

Spring Migration on the Gulf Coast Dauphin Island, Alabama

April 24 – 29, 2022

With Simon Thompson

Day 1 (Sunday, April 24)

We all have to get to Dauphin Island by ourselves and meeting at the hotel, we will have the opportunity for some late afternoon birding. We'll then meet in the evening for dinner and discuss the plans for the week.

Day 2 (Monday, April 25)

After breakfast we will start our exploration of Dauphin Island, where one of our first stops will be the locally famous birding spot, the Shell Mounds. Over the years this has been excellent for a great selection of warblers, tanagers and other trans-Gulf migrants. We'll take our picnic lunch at Cadillac Park (where we have had abundant Kentucky and Hooded Warblers on past tours) before taking birding stops around other great birding areas such as West End, the low scrub on seaward side of Fort Gaines (East end of Island) for Bobolinks and sparrows. And should time (and birds) permit, we'll stop again at the Shell Mounds to see what has dropped in.

Day 3 (Tuesday, April 26)

The Airport is another one of Dauphin Island's great birding spots and the fence rows can hold sparrows and even Eastern Kingbirds and other flycatchers, while the nearby marshes have been reliable spots for Clapper, Virginia and Sora Rails. The channels between here and the causeway are also good for lingering ducks and White Pelicans. We'll take some time to scan the birdlife on Sand Island; off Dauphin Island's south coast is an excellent place to familiarize you with gulls, terns, herons and shorebirds. Plus we may stop by the regular migration "hotspots" to see what has appeared during the morning.

Day 4 (Wednesday, April 27)

After checking the local areas for migrants, we will take the ferry across to Fort Morgan after lunch. Warblers, vireos and tanagers can pile up in the coastal thickets after adverse winds and weather conditions. Bobolinks are frequent and in the past we have seen Upland Sandpiper, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and White-winged Dove. In other words, almost anything is possible.

Day 5 (Thursday, April 28)

Every day can be different on Dauphin Island, so we'll again check the Shell Mounds first thing this morning. The rest of the morning will be spent at the Audubon Sanctuary on the south coast. This was badly damaged by recent hurricanes and many of the trees suffered accordingly, but the birding can still be very good.

Day 6 (Friday, April 29)

Our last morning will, of course, be spent around the Shell Mounds looking for anything new that has arrived. After that we leave for our drive back to Asheville.

This itinerary may change due to weather and the birds!