



Alabama Coastal BIRDFEST

September 28-October 1, 2022



SOUTH ALABAMA
LAND TRUST

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

#100 – MOBILE BAY, DAUPHIN ISLAND SEA LAB, RESEARCH VESSEL ALABAMA DISCOVERY CRUISE

6:30am-2:30pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center | includes lunch

Join marine biologists from Dauphin Island Sea Lab for a cruise aboard the Research Vessel Alabama Discovery. 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 Alabama Aquarium on Dauphin Island.

Note: 65 ft. research vessel cruise. Requires notarized form to board vessel. **Jon Dunn, special guest and keynote speaker, will be attending this trip.**

#101 – MAGNOLIA BRANCH WILDLIFE RESERVE

6:30am-2:00pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center | includes lunch

Magnolia Branch is the perfect place to get away and enjoy nature. Join our guides as we explore some of the more than 900 acres of pristine forest, creeks, and lakes 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 – WEEKS BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE / WEEKS BAY EXPLORER CRUISE

7:00am-9:00am – Departs from Weeks Bay Marina |

Cruise Weeks Bay and Magnolia River on board 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 the boardwalks through a bottomland hardwood swamp or see exhibits in the Visitor Center. Note: Pontoon cruise

#103 – THE BIRDS, WILDLIFE AND HABITATS OF GULF STATE PARK

7:00am-2:00pm – Meet at Gulf State Park Pavillion | includes lunch

Situated on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, Gulf State Park is home to a variety of different ecosystems ranging from beaches to maritime forests and pine savannas. The park is home to a host of diverse species of plants and animals, including resident and migrating birds and several rare, threatened, or endangered species. Come explore the park and learn why it is so important to preserve this unique area.

#104 – MOBILE BOTANICAL GARDENS

8:00am-10:00am – Meet at Mobile Botanical Gardens |

Journey through 106 beautiful acres of the Mobile Botanical Gardens. Found in the heart of urban Mobile, experience a variety of habitats for birds including multiple natural wooded habitats with nature trails, a 35 acre fire-managed long leaf pine forest hosting a large endangered gopher tortoise population, a pollination garden, and noteworthy horticultural collections and gardens. The Sawada Winter Garden has been recognized by the International Camellia Society as a 'Garden of Excellence' and the Aromi Rhododendron garden is the largest collection of its type in the southeast. From the Gardens, migratory and resident birds and water fowl can also be observed in the adjacent lakes and ponds of Langan Park.

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

9:00am-12:00pm – Departs from Meaher State Park |

A small group of birders will enjoy a personalized boat journey into the vast wilderness of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. Travel with local nature expert Ben Raines, a licensed charter captain, award-winning journalist and filmmaker. Ben coined the term “America’s Amazon”, which is a published book and documentary. The Delta is one of the largest wetland systems on the continent, covering hundreds of thousands of acres with a network of rivers and creeks that brand together and twist apart. Trip is limited to six participants.

Note: Small boat tour

#106 – DELTA EXPLORER PONTOON CRUISE - LOWER DELTA

9:00am-10:30am – Depart from 5 Rivers Bartram Landing |

This pontoon boat excursion showcases the incredible beauty and natural diversity of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. The Delta is the second largest in the U.S. and one of the largest wetland ecosystems in the world. Every one of these outings takes a slightly different course and features unique opportunities to view the abundance of the delta wildlife, such as eagles, ospreys and, of course, alligators. Note: Pontoon boat tour

#107 – BLAKELEY STATE PARK NATURE WALK

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

The extensive hardwoods at Blakeley State Park attract many migrant birds, including the striking Blackburnian Warbler. The park is also one of the best places in the Mobile area to find resident birds such as the Hairy Woodpecker. In addition to birds, Blakeley State Park has a wonderful assortment of flowers that attract a great diversity of butterflies. It is also a seasonal home for many species of dragonfly ranging in size from Little Blue Dragonlet and Amanda’s Pennant to several of the large clubtails. Guides will walk the trails with you and point out local flora along the way.

#108 – eBIRD and MERLIN BIRD ID APP WORKSHOP

12:00pm-2:00pm – 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

This workshop offers guidance, clarity, and hands on instruction on how to use two well known apps, eBird and Merlin Bird ID, to their full potentials. Merlin Bird ID leverages the power of eBird observations to help beginners identify common birds. Merlin uses eBird data to create a short list of birds that match the user’s description and are likely to be found at the location and time of the sighting.

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

1:00pm-4:00pm – Departs from Meaher State Park | See trip #105 for description

#110 – DELTA EXPLORER PONTOON CRUISE - LOWER DELTA

1:00pm-2:30pm – Depart from 5 Rivers Bartram Landing | See trip #106 for description

#111 – BASICS OF BIRDING WORKSHOP

2:00pm-4:00pm – 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

New to birding and want to enhance your experiences during BirdFest and beyond? This workshop offers tips on how to engage your senses while identifying birds by sight and sound, how to use equipment such as binoculars, what you need to know about birding etiquette, and more.

#112 – WELCOME RECEPTION

5:00pm-7:00pm – 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

Enjoy hors d’oeuvres and drinks at 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, where the Mobile, Spanish, Tensaw, Apalachee and Blakeley rivers flow into Mobile Bay. Catch a beautiful sunset, mingle with fellow birders and guides, meet keynote speaker Jon Dunn, and enjoy “Nature Through Lenses” focusing on works from 2022 featured photographer, Paul Dovie. To conclude, we will have a special showing of the Discovering Alabama Birding video.

#113 – SUNSET AIRBOAT TOUR

5:30pm-6:30pm – Departs from the Original Oyster House |

Enjoy an evening exploring the Mobile-Tensaw 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. Airboats allow you to experience the Delta in a much closer way since they do not require deep water, allowing riders to go places other boats can not go. Guides are knowledgeable about the flora and fauna of the Delta and happy to educate participants about the natural wonders they see. Note: Airboat tour

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

#200 – WILLIAM BROOKS PARK, CHICKASAW PONDS, and BATTLESHIP PARK

6:30am-12:00pm – Carpool from 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

Meander through trails and boardwalks to view the waterfowl, waders, and migratory birds in Williams Park, located in Chickasaw Creek. Birds frequently seen at Chickasaw Ponds include common gallinule, least bittern, purple gallinule, anhinga, and various migratory birds. Note: Moderate walking

#201 – DAUPHIN ISLAND/ TRANS GULF MIGRATION FLYWAY

6:30am-2:00pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center | includes lunch

Dauphin Island has been named the "Birdiest Small City" in the U.S. for good reason. Located on the Gulf Migration Flyway, Dauphin Island has been named one of the "top four locations in North America for viewing neotropical migration." Visit prime birding spots, starting at the airport marsh, then to Shell Mound Park, ending at Dauphin Island Audubon Bird Sanctuary. Note: Moderate walking. Jon Dunn, special guest and keynote speaker, will be attending this trip.

#202 – DAUPHIN ISLAND/ TRANS GULF MIGRATION FLYWAY

7:30am-1:00pm – Meet at Dauphin Island Audubon Bird Sanctuary | does not include lunch

Dauphin Island has been named the "Birdiest Small City" in the U.S. and for good reason. Located on the Gulf Migration Flyway, Dauphin Island has been named one of the "top four locations in North America for viewing neotropical migration". Visit prime birding spots, starting at the Dauphin Island Audubon Bird Sanctuary, then Goat Tree Reserve, ending at Shell Mound Park. Note: Moderate walking

#203 – FIELD SESSION AT BAYFRONT PARK

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

Bayfront Park is a local favorite and one of the area's most easily accessible and highly diverse birding spots. A guide will teach participants how to identify specific species of birds regularly seen locally. Be sure to bring your binoculars and any bird identification books or apps you have. Note: Moderate walking

#204 – PERCH CREEK/ MOBILE BLUEWAY KAYAK TOUR

8:00am-10:00am – Departs from McNally Park |

Paddle the City of Mobile's new birding trail, the Perch Creek Nature Trail Preserve in the lower Dog River Watershed. Meander through serene waters of the Dog River Scenic Blueway and enjoy the thriving ecosystem. Watch for bald eagle, osprey, various songbirds, shorebirds, and maybe a glimpse of the resident pileated woodpecker. Guides will share their knowledge of unique flora and fauna found in this urban estuarine system. Note: Easy to moderate paddle

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

9:00am-12:00pm – Departs from Meaher State Park | See trip #105 for description

#206 – DELTA EXPLORER PONTOON CRUISE - UPPER DELTA

9:00am-12:00pm – Departs from Live Oak Landing |

Explore the secluded regions of the vast Delta in its most natural setting. Depart from Live Oak Landing, located on the Tensaw River in the upper Delta. Venture up this storied waterway around the infamous "Devil's Bend", into Bottle Creek before journeying down the Middle River and returning to the Tensaw. Note: Pontoon boat tour

#207 – MONARCHS AND MORE BUTTERFLY WORKSHOP

9:00am-10:30am – 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

Learn about butterflies of coastal Alabama, butterfly conservation, gardening for butterflies and moths, photographing insects, how to locate butterflies, and more.

#208 – SOUTHEASTERN HUMMINGBIRDS WORKSHOP

12:00pm-2:00pm – 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

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. Results of his research have been presented in several national publications.

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

1:00pm-4:00pm – Departs from Meaher State Park | See trip #105 for description

#210 – DELTA EXPLORER PONTOON CRUISE- UPPER DELTA

1:00pm-4:00pm – Departs from Live Oak Landing | See trip #206 for description

#211 – ADVANCED BIRDING WORKSHOP

4:00pm-6:00pm – 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

Take your birding knowledge to the next level with this advanced class, taught by Alabama Audubon staff.

#212 – WEEKS BAY SUNSET PONTOON CRUISE

5:00pm-7:00pm – Departs from Weeks Bay Marina |

Enjoy the sunset on a leisurely pontoon cruise aboard the Weeks Bay Explorer where you will learn about the important estuary that not only supports young marine life but also healthy bird habitat. Weeks Bay is one of the 29 National Estuarine Research Reserve watersheds in which Fish and Magnolia river flow into. Note: Pontoon cruise

#213 – SUNSET AIRBOAT TOUR

5:30pm-6:30pm – Departs from the Original Oyster House | See trip #113 for description

#214 – BIRD AND NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

6:00pm-8:00pm – 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

Of all wildlife, birds are among the most colorful, behaviorly intriguing, and varied, making them extremely fun, and challenging to photograph. Learn tips and tricks on how to capture incredible moments of nature in action and in stillness.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

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

6:30am-2:00pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center | includes lunch

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

#301 – FORT MORGAN PENINSULA, TRANS GULF MIGRATION AND BIRD BANDING

7:00am-2:00pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center | includes lunch

The American Bird Conservancy calls Fort Morgan one of the top globally-important bird areas in the United States. Visit open areas and shoreline around this historic site, hoping to see a variety of neotropical migrants, resident birds, and hawks. This trip also includes visiting the banding site of the new Banding Coalition of the Americas and a chance to hold a bird and release it. Jon Dunn, special guest and keynote speaker, will be attending this trip.

#301A – 8:00am-1:00pm – Meet bus at Fort Morgan | does not include lunch | See trip #301 for description

#302 – SANDHILL CRANE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE IN MISSISSIPPI

6:30am-2:00pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center | includes lunch

Join the staff of the refuge for an overview and tour of the refuge, and get a behind the scenes look at some of our management practices. Historically, non-migratory Sandhill cranes inhabited much of the Gulf Coast, but loss of habitat due to timber farming and wildfire suppression has mostly confined the Mississippi Sandhill crane to the 19,300 acres of the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge. A critically endangered species, there are now approximately 150 Mississippi Sandhill cranes left in the wild. In addition to this rare bird, the wet pine savanna habitat where it makes its home is one of the most species-diverse plant communities in North America.

Note: Moderate walking

#303 – BON SECOUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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

Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge on Fort Morgan Peninsula is a prime birding location. Guides and naturalists will take you down trails through woods, coastal marsh, and sandy beaches to seek birds and wildlife in a variety of habitats. Note: Extensive walking, remote area, bring plenty of water

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

9:00am-12:00pm – Departs from Meaher State Park | See trip #105 for description

#305 – BUILDING A BACKYARD WILDLIFE HABITAT

10:00am-11:30am – 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

Ecosystems are being quickly damaged by what's known as fragmentation. National parks, state lands, and other protected properties help in reconnecting vital habitats, but the power in private property has great potential in increasing biodiversity and in re-wilding land. Regardless if you have a small yard, balcony, or many acres, everyone can participate in reconnecting these ecosystems. Learn about the importance of planting native plants, and best practices in categories such as water, cover, sustainability, breeding places and food sources.

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

1:00pm-4:00pm – Departs from Meaher State Park | See trip #105 for description

#307 – GRAHAM CREEK/ WOLF BAY KAYAK TOUR

1:00pm-3:00pm – Departs from Graham Creek Nature Preserve |

Graham Creek Nature Preserve is home to hundreds of plant and wildlife species, among almost 500 acres of natural habitats including pine savannas, bottomland wetlands, mixed forests and tidal marshes. Explore the protected waters of Graham Creek out to the north end of Wolf Bay, a premiere dolphin habitat of the area. Wolf Bay's plethora of wildlife includes many species of wading birds and raptors. Note: Moderate paddle

#308 – CAVITY NESTERS IN YOUR BACKYARD

4:30pm-5:30pm – Tensaw Theatre at 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center |

Learn about the different types of bird boxes, how to pick which type is right for your yard, and how providing nest boxes can help secure homes for migratory birds in areas with limited bird habitat options. Examples of cavity nesting birds would include bluebirds, chickadees, nuthatches, tufted titmice, screech owls, great crested flycatchers, woodpeckers, and wood ducks. Discussion will cover the specific construction of box build to attract these types of birds and their potential predator control options.

#309 – KEYNOTE SPEAKER JON DUNN

6:00pm - 9:00pm - TBD |

Join us in welcoming Jon Dunn, one of the most well respected birders in North America and chief consultant and author of much of the National Geographic field guide series. Jon's presentation will focus on the natural history, identification, and taxonomy of shorebirds, focusing on the smaller sandpipers (*genus Calidris*) the yellowlegs (*genus Tringa*), and the dowitchers (*genus Limnodramus*). Beyond the details, learning and becoming comfortable with shorebirds requires the right approach.

BIO: Jon is a nearly life-long birder, discovering birds at age eight when he saw a bright adult male Hooded Oriole at his home in Southern California in 1962. Jon has written extensively on the identification and distribution of the birds of North America, often with co-authors Kimball L. Garrett and Jonathan Alderfer. He was chief-consultant or co-author for all seven editions of the National Geographic's Field Guide to the Birds of North America and also co-authored Warblers, and Birds of Southern California, status and distribution. Jon served on the ABA's Checklist Committee and 30 years on the California Bird Records Committee. He has been a member for the last 22 years on the AOS's Committee on Nomenclature and Taxonomy. Beyond birds, Jon has a keen interest in history and the music, poetry and insights of Leonard Cohen. He has lived most of his life in Southern California, currently near Bishop on the east side of the Sierra Nevada. Throughout the evening, enjoy a beautiful video presentation of bird and wildlife photography from along the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, created by Kathy Hicks, outreach and education, of 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1

#401 – SHOREBIRD FIELD WORKSHOP

6:30am-2:00pm – Ride bus from 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center | Includes lunch

Dauphin Island is classified as an "Important Bird Area" (IBA) and one of the "10 most globally important sites" for migration. 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. Your guide will provide extensive instruction on shorebird identification and habitat. Note: Moderately strenuous walking/ sand & distance
Jon Dunn, special guest and keynote speaker, will be attending this trip.

#402 – EARLY BIRD KAYAK TOUR OF BAY MINETTE BAY

7:00am-9:00am – Departs from Buzbee's Fish Camp |

Paddle from Buzbee's Fish Camp through the southern reaches of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, America's Amazon. Circumvent Bay Minette Basin, learn the rich history of this area while taking in the diverse plant and animal life surrounding you. Look for herons and gallinules along marshy edges and cast your eyes upward for birds flying overhead including bald eagles, osprey, an assortment of other raptors, both glossy and white Ibis, both black-crowned and yellow-crowned night-herons and several species of swallow. Note: Moderate paddle

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

9:00am-12:00pm – Departs from Meaher State Park | See trip #105 for description

BIRD AND CONSERVATION EXPO

9:00am-1:00pm – 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center | FREE

Free, fun, and family-friendly, come participate in a variety of activities and exhibits hosted by local environmental groups, non-profits, and other agencies. Learn about local conservation efforts, nature, and more! New this year is not only the location, but also three \$5 boat tours at 9:00am, 10:30am, and 12:30pm departing from 5 Rivers, cruising around the bend to Meaher State Park, then back to 5 Rivers. Pontoon boat tours will be led by Mason Currier, a junior birder, that leads birding tours for young birders.

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

1:00pm-4:00pm – Departs from Meaher State Park | See trip #105 for description

#405 – WEEKS BAY SUNSET CRUISE

5:00pm-7:00pm – Departs from Weeks Bay Marina | See trip #212 for description

#406– SUNSET AIRBOAT TOUR

5:30pm-6:30pm – Departs from the Original Oyster House | See trip #111 for description

#407– SUNSET PONTOON BOAT TOUR

5:45pm-7:45pm – Departs from Blakeley State Park |

Enjoy a relaxing excursion down the waterways of the lower Mobile-Tensaw Delta. Departing from the Blakeley dock, take an early evening cruise to the head of Mobile Bay and enjoy the stunning views of the setting sun and the cool bay breeze before returning upriver.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration opens Monday, August 1, 8:00am CST and closes Monday, September 19, 11:59pm.

All registration is online. If you are unable to register online, please call Katherine, Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator for South Alabama Land Trust, at 251-990-5004.

Prices listed do not include 7% state and local taxes.

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY

In the unlikely event that a trip/ workshop is cancelled, registered participants will be notified as soon as possible and refunds will be issued. If a trip/ workshop is canceled due to circumstances that cause safety concerns, such as weather, a full refund will be given OR you may donate your trip fee towards South Alabama Land Trust conservation efforts.

Please send all refund requests to: kkuhn@southalabamalandtrust.org

Should you need to cancel any or all of your trips/ workshops, a refund will be issued subject to the following:

- A full refund will be issued for cancellations on or before Monday, September 5
- A 50% refund will be issued for cancellations between Tuesday, September 6 and Monday, September 12
- No refunds will be issued on or after Tuesday, September 13
- No refunds will be issued for no-shows