pond and an occasional alligator going across the trail. Areas that were also visited included the HBSP Mullet Pond Observation Deck, the Nature Center and Boardwalk, and after a lunch break, we visited the Sandpiper Pond Observation Deck. Later that evening we had dinner at Grahm's Landing Restaurant.

On Saturday, we traveled to the Santee Road a short distance from the Coastal Reserve. While we gathered there the birds were vocal and active in flyovers. We then traveled the short distance to the Coastal Reserve. We had excellent flyovers by Wood Storks and Swallow-tailed Kites. There were many other excellent bird sightings including seeing a King Rail. After enjoying this area, we traveled to the Hampton Plantation where we had lunch and did some birding. There were additional flyovers by Wood Storks and Swallow-tailed Kites, along with warbler and songbird sightings. The group then traveled to the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge, Hasty Point where we enjoyed more great birding. Saturday evening, we had dinner at Lee's Inlet Kitchen.

On Sunday, some of our group had to return home early or had other obligations. For those who stayed, our schedule called for meeting at Brookgreen gardens at 9:30am. However, Nancy

Adamson sent out a text message early that there were Roseate Spoonbills feeding at the HBSP Causeway. So, many of us rushed to see this sight. There were 2 Spoonbills. They were a treat to watch. Eventually they flew south and landed on the Mallard Pond side of the Carriage Trail. They could be seen there in low growth trees and bushes with Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets, and Anhingas. We then drove the short distance to Brookgreen Gardens. Several of us did birding out on the trails, and some enjoyed a boat ride. These are beautiful gardens to visit. All In all, a great way to wrap up a fantastic trip.

Photos for South Carolina Trip 15-19 April 2026



Royal Tern



White Ibis



Black-necked Stilt



Bald Eagle, juvenile



Glossy Ibis



Tricolored Herons on nest



Common Gallinule



Snowy Egret



Least Bittern



Green Heron



Clapper Rail



Alligator, "Official Greeter" Santee Coastal Reserve



Wood Stork



King Rail



Swallow-tailed Kite



Prothonotary Warbler



Roseate Spoonbill



Yellow-crowned Night Heron



Roseate Spoonbills with Anhingas



Black-crowned Night Heron



Hudsonian Whimbrel



American Oystercatcher