

2019 ALABAMA COASTAL BIRDFEST SCHEDULE

The following is the schedule of trips and workshops for the 2019 BirdFest.

Registration will be open from 9 am August 12th – 4pm September 20th

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2

#101 – MAGNOLIA BRANCH WILDLIFE RESERVE

6:30am-2pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers

Fee: \$60 – includes lunch

Magnolia Branch is the perfect place to get away and enjoy nature. Join our guides as we explore and bird some of the more than 900 acres of pristine forest, creeks, and beautiful lakes that are owned and maintained by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Additionally, a tribal elder will speak on cultural issues and conservation activities utilized by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. **Note: Moderate walking**

#102 – SPLINTER HILL PITCHER PLANT BOG

6:30am-2pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers

Fee: \$60 – includes lunch

The Nature Conservancy's Splinter Hill Bog Preserve and adjacent state-owned Forever Wild Preserve are home to diverse habitats and some of the largest white-topped Pitcher plant bogs in the world. More than twelve species of carnivorous plants and many wildflowers that attract several butterfly species can be seen. **Note: Easy walking/distance.**

#103 – SMALL BOAT ECO-TOUR OF MOBILE-TENSAW DELTA

7-9am – Departs from Bartram Landing at 5 Rivers

Fee: \$100

A small group of birders will enjoy a personalized boat journey into the untouched Mobile-Tensaw Delta wilderness. Travel with local nature expert and guide **Jimbo Meador** on his custom-built boat that can maneuver the shallow waters of the bay and tributaries with a high-speed but quiet motor, allowing you to get close and observe the abundant wildlife in an environmentally-friendly, undisturbed atmosphere. Trip is limited to six participants. **Note: Small boat cruise**

#104 – WEEKS BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE/WEEKS BAY EXPLORER CRUISE

7-9am – Departs from Weeks Bay Marina

Fee: \$30

Cruise Weeks Bay and Magnolia River onboard the *Weeks Bay Explorer*, and learn about this beautiful estuary. During the tour, be on the lookout for bald eagles, osprey, terns, gulls, egrets, herons, and marine wildlife. Afterwards, enjoy a self-guided tour along boardwalks through a bottomland hardwood swamp and/or a native pitcher plant bog, or see exhibits in the Visitor Center. **Note: Cruise**

#105 – BLAKELEY BATTLEFIELD WALKING TOUR

9:30-11:30am – Meet at Blakeley State Park Entrance

Fee: \$30

Join the knowledgeable rangers from Blakeley and explore two historic sites: the Town of Blakeley and the Battlefield of Fort Blakeley. The Town of Blakeley is one of the oldest towns in the State of Alabama. In its heyday, it was one of the largest cities in Alabama and a commercial rival to the city of Mobile across the bay. Blakeley once boasted numerous homes and businesses, a newspaper, and one of the earliest steamboat construction facilities in the state. The Battle of Fort Blakeley was the largest Civil War battle fought in Alabama and one of the last of the war.

#106 – SOUTHEASTERN HUMMINGBIRDS WORKSHOP

Noon-2pm – 5 Rivers

Fee: \$20

The program, taught by **Fred Bassett**, will discuss Ruby-throated hummingbirds in depth and introduce several western hummingbird species wintering in the Southeast and show how they are banded. Fred Bassett is a certified master bird bander who is president of Hummingbird Research, Inc, a non-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of hummingbirds. He has worked with birds for over twenty five years. During the winter Fred documents western hummingbirds wintering in Alabama and Florida. Over the past twenty winters, he has captured more than 3,500 hummingbirds of eleven different species in that area. He travels each summer to study hummingbirds in western states and has done hummingbird research in Alaska and Canada. He has banded more than 30,000 hummingbirds at more than 1,200 locations from Miami, Florida to Haines, Alaska. Results of his research have been presented in several national publications.

#107 – BASICS OF BIRDING WORKSHOP

2-4pm – 5 Rivers

Fee: \$20

New to birding and want to strengthen your birding skills? **Emma Rhodes**, an experienced birder and Coastal Biologist from Birmingham Audubon, will be teaching this workshop. It will be an opportunity to explore the hobby of birding no matter what your level of interest might be, and Emma will be discussing some helpful tips and tools for bird watching. She will talk about the basics of bird identification from how to identify a bird based on size, shape, color, voice, habitat, etc. She will also talk about the latest birding resources and recommended field guides that are available today. If time and weather allow, the group will go outside towards the end of the workshop where Emma will show participants how to properly use binoculars. We encourage you to bring your binoculars! However, there will be some available for those who do not have binoculars. The workshop will encourage participants to explore ways in which they can become more involved with birding and community science projects in their local region.

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#108 – ADVANCED BIRDING WORKSHOP

4-6pm – 5 Rivers

Fee: \$25

Take your birding knowledge to the next level with this advanced class, taught by local expert, **Carol Furman**.

#109 – SUNSET AIRBOAT TOUR

5-6pm – Departs from the Original Oysterhouse

Fee: \$55

Join Airboat Express for a beautiful evening exploring the Delta by airboat. This tour is a photographer's dream with chances to see eagles, gators, and other critters as well as a beautiful sunset over the water. Guides from Airboat Express are knowledgeable about the flora and fauna of the Delta and happy to educate all participants about the natural wonders they see. **Note: Boat Tour**

#110 – DELTA SUNSET CRUISE

5-7pm – Departs from Cafe Del Rio Restaurant

Fee: \$35

Explore the calm waters of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta and Northern Mobile Bay on this late afternoon boat tour. You'll explore the open marsh, watching for a variety of wildlife along the river banks as we make our way into Mobile Bay where we'll watch the sun set over the bay and the city of Mobile, Alabama. Snacks and soft drinks are provided. **Note: Cruise**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

#201 – JACINTO PORT, WILLIAM BROOKS PARK, CHICKASAW PONDS, and BATTLESHIP PARK

6:30am-Noon – Carpool from 5 Rivers

Fee: \$40

Enjoy birding the 7.5 miles of this Forever Wild property located in Saraland, Alabama. Our guides will take you through various habitats that include longleaf pine, slash, and hardwoods with views of Bayou Sara and surrounding Mobile-Tensaw Delta. William Brooks Park is located on Chickasaw Creek and offers trails and a boardwalk system to view the waterfowl, waders, and migratory birds. Birds that are frequently seen at Chickasaw Ponds include Common Gallinule, Least Bittern, Purple Gallinule, Anhinga, and various migratory birds. **Note: Moderate walking**

#202 – DAUPHIN ISLAND/TRANS GULF FLYWAY

6:30am-2pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers

Fee: \$50 – includes lunch

WildBird magazine called Dauphin Island, a narrow barrier island only 14 miles long, one of the "top four locations in North America for viewing neotropical migration." This heavy-walking trip will visit prime birding spots, including the Dauphin Island Audubon Bird Sanctuaries, the airport marsh, Shell Mound Park, the goat trees, and the causeway. **Note: Extensive walking/sand**

#203 – SMALL BOAT ECO-TOUR OF MOBILE-TENSAW DELTA

7-9am – Departs from Bartram Landing at 5 Rivers

Fee: \$100

*See trip #103 for description

#204 – FIELD SESSION AT BAYFRONT PARK

7:30-10:30am – Meet at Bayfront Park in Daphne

Fee: \$30

Take the skills you learned in **Basics of Birding** and **Advancing Birding Workshops** out into the real world at one of the area's most easily accessible and highly diverse birding spots...Bayfront Park. Local birding expert, **Larry Gardella**, will teach participants how to identify specific species of birds that are regularly seen at this particular spot. Be sure to bring your binoculars and any bird identification books you have. **Note: Moderate walking.**

#205 – MOBILE BAY, DISL RESEARCH VESSEL ALABAMA DISCOVERY CRUISE

7:30am-1:30pm – Meet at DISL parking lot (park across the street from the Estuarium)

Fee: \$40

Join marine biologists from Dauphin Island Sea Lab for a cruise aboard the *RV Alabama Discovery*. You'll learn the Bay's history, ecology, and value, perhaps see bottlenose dolphins and the Sand Island Lighthouse up close, and view specimens caught in a trawl net. Includes a stop at the George F. Crozier Estuarium. Please note lunch is not included, but guests may bring their own. **Note: Cruise**

#206 – LOWER DELTA KAYAK TOUR

2-4 pm – Departs from Bartram Landing at 5 Rivers

Fee: \$55

At the city limits of America's wettest city, you'll find the vast wetlands of the lower Mobile-Tensaw Delta. This lush habitat provides the perfect backdrop for amazing sunsets and energetic wildlife. We'll learn about a variety of wildlife including Alligators, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Heron, Cormorant, Pelicans, and Nutria while paddling through the marsh. U.S. history is deep and colorful in this region, and so is our commentary, including points on the history, geology, ecology, and characters of the Delta. This is the "hands-on" tour for all avid lovers of nature and its creatures when visiting Mobile, Alabama. **Note: Moderate paddle**

#207 – SUNSET AIRBOAT TOUR

5-6pm – Departs from the Original Oysterhouse

Fee: \$55

*See trip #109 for description

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#208 – WEEKS BAY SUNSET CRUISE

5-7pm – Departs from Weeks Bay Marina

Fee: \$35

End your day with a leisurely cruise onboard the *Weeks Bay Explorer* along Weeks Bay and Magnolia rivers, and watch birds and sea life (possibly bottlenose dolphins) end their day. We will position the boat perfectly giving you time to snap great sunset photos before heading back to dock. **Note: Cruise**

#209 – DELTA SUNSET CRUISE

5-7pm – Departs from Cafe Del Rio Restaurant

Fee: \$35

*See trip #110 for description

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

#301 – BAYOU LA BATRE, FOREVER WILD GRAND BAY SAVANNA, GRAND BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, POINT AUX PINS

6:30am-2pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers

Fee: \$50 – includes lunch

The Nature Conservancy calls this area one of the “last great places on Earth.” Fishing, shrimping, and oyster harvesting are big businesses here, and birding concentrates on water birds, shorebirds, and marsh species, with passerines and raptors abundant in the fall. **Note: Moderate walking**

#302 – SMALL BOAT ECO-TOUR OF MOBILE-TENSAW DELTA

7-9am – Departs from Bartram Landing at 5 Rivers

Fee: \$100

*See trip #103 for description

#303 – WEEKS BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE PITCHER PLANT BOG TOUR

7-9am – Carpool from Weeks Bay Reserve

Fee: \$30

Join wildlife and estuarine experts at the Weeks Bay Pitcher Plant Bog. As you stroll along the boardwalk, be on the lookout for White-topped Pitcher plants or the sticky leaves of the carnivorous Sundew. Bring binoculars and watch for fall migratory bird species such as Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Warbler species. Also be on the watch for migrating species of butterflies. **Note: Moderate walking**

#304 – BON SECOUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

7:30-11:30am – Meet at Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge

Fee: \$35

Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge on Fort Morgan Peninsula is a prime birding location. Our guides and naturalists from BSNWR will take you down trails through woods, coastal marsh, and sandy beaches to seek birds in a variety of habitats. A new boardwalk trail opened in 2018. Please note, this is a remote area and you will need to bring water. **Note: Extensive walking/sand & distance**

#305 – HISTORIC BLAKELEY STATE PARK CRUISE

8:30-10am – Meet at Blakeley State Park entrance

Fee: \$40

Historic Blakeley State is situated in one of the most ecologically diverse sections of Alabama. Within the park’s grounds are the site of the last major battle of the Civil War. We will enjoy a 90-minute uniquely narrated voyage of discovery on the *Delta Explorer* while exploring the major battles of the Civil War’s “Mobile Campaign” from the rivers along which its major actions took place. **Note: Cruise**

#306 – DELTA WILDLIFE BOAT TOUR

9-10:30am – Departs from Cafe Del Rio Restaurant

Fee: \$25

Experience the lower Mobile-Tensaw Delta on this highly rated wildlife tour. You'll float amongst the open Marsh watching for a variety of wildlife, and learn about these unique animals of the swamp and how they live. This is the "must do" tour for all avid lovers of nature and its creatures when visiting Mobile, Alabama. The Mobile-Tensaw Delta is Mobile's biggest jewel - If you do nothing else, take this trip! **Note: Cruise**

#307 – MOBILE RIVER, BAY, AND DELTA TOUR

1-2:30 pm – Departs from Cooper Riverside Park

Fee: \$30

The most interesting water-based tour in Alabama – You'll experience the 10th busiest Port in the nation, the 4th largest, and most diverse estuary in North America and the 2nd largest river delta in the U.S. You'll see a working port, naval vessels, large and interesting cargo ships up exceptionally close, along with Mobile Bay, historical landmarks, birds, dolphins, and gators are all often seen on this tour. **Note: Cruise**

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#308 – GRAHAM CREEK/WOLF BAY KAYAK TOUR

1-4pm – Departs from Graham Creek Nature Preserve

Fee: \$70

This tour departs from the Graham Creek Nature Preserve in Foley, Alabama. We'll explore the protected waters of Graham Creek as we watch Brown Pelicans dive around us. This tour will make its way out to the North end of Wolf Bay, a premiere dolphin habitat of the area. There we'll explore the bay and its local wildlife including many species of wading birds and raptors. **Note: Moderate paddle**

#309 – AVIAN CONSERVATION: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

4:30-5:30pm – Tensaw Theatre at 5 Rivers

Fee: \$20

Explore the history of human exploitation of avian populations, causes (past and present) of species declines and the efforts applied to mitigate habitat/species losses, and future problems associated with increased land use/alteration, climate change, and sea level rise. **Joel Borden** is a vertebrate ecologist and instructor of biology at the University of South Alabama where he has been active in education and research in avian biology for over 10 years.

#310 – BIRDFEST SOCIAL WITH SPEAKERS AND RAFFLE

6-9pm – Delta Hall at 5 Rivers

Fee: \$40

Enjoy Southern hospitality and a delicious meal. The BirdFest Raffle wraps up tonight, so be ready to buy your tickets! Featured Photographer, **Jimbo Meador**, and Keynote Speaker, **Lianne Koczur, PhD**, will present. Jimbo is a local guide, historian, and all-around Gulf Coast legend. Lianne is the newest member of the Alabama Coastal Bird Stewardship Program and serves as their Science and Conservation Director.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

#401 – VILLAGE POINT PARK PRESERVE AND MEAHER STATE PARK

6:30am-Noon – Carpool from 5 Rivers

Fee: \$30

This is a very nice walk on boardwalks and on trails through forest and swamps to reach a beautiful beach and pier on Mobile Bay. There is a variety of wildlife including alligators and birds. **Note: Easy walking.**

#402 – BLAKELEY ISLAND MUD PONDS & BATTLESHIP PARK

6:30am-Noon – Carpool from 5 Rivers

Fee: \$30

Mobile River's Blakeley Island is known for large dredge disposal ponds that are the premier shore-birding spots in the state. With Battleship Park on the Causeway, these sites are great for spotting osprey, shorebirds, and waterfowl-and the occasional Roseate Spoonbill. **Note: Moderate walking**

#403 – FORT MORGAN PENINSULA/TRANS GULF FLYWAY

6:30am-2pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers

Fee: \$50 – Includes lunch

The American Bird Conservancy calls Fort Morgan one of the top "globally important bird areas" in the U.S. You'll visit the open areas and shoreline of Fort Morgan State Historic Site, all part of a vital Trans Gulf Flyway. **Note: Moderate/extensive walking**

#404 – SMALL BOAT ECO-TOUR OF MOBILE-TENSAW DELTA

7-9am – Departs from Bartram Landing at 5 Rivers

Fee: \$100

*See trip #103 for description

#405 – SHOREBIRD FIELD WORKSHOP

7:30am-Noon – Depart from Dauphin Island Pier

Fee: \$40

Dauphin Island is one of the "10 most globally important sites" for migration. We will visit the maritime forest, marshes, and dunes of Audubon Bird Sanctuary and Pelican "Island," a narrow strip of land that migrated from Sand Island Lighthouse and is now attached to Dauphin Island. **Andrew Haffenden** will lead the tour and give extensive instruction on field identification. **Note: Moderate to extensive walking/sand & distance**

#406 – GULF SHORES DOLPHIN EXPERIENCE KAYAK TOUR

1-4pm – Departs from Happy Harbor at Oyster Bay, Gulf Shores

Fee: \$70

This tour immerses guests in a coastal wilderness and one of the prettiest classrooms on earth. We'll watch for and learn about Gulf Shores' Bottlenose Dolphins in their natural environment from the intimate, unobtrusive, and non-threatening vantage point of a kayak. Bring your own water and snacks. **Note: Moderate paddle**

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#407 – SUNSET AIRBOAT TOUR

5-6pm – Departs from the Original Oysterhouse

Fee: \$55

*See trip #109 for description

#408 – WEEKS BAY SUNSET CRUISE

5-7pm – Departs from Weeks Bay Marina

Fee: \$35

*See trip #208 for description

GENERAL REGISTRATION INFO

All registration is completed online. If you are unable to complete online registration, please call 251-990-5004 for assistance.

Trips are filled in the order registrations are received. Registrants will pay registration fees, credit card fees associated with using Eventbrite, and state and local sales tax. You will receive an email confirmation of your registration from the ticketing site. Remember to check your “Spam” folder for this confirmation before calling for assistance.

For bus trips, be at 5 Rivers Delta Hall at least 15 minutes before the scheduled departure time. The posted trip time is the departure time of the bus. Check-in inside and enjoy coffee and donuts before boarding the bus.

For trips that meet at a different location, such as paddles and boat trips, be at the departure point at least 15-20 minutes before the scheduled time. The posted trip time is the departure time of the boat(s).

Maps for any trip that does not leave from 5 Rivers will be available on the website and hard copies will be available at 5 Rivers during check in.

Paddling trips will include all necessary gear and safety equipment.

BIRDFEST CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS

Alabama Coastal BirdFest reserves the right to cancel any event for any reason. In the unlikely event that BirdFest cancels a trip, we will notify registered participants as soon as possible.

If you need to cancel any or all of your registered tours or events, a refund will be subject to the following:

- Cancellations on or before September 2 will receive a full refund, minus a \$10 administrative fee.
- Cancellations September 3 through September 13 will receive a 50% refund, minus a \$10 administrative fee.
- No refunds will be issued for cancellations after September 13.
- No refunds will be issued for No Shows.

- Weather Related: If BirdFest cancels a trip/event due to unforeseen circumstances that cause safety concerns, usually weather, a full refund for the trip fee will be available **upon written request**, received on or before October 31. Refunds not requested in writing will be considered a donation to the Weeks Bay Foundation for Alabama Coastal BirdFest.

- Requests for refunds should be emailed to marcia@weeksbay.org, subject line--BirdFest Refund, or by mail to Weeks Bay Foundation, 11401 US Highway 98, Fairhope, AL 36532, Attention: Birdfest Refunds. Written requests should include the name of the registrant(s), the trip number(s), contact phone number, and mailing address.