



Lazy Louisiana

23-30th March 2019

Introduction

This was a work trip but I flew out a week early and had a tour round Louisiana, there were no real targets birdwise as I have been to the USA plenty of times so only a few possible species. Mammal wise targeting any small mammals, this was more a relaxing tour with a couple of tourist stops as well.

I flew with BA which was fine and flew to time.

Car Hire with Alamo – actually very quick to get the car and no issues at all.

All accommodation was adhoc in motels.

Temperatures were warm upper 20s during the day and mid teens at night, one afternoon of heavy rain and thunderstorms apart from that hot and sunny.

The photos are hyperlinked to larger versions.

Diary

23rd March 2019

I arrived late evening and drove to Baton Rouge, some **grackles** and **starlings** at the airport the only wildlife seen.

24th March 2019

An early start at the Atchafalaya reserve, a nice selection of common birds such as **Carolina chickadees**, **cardinals** and **yellow rumped warblers**. A cracking **Protonotary warbler** the highlight and it was very co-operative for photographs. The reserve is large and I spent all morning just driving one section where **turtles**, **dragonflies** and a selection of **butterflies** including the spectacular **black swallowtail**, were seen. Here the first mammal of the trip **Eastern Grey Squirrel** finally gave itself up. I drove to Lafayette for supplies and some lunch, I set my small mammal traps outside the reserve before returning to the reserve and doing some exploring on foot along some of the trails. Here **skinks**, **frogs** and plenty of woodland **butterflies** along with the common bird species. The reserve is extensive and I drove the rest of the sections stopping regularly and spotting lots of wildlife. The reserve is full of wildlife and my stops produced **white ibis**, **wood ducks**, **white eyed vireos**, **Carolina wrens**.

As it got dark I started a night drive over this extensive reserve. There were plenty of things to see a **leopard frog**, lots of **alligators** and plenty of mammals. 15+ **white tailed deer**, 13 **racoons**, 10 **Opossums**, 5 **Nine banded armadillos** and a **wild boar**. The only bird were a couple of **killdeer**. I got a couple of hours sleep before dawn after a successful night drive.



Protonotary warbler



Black Swallowtail



Alligator



Nine Banded Armadillo



White Ibis



25th March 2019

I left the reserve and checked the traps but nothing so I headed to White Lakes south of Lafayette. Here was a rather nice reserve with a nice selection of birds including a showy **Common yellowthroat**. But the park was full of dragonflies thousands of them. After a good walk round I headed to Lacassine Reserve, first stop was the park HQ here was a small area to view the lake shore from the board walk had **green anoles** and some **skinks** but the prize was some **cotypu** in the weed filled lake shallows. I headed to the main part of the reserve and was very disappointed even in the wildlife area speedboats ploughed through the water spooking everything. Despite this there were a few birds about, the undisturbed ditches most productive. A flypast **American bittern** the best bird, but some showy **pied billed grebes** were nice. My next stop was at Cameron Prairie reserve and this was superb here was a vast selection of **ducks**, **waders** and other wetland birds in complete contrast to Lacassine. I headed to Cameron for some birding there but a severe thunderstorm put pay to that so I continued on and out of the storm to Sabine Reserve. This was an extensive area viewed mostly from the road but there were a couple of boardwalks and the largest was excellent. Here both **Sora** and **yellow rail** made the walk worth the effort. I headed to Lake Charles for some well-earned sleep.

26th March 2019

Sam Houston State Park was my first stop, it was early so few people about so plenty of wildlife about, **pileated woodpecker**, **northern parula** and some nice trumpet flowers. I checked the three bat boxes a single **Mexican free tailed bat** in one box, one empty and one crammed with **Mexican free tailed bats** and at least one **hoary bat**. After lunch I headed north into rice country, an area full of rice fields and plenty of waterbirds and then into some farmland and relic prairie with nice prairie birds such as **loggerhead shrikes** and **eastern meadowlarks** and a black racer on a side road. I found a nice spot to set my traps and went for a walk nearby. I saw something move, heard a squeal and investigated, a **prairie vole** had been taken by a **cottonmouth** - wow, the snake slid away, I inspected the vole and moved away so the snake could return. As dusk fell I did a night drive over quite a wide area including, prairie, rice fields and some woodland.



Pied Billed Grebe



Black Necked Stilt



Mexican Free Tailed Bat



Trumpet Flower



Red Shouldered Hawk

The night drive was very productive a couple of **coyotes**, **eastern cottontail**, **raccoon** but the prize for persevering was a **bobcat** which crossed a side road.

27th March 2019

The very last trap was tripped and a **Southern short tailed shrew** was inside very nice. I headed off the first stop was a little drive south. Rips Rookery is a nice rookery of **egrets**, **roseate spoonbills** and **anhingas** close to the road. I headed to Lake Martin where the first snake of the trip a **Western ribbon snake**, a nice **barred owl** and then more snakes, **brown banded water snake** also seen. After lunch I headed to Baton Rouge and to a small park, Blackwater, a nice selection of insects and a few common birds. As dusk fell I headed to the Forest Community park, I was looking for **Southern flying squirrels** and I got a brief view but it was a little disappointing not to have more and as the park closes at 10pm I had to leave.

28th March 2019

I visited Baton Rouge for tourist stuff all morning before heading to off to Lake Ponchertrain. Here were lots of reserves which I visited over the afternoon, here was a nice selection of **terns** along with **pelicans** and **common loons**. A sounder of **wild boar** and a **white tailed deer** of mammal interest and some nice plants such as **spider lily** as well, plenty of **butterflies** and **dragonflies** as well. I found an area to set some traps near a petrol station and then after some food did a night drive. It was a little hard work but eventually got a **swamp rabbit**, **opossum**, **raccoon** and a **least sandpiper**.



Kildeer



Neotropical Cormorant



Roseate Spoonbill



Alligator



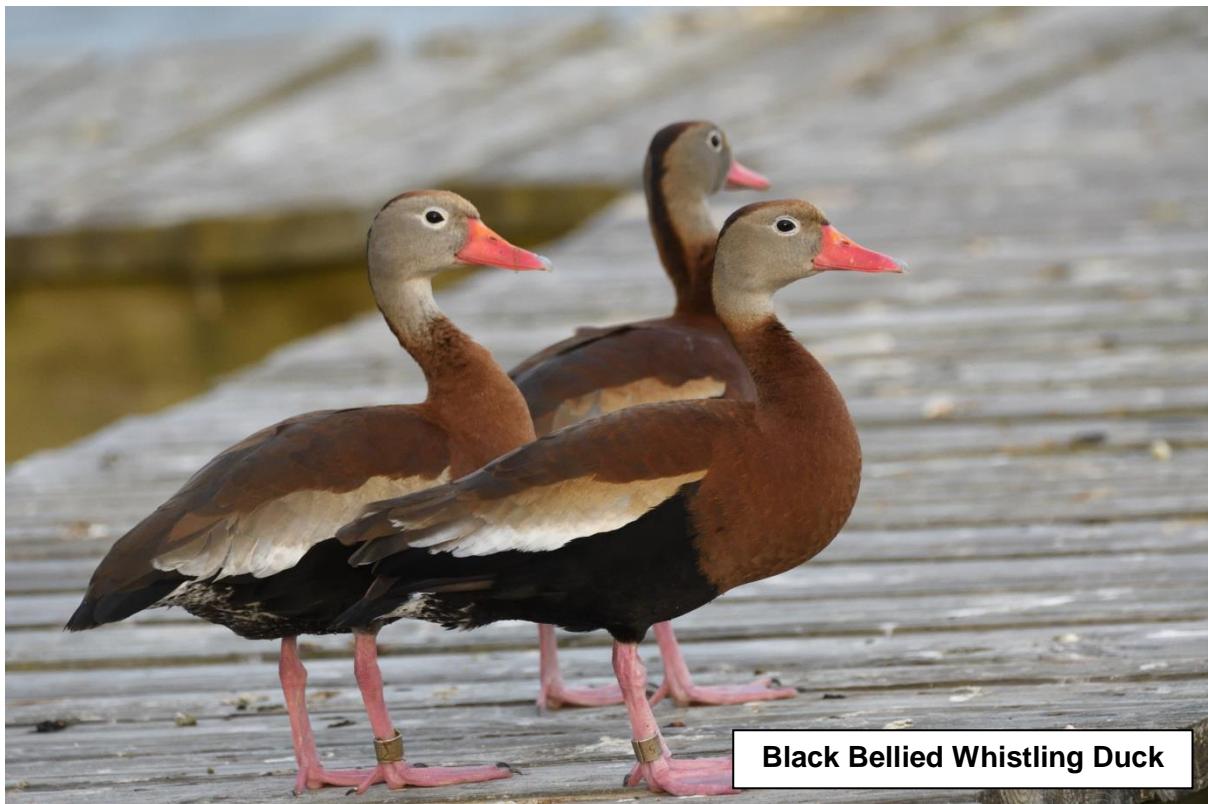
Common Loon



Brown Banded Water Snake



Wild Boar



Black Bellied Whistling Duck

29th March 2019

The traps produced a **cotton deermouse** and an **Eastern woodrat**. I headed to Bogue Chitto and met some crayfish fishermen but not many other things of note on the drive through the first part of the reserve. I headed to another part which was much better with plenty of birds and some **water moccasins** by a boardwalk. After some touristy stuff I headed to Bayou Savage reserve which had several areas to stop and walk and I took advantage of these. A nice herony had a good selection of species and I found a site near some houses for my traps. I headed for some accommodation and food finding some nice **black bellied whistling ducks** on the way.

30th March 2019

My last Day and nothing in the traps, I visited North Lake reserve to see some rare iris, copper and Nelson's and the white form of giant blue. I did some touristy stuff then spent a few hours in the Houma area but nothing of real note just plenty of common species and I headed to the airport to meet my colleagues.



Giant Blue Iris



Brown Pelican



Red Tailed Hawk

Checklists

Mammals - 20



Racoon

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Eastern Woodrat | Southern Short Tailed Shrew | Cotton Deer Mouse |
| Prairie Vole | Marsh Rice Rat | White Tailed Deer |
| Coyote | Nutria / Coypu | Bobcat |
| Racoon | Opossum | Armadillo |
| Eastern Pipistrelle | Mexican Free Tailed Bat | Hoary Bat |
| Wild Boar | Southern Flying Squirrel | Swamp Rabbit |
| Grey Squirrel | Eastern Cottontail | |



Virginia Opossum

Eastern Cottontail

Cotton Deermouse

Southern Short Tailed Shrew

Birds - 118

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| House Sparrow | Starling | Collared Dove |
| Mourning Dove | Common Ground Dove | Cardinal |
| Red Winged Blackbird | Northern Mockingbird | Blue Jay |
| Barn Swallow | Great Egret | Brown headed Cowbird |
| Eastern Bluebird | Laughing Gull | Carolina Chickadee |
| Carolina Wren | Common Grackle | White Eyed Vireo |
| Northern Rough Winged Swallow | Yellow Crowned Night Heron | Ruby Throated Hummingbird |
| Snowy Egret | Tufted Titmouse | Kildeer |
| Great Blue Heron | Cattle Egret | Grey Catbird |
| Common Yellowthroat | Tree Swallow | Blue Winged Teal |
| Little Blue Heron | White Throated Sparrow | Turkey Vulture |
| Boat Tailed Grackle | Fish Crow | Eastern Kingbird |
| Lesser Black Backed Gull | Double Crested Cormorant | Black Bellied Whistling Duck |
| Protonotary Warbler | Tricoloured Heron | Cedar Waxwing |
| Blue Grey Gnatcatcher | White Ibis | Black Necked Stilt |
| Loggerhead Shrike | Willet | Brown Pelican |
| Lesser Yellowlegs | Forster's Tern | Wood Duck |
| Savannah Sparrow | Black Vulture | Royal Tern |
| Eastern Meadowlark | American Coot | Belted Kingfisher |
| Pileated Woodpecker | Mottled Duck | Red Shouldered Hawk |
| Greater Yellowlegs | Black Bellied Plover | American Crow |
| Ring Billed Gull | American Herring Gull | Swamp Sparrow |
| Purple Martin | Least Sandpiper | Rock Dove |
| Red Tailed Hawk | Roseate Spoonbill | Pied Billed Grebe |
| Anhinga | Yellow Rumped Warbler | American Robin |
| White Winged Dove | Moorhen | Caspian Tern |
| Osprey | Neotropical Cormorant | White Faced Ibis |
| Marsh Wren | Chipping Sparrow | Barred Owl |
| Great Tailed Grackle | Sora | House Wren |
| White Pelican | Broad Winged Hawk | Mallard |
| White Crowned Sparrow | Short Billed Dowicher | Long Billed Dowicher |
| Northern Shoveler | Northern Harrier | Canada Goose |
| Coopers Hawk | Bank Swallow | Fulvous Whistling Duck |
| Wilson's Snipe | American Kestrel | Great Horned Owl |
| Gadwall | Common Loon | Swanson's Hawk |
| Glossy Ibis | Green Winged Teal | American Bittern |
| Sharp Shinned Hawk | Field Sparrow | American Widgeon |
| Northern Parula | Yellow Rail | Golden Crowned Kinglet |
| Caspian Tern | American Golden Plover | Wood Thrush |
| Orange Crowned Warbler | | |

Selected Others



Brown Banded Water Snake

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alligator | Red Eared Slider | Green Anole |
| Brown Anole | Water Moccasin | Greenhouse Frog |
| Southern Painted Turtle | Spiny Softshell Turtle | Red Eared Slider |
| Common Five Lined Skink | Brown Banded Water Snake | Western Ribbon Snake |
| Coal Skink | American Bullfrog | Pig Frog |
| Leopard Frog | Black Racer | |
| Common Buckeye | Cloudless Sulphur | Monarch |
| Pearl Crescent | Delaware Skipper | Gemmed Satyr |
| Carolina Satyr | American Painted Lady | Giant Leopard Moth |
| Blue Dasher | Common Sanddragon | Common White Tailed Skimmer |
| Eastern Pondhawk | Slaty Skimmer | Familiar Bluet |
| Broad-Striped Forcepsnail | Common Checkered-Skipper | Dusky-blue Groundstreak |
| Southern Skipperling | Twin Spot Skipper | |

flickr