

Canada and USA, 25 April - 24 May 2018

A classic road trip down the Mississippi from Illinois to Louisiana, augmented with a visit to our friends in southern Ontario, and extending along the Gulf coast into the Florida 'panhandle'. This route gave us plenty of opportunities to take in the rich and varied history, music, food and of course the birds. There weren't many birds I was desperate to see, and I hoped to pick these up along the way rather than going to specific sites.

We flew with British Airways from Heathrow to Toronto and back from New Orleans to Heathrow, and a flight from Toronto to Chicago operated by American Airlines on behalf of BA, all on the same ticket. We hired our car from Alamo, picking it up from their base in Chicago and returning it to New Orleans airport. All the transport arrangements worked well and driving was generally easy and stress-free. *Road Trip USA: Great River Road* by Jamie Jensen was a helpful general guide, although we often deviated from the recommended route. I took Sibley's Birds of North America but didn't need to use it much thanks to the (free) Audubon Bird Guide app. I got information on birding sites from the internet and from the free Florida Birding Trail booklets.

Wednesday 25 April: Hamilton - Ontario

We'd arrived in Toronto the previous afternoon and caught the bus from the airport to Hamilton, where my school friend Richard met us. The hour-long journey showed us a surprisingly wintry scene - not a blade of green grass to be seen - and Richard confirmed it had been a long cold winter in southern Ontario, and spring was only just arriving.

I was up early in the morning and enjoyed watching the birds in their garden from the comfort of the warm indoors. Over a couple of cups of tea I notched up a decent garden list, including white-throated sparrow, white-breasted nuthatch, Carolina wren and downy woodpecker. Our friends then took us to Websters Falls, where we saw a couple of hairy woodpeckers and a brown-headed cowbird, then to the attractive town of Dundas. Walking round the elegant houses of Dundas we saw a few signs of spring, with bright blue scillas carpeting many of the lawns. I love North American birds and for me this visit to Canada was a great opportunity to refamiliarise and get a feel for what was migrating before we embarked on our journey south.

Thursday 26 April: Hamilton and Niagara - Ontario

I walked round the local Kirkendall South neighbourhood early morning, enjoying looking at the beautiful houses (the one used for filming *The Handmaid's Tale* was only a short walk away), surreptitiously spying into people's gardens to see the birds. Cardinals, mourning doves and blue jays were everywhere and these proved to be consistently among the commonest birds of the trip. A flock of 12 chipping sparrows on a playing field confirmed that migration was well under way.

Carol drove us to Niagara, where we parked above the Falls and had the experience of walking down the Niagara River to see it disappearing into the chasm below. Above the falls various waterbirds were feeding in the swollen river: buffleheads, red-breasted mergansers, greater scaup, horned (Slavonian) grebe and common loon. There was a sizeable colony of double-crested cormorants on nearly-submerged islands, common terns were diving in and a small gang of rough-winged swallows was rushing about.

Niagara-on-the-Lake was a delightful old town to wander in - sometimes called the 'prettiest town in Canada', the first capital of what is now Ontario in the 1790s. From the bank of the Niagara River near its outlet to Lake Ontario we could see across to Fort Niagara in New York State. More birds here: long-tailed ducks, horned grebes, common terns, a common loon and a Caspian tern.



Red-winged blackbird, Niagara Falls, Ontario



Common loon, Niagara River, Niagara Falls, Ontario

Friday 27 April: Hamilton and Toronto - Ontario

Walking round the local neighbourhood I added northern flicker and ruby-crowned kinglet to the trip list. The rest of the day was spent with our friends and their family as we made our way to Toronto Airport to stay the night in the airport hotel.

Saturday 28 April: Chicago - Illinois

We arrived in Chicago late morning and spent the rest of the day in Millennium Park and 'The Loop' (the downtown area, named from the ancient elevated railway that runs around it). Fabulous to see the city skyscrapers, some of them the oldest tall buildings anywhere, and the huge metal sculpture 'Cloud Gate'. 5 red-breasted mergansers were fishing on the Chicago River, right in the heart of the city.

Sunday 29 April: Chicago - Illinois

The temperature dropped nearly to zero overnight and with the wind from Lake Michigan funnelling through the city streets we could see why it's called the 'Windy City'. After breakfast we did a brisk walk up Michigan Avenue to Oak Park Beach, which is a proper sandy beach. On the Lake were ring-billed gulls and more red-breasted mergansers, and there were American coots near Navy Pier on the way back to our hotel.

We picked up our hire car from the Alamo base in N LaSalle Street. We'd booked a medium SUV but we were upgraded at no cost to a Jeep Grand Cherokee, which was excellent. It was 4x4 and had built-in GPS (Sat Nav), neither of which we'd booked. We headed for Oak Park to look at the Frank Lloyd Wright houses, then along the old Route 66 to Joliet for the night.

Monday 30 April: Joliet, Midewin and Springfield - Illinois

Joliet was a convenient stopping place, getting us out of the city before the Monday morning bustle. The Best Western Inn was out of town and I enjoyed an early morning walk in the semi-rural/semi-industrial surroundings. No amazing birds, but more evidence of movement with American robins and red-winged blackbirds everywhere and more rough-winged swallows buzzing about. It was much warmer here than in Chicago, away from the cooling effect of Lake Michigan.

I was keen to visit Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie nearby, the largest remaining tract of this prairie habitat which would have dominated the landscape a few centuries ago. To be honest, this proved one of the few disappointments of the trip. As we should have known, at this time of year the grasses and wildflowers had only just started to grow and there wasn't a great deal to see. I'd hoped to see some of their small herd of bison, but they weren't visible from the various vantage points we tried. Nevertheless we had good views of some field and savannah sparrows and eastern meadowlarks as well as lots more migrating American robins and red-winged blackbirds, a brown thrasher and an eastern bluebird.



Field sparrow, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Illinois



Eastern phoebe, Lincoln Home NHS, Springfield, Illinois

Route 66 took us past Springfield, Illinois, so we made an impromptu visit to the Lincoln Home National Historic Site to see Abraham Lincoln's house, where he lived before he was made President. The surrounding area has been made into a park with several other old houses you can visit. An eastern phoebe was there and chimney swifts were wheeling overhead. After Springfield we left Route 66, heading west to the Mississippi, which we crossed at Hannibal, Missouri.

Tuesday 1 May: Hannibal and Pere Marquette Park - Missouri and Illinois

Hannibal was a good place to start our road trip down the mighty river: it's about half-way down from the source; the river is at its widest just upstream from here; and it was the town where Mark Twain grew up. It was once a thriving river town, but it's lost most of its trade and its historic downtown is now like a quirky 'Twaintown' where you can see his childhood home and a Twain museum. I loved it but it didn't seem to be drawing in the crowds, at least when we were there. Maybe that's why we liked it! At the old river quay a colony of purple martins was making use of the nest boxes provided for them; we saw lots of these later, even in the centre of Memphis, all occupied by purple martins.

Before we visited the town I walked around near our hotel (Sleep Inn and Suites - excellent value and quality) and saw some more savannah sparrows and a red-headed woodpecker; my only previous had been glimpsed from a car in 1980 so I was very pleased to see one properly!

We drove south from Hannibal following the Great River Road, which is clearly signed along the route. This section along the river on the Missouri side is attractively undulating and wooded. From our picnic stop at a viewpoint on a high bluff we overlooked the river to the flat plain of the Illinois side and watched a summer tanager singing above us. Crossing the river back into Illinois we headed for Pere Marquette State Park, where we stopped for the night at one of the lodge cabins. We had time to walk up the ravine trail, where we saw some singing yellow warblers, tufted titmice, Swainson's thrush and blue-grey gnatcatcher. In the clearing around the Lodge itself were lots of American robins and chipping sparrows, and a singing Baltimore oriole.

Wednesday 2 May: Pere Marquette, Cahokia and Lake of Egypt - Illinois

A bird singing high up in a tree caught my attention as soon as I stepped out of the cabin. I eventually got a view of it: a **Philadelphia vireo**, my first new bird of the trip. Around the lodge and surrounding forest I found a couple more eastern phoebes, another summer tanager and a veery. Down at the Illinois River there was a big group of hirundines - mainly barn and cliff swallows, with smaller numbers of tree and bank swallows (sand martins). A yellow warbler and a red-eyed vireo were in riverside bushes.



Cliff swallow, Pere Marquette Park, Illinois



Veery, Pere Marquette Park, Illinois

We were starting to see some good birds and more birding opportunities lay ahead. But first the Great River Road took us to another historic site. I'd never heard of Cahokia Mounds, or the Mississippian people who built them, but when we learned that this site near St Louis held a population estimated at up to 40,000 in 1250 - one of the biggest cities on earth, bigger than London - we had to make a visit. There isn't a great deal to see now other than the huge mounds, but the visitor centre has excellent informative displays and we did an enjoyable circular walk around the site and up Monk's Mound, which gives great views all around. We saw our first eastern kingbirds here, and a pond across the road from the car park had blue-winged teal, little blue heron, great white egret and killdeer.

We crossed the Mississippi south of St Louis and continued on the Missouri side to Ste Genevieve, where we crossed the river by ferry, flashing our headlights to summon the ferryboat, as instructed. Back in Illinois, we headed eastwards to our lakeside house at Lake of Egypt near the Shawnee National Forest.

Thursday 3 May: Lake of Egypt and Ferne Clyffe - Illinois

The Lake of Egypt is a man-made lake and although largely surrounded by houses and boat docks, there is still plenty of forest around it. It had rained heavily in the night, and continued to do so intermittently all day, but the covered verandah was a great place to sit and watch from. There were a few Canada geese and wood ducks on the water, and a common loon, and usually a couple of Forster's terns. A pair of eastern bluebirds were interested in the nest box and there were nearly always some migrating warblers moving through the trees. I managed at last to see my first **blackpoll warbler**, and these were reliable here throughout our stay, along with palm and yellow-rumped (myrtle) warblers. Over the next couple of days I added great blue and green herons, Cape May, chestnut-sided, Blackburnian and Tennessee warblers, grey catbird, brown thrasher, great crested flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo and red-headed woodpecker to the garden list.



Blackpoll warbler, Lake of Egypt, Illinois



Lake of Egypt garden, Illinois

We didn't feel like driving far so we checked out Ferne Clyffe State Park, the other side of the lake. It was still raining on and off, but we found a few birds including eastern phoebe, Swainson's thrushes, white-throated sparrows and grey catbird.

Friday 4 May: Lake of Egypt, Garden of the Gods and Rim Rock - Illinois

We set off to visit the attractive 'Garden of the Gods' within the Shawnee National Forest. There weren't too many people there so we were able to do a bit of birding while enjoying the rock formations. Highlights were a couple of yellow-throated warblers singing near the car park, a chestnut-sided warbler and a white-breasted nuthatch. A Cooper's hawk flew over and the chickadees here were Carolina rather than black-capped. On to 'Rim Rock', with more yellow-throated and chestnut-sided warblers, a summer tanager (these became increasingly common as we moved south) and a wood thrush. Spring flowers in both places were excellent, with masses of Alpine shooting star (dodecathlon) and tradescantia.



Garden of the Gods, Shawnee National Forest, Illinois



Alpine shooting star and tradescantia, Rim Rock

Saturday 5 May: Lake of Egypt and Reelfoot Lake - Illinois and Tennessee

We set off southwards to rejoin the Great River Road, crossed the Ohio River at Cairo, and followed the Mississippi on the Kentucky side. We got through Kentucky quickly, although slowed down slightly when the road we were on disappeared beneath several inches of thick river mud, making us turn back to find another route. Crossing into Tennessee we headed for Reelfoot Lake, but had trouble finding good observation spots. We stopped beside a road signed to Black Bayou, where we saw several indigo buntings, a couple of Tennessee warblers and a blackpoll warbler, although we never found the bayou itself. The Reelfoot Lake visitor centre was popular with weekend visitors, but the boardwalk there was a nice circuit with Louisiana waterthrush, palm warbler, and indigo buntings in the cypress swamp and water snakes swimming around.

We carried on to Memphis and handed our embarrassingly mud-coated car into the care of the hotel doormen. The Beale Street Blues Festival was on, the weather had turned hot and the downtown area was in full party mode.

Sunday 6 May: Memphis - Tennessee

Memphis is not a birding city, but it was interesting to stroll over the bluff to the river early morning. In Jefferson Davis Park and around the cobblestones were many American robins, common grackles, chimney swifts and purple martins. A couple of Forster's terns were fishing near the quay, where there were a few hirundines - rough-winged, cliff and barn swallows. In the city streets were various signs highlighting sites of historical interest - often music-related. We visited the superb Stax soul museum, in the out-of-town building where Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Wilson Pickett and Eddie Floyd made their classic recordings.

Monday 7 May: Memphis - Tennessee

The National Civil Rights Museum, in the Lorraine Hotel where Martin Luther King was shot, was another high point for us. The two-storey building has been so cleverly converted into a museum that you don't realise you're in a motel until you reach the crucial spot; you can also go in the building opposite where James Earl Ray fired from. It told the story of successive generations of African Americans to free themselves from oppression and to achieve fairness and equality; we found it surprisingly moving. In the afternoon we went on a river trip in a replica steamboat, from which we saw some Forster's terns and more hirundines.

Tuesday 8 May: Hot Springs - Arkansas

Crossing the DeSoto Bridge at Memphis, we left the Great River Road again, this time heading west to Hot Springs, Arkansas. We didn't know much about the area but it looked green on the map! The town of Hot Springs itself was actually very interesting: it was a former spa and casino town favoured by baseball players, movie stars and gangsters in the 20s and 30s and the elegant bathhouses still line the main street. Just outside town, Hot Springs National Park is a nice forested hill with views out east over the alluvial plain. On a short walk we found black-and-white warblers, red-eyed vireos and Carolina chickadees.

We'd chosen to stay at a hotel out of town beside Lake Hamilton, thinking that this sounded quiet and rural. Unfortunately we discovered the entire area between the town and Lake Hamilton area is an ugly urban sprawl all the way to our hotel (Baymont Inn and Suites). The lake seemed to have no public access and our hotel had only a small lake frontage, so there wasn't much scope for walking/birdwatching. However, with a little research on the BirdsEye app I found somewhere that proved excellent the next day.

Wednesday 9 May: Lake Hamilton and Lake Ouachita - Arkansas

At Hulsey Fish Hatchery, a few miles further east on the lake, I was pleased to find public access, a car park and even a hide. The pool nearest the car park had been drained and there were plenty of small waders on the mud: lesser yellowlegs, least and pectoral sandpipers and a killdeer. Further on another drained pond held semipalmated sandpipers as well as more pectoral and least, and some blue-winged teal. An adult bald eagle flew over - the only one of the trip. Around the perimeter were now-familiar birds including brown thrasher, northern mockingbird, brown-headed cowbird and tufted titmouse but the star bird was a male **scissor-tailed flycatcher** displaying over the ponds.



Lesser yellowlegs, Hulsey Fish Hatchery, Arkansas



Blue-winged teal, Hulsey Fish Hatchery, Arkansas

After breakfast we headed to Garvan Woodland Gardens, which is in a large stretch of lakeside forest further east. As we passed the road leading to the fish hatchery another pair of scissor-tailed flycatchers was on a roadside fence. The gardens and surrounding woodland were very attractive, but we only saw common birds including Carolina wren, brown thrasher and blue-grey gnatcatcher.



Scissor-tailed flycatcher, Hulsey Fish Hatchery, Arkansas



White-rumped and pectoral sandpipers, Hulsey Fish Hatchery

We headed to Lake Ouachita, where we stopped for a while at the marina and walked the nearby Dogwood Trail, where we saw a singing pine warbler and some summer tanagers. The drive up to Lake Ouachita vista, high up overlooking the lake and forest, was fun to do but we only saw turkey vulture and cardinal there.

Later I went back to Hulsey Fish Hatchery, where a small flock of white-rumped and semipalmated sandpipers had settled on the second drained pond, and three eastern bluebirds had appeared. Two more scissor-tailed flycatchers provided extra colour and excitement, and the visit was rounded off nicely with my first **brown-headed nuthatch** in the car park trees.

Thursday 10 May: Prattsville and Indianola – Arkansas and Mississippi

Heading back east we noticed our first black vulture and another roadside scissor-tailed flycatcher near Prattsville, Arkansas before crossing the Mississippi again on our way to Indianola. This is the heart of the Mississippi Delta, birthplace of the blues, where Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson, John Lee Hooker were all born. At the end of the Civil War the area was mainly swamp and forest; freed slaves and white migrants cleared the area for growing cotton but by the turn of the century most blacks were tied into the sharecropping system, which meant dawn-to-dusk work for little reward. We were there to visit the excellent B B King Blues Museum, which displayed how blues music developed against this background and told his personal life story.

As we drove into Indianola we saw our first **Mississippi kite** circling over the road, and two more above the entrance to the B B King museum. In the afternoon I drove out of town to see what I could find in the farmland around. At Three Way Road, near Moorhead, I walked along the road beside a cotton field with some scrub and weeds. I was pleased to see some eastern meadowlarks and **dickcissels** there as well as the ubiquitous mourning doves, red-winged blackbirds, mockingbirds, cardinals and grackles. I couldn't find a way to the Quiver River here; further north along Nobile Road I found a river bridge where there were an indigo bunting and some wood ducks.

Friday 11 May: Indianola, Yazoo, Vicksburg and Natchez – Mississippi

I wasn't expecting to see much around America's Best Value Inn on the main drag in Indianola, yet in a small park at the back of the lot I watched an **Acadian flycatcher**. Continuing south, we stopped at Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge. At the Alligator Pond I was surprised to see a couple of black-bellied whistling ducks; these have extended their range rapidly and are now common in the south. A large colony of herons was on the far shore, mainly snowy egrets and little blue herons. Back at the trailhead a barred owl flew across the forest floor and settled in view, watching me. From the Matt Collier boardwalk we saw two more Acadian flycatchers. Back on the Great River Road, we stopped briefly at the Vicksburg National Historical Site, where a broad-winged hawk flew over, with a Mississippi kite shortly after, then took the Natchez Trace from Port Gibson (another interesting historic town) into Natchez.



Orchard oriole, Fort Rosalie, Natchez, Mississippi



Mississippi kite, Fort Rosalie, Natchez, Mississippi

From our hotel near the visitor centre I walked into the splendid old town through Fort Rosalie, where an orchard oriole was singing and a Mississippi kite settled obligingly in a tall tree. There was a large gathering of cliff swallows around the casino on the riverfront, and a couple more singing orchard orioles in Bluffs Park.

Saturday 12 May: Natchez and St Catherine's Creek - Mississippi

More of the same birds as yesterday near the hotel, including three more orchard orioles and another Mississippi kite, plus black vultures, red-bellied woodpeckers and a hairy woodpecker, then another broad-winged hawk as we headed south on the Great River Road. We got to St Catherine's Creek National Wildlife Refuge and walked around the reserve. A ruby-throated hummingbird visited flowers outside the visitor centre, and in the woods we found prothonotary warbler, Acadian flycatcher and downy woodpecker, and heard an eastern wood-pewee. After lunch in St Francisville (yet another beautiful old town) we crossed into Louisiana and carried on to Eunice, where we checked into our B&B and went off to the Liberty Theatre to watch the live recording of the weekly Cajun radio show.

Sunday 13 May: Eunice and Lake Martin - Louisiana

Our B&B on the edge of Eunice was in a nicely wooded area, and there were plenty of common birds around the house. Down the road I found white-eyed vireos, pine warblers and a pair of red-headed woodpeckers. At Lafayette we visited Vermilionville, a sort of living museum centred around many old wooden houses from the era of the first Acadian (Cajun) settlers, who relocated here from north east Canada.

In the afternoon we went to Lake Martin, a very attractive freshwater lake near Breaux Bridge. It was too hot to go on a trip in an open boat, so we walked in the lakeside forest at Cypress Island Preserve, seeing parula and prothonotary warblers, white-eyed vireo, Acadian flycatcher, yellow-crowned night heron and little blue heron. Driving back to Eunice via Crawley we passed hundreds of great white egrets and snowy egrets feeding in the crawfish ponds, along with a couple of black-necked stilts and roseate spoonbills. As there was nowhere to stop at the roadside we decided to return the next day.



Red-headed woodpecker, near Eunice, Louisiana



Yellow-crowned night heron, Cypress Island, Louisiana

Monday 14 May: Eunice, Lake Martin and Donaldsonville - Louisiana

We turned west off the Eunice - Crowley road and drove around the crawfish ponds until we found some with birds. Great white egrets were the most numerous heron, with a couple of little blue herons, a cattle egret and a single black-necked stilt. 3 roseate spoonbills flew over and two **fulvous whistling-ducks** rose from near the road, frustratingly flying out of sight. Red-winged blackbirds and barn swallows were around and the whole area looked great for passerines as well as waterbirds.

We decided to go back to Lake Martin for a morning walk before it got too hot. This time we parked at the northern end of the lake and walked through similar forested habitat to yesterday, but this time with a view of the lake. Great white egrets, little blue herons, green herons, great blue herons, neotropic cormorants, an anhinga and an alligator were on the lake and overhead were a feeding party of at least 19 Mississippi kites and an osprey. In the woods were brown-headed cowbirds, white-eyed vireos, parula and prothonotary warblers and a singing **painted bunting**. I was rather pleased with myself for finding this from its house finch-like song, which I'd heard on the Audubon app.



Painted bunting, Lake Martin, Louisiana



White-faced ibis, Donaldsonville, Louisiana

This excursion to Cajun country had taken us west of the Great River Road, and now we headed back east over Atchafalaya Swamp to Donaldsonville, on the Mississippi. A displaying nighthawk over the hotel car park at 5.00 pm was a surprise, as it was still sunny and hot. From the top of the big river levee, with its newly-made walking/cycling track, we could view the muddy riverside, which had a little blue heron and a white-faced ibis. A couple of black-bellied whistling ducks flew over, and there was a colony of purple martins using nest boxes.

Tuesday 15 May: Vacherie and Donaldsonville - Louisiana

We were in Donaldsonville to visit some of the historic plantations now open to the public. Our guided tours of Laura and Oak Alley Plantations, both in Vacherie a few miles downstream, gave a good idea of daily nineteenth-century life, both for the plantation owners and their family, and for the enslaved workers. Both have slave cabins still standing - some of them still lived in up to the 1970s. While walking up the impressive avenue of mature live oak trees at Oak Alley we saw a couple of Mississippi kites and a swallow-tailed kite.

In the early evening further along the levee trail in Donaldsonville various birds were at riverside ponds: black-bellied whistling ducks, great white and snowy egrets, green and little blue herons, a downy woodpecker, multitudes of common grackles and some white-winged doves - another range-expanding species I wasn't expecting to see. The grackles here were of the nominate race (*quiscula* or purple race), as in Florida, with a purple sheen on the head and a black body. They looked noticeably different from those I'd looked at in Illinois (*versicolor* or bronzed race) which have a bluish head and a bronze sheen on the body.



Live oaks at Oak Alley Plantation, Louisiana



Swallow-tailed kite, Oak Alley Plantation, Louisiana

Wednesday 16 May: Donaldsonville, Edgard and New Orleans - Louisiana

An unfamiliar, bulky black bird flying over the Donaldsonville levee trail in the morning turned out to be another unexpected range-expander: a bronzed cowbird. A Mississippi kite flew over and the range expansion of white-winged doves was confirmed with at least 8 around.

The Whitney Plantation in Edgard is devoted to slavery. It opened in 2014 and uses life-size models and real oral histories (collected in the 1930s from former slaves still alive) to good effect. There are several antebellum plantation houses along this part of the river, known as 'Plantation Alley'. They are undoubtedly beautiful, with their lovely grounds, and increasingly they are telling the history from the slaves' point of view as well as their wealthy owners'. In between the plantations there are many large oil refineries, the main employment now.

Moving on to New Orleans, we arrived at our self-catering apartment near the Garden District and walked around this attractive suburban area, enjoying the shops and restaurants on Magazine Street.

Thursday 17 May: New Orleans - Louisiana

Early morning birds in Irish Channel and Garden Districts were routine Southern species: Carolina chickadees, blue jays, northern mockingbirds, mourning doves. Fish crows seemed to predominate over American crows around here. We took the Charles Street streetcar into town and spent the day in and around the French Quarter. A Mississippi kite and a laughing gull flew over Jackson Square while we were there, and a couple of monk parakeets flew over us in Woldenberg Park.

Friday 18 May: New Orleans - Louisiana

We went first to New Orleans Museum of Art in City Park, where we parked for a walk. Unfortunately the museum and its garden were closed for a graduation, and there wasn't much interest around the lake there, so we moved on to Couturie Forest. This was quiet too, apart from a couple of alligators on the pond and some more Mississippi kites overhead. Audubon Park was slightly better, with an anhinga, more Mississippi kites, and a family of bronzed cowbirds. From our apartment we had a quick look at the popular Lafayette Cemetery before we had to scuttle back into the comfort of air conditioning. As soon as we got back there was a heavy shower, the first rain we'd had since Lake of Egypt.

Saturday 19 May: Bayou Sauvage, Mobile and Perdido Key - Louisiana, Alabama and Florida

Leaving New Orleans, we stopped for a walk at Bayou Sauvage. Black vultures and anhingas were in the air above the car park, followed by a tricoloured heron, a couple of young brown reddish egrets flew over the marsh and two yellow-crowned night herons were in a ditch nearby. Following the boardwalk through the swamp we added boat-tailed grackles and blue grosbeaks to the trip list. Here we encountered our first troublesome insects: deer flies, nasty moth-like things that land on your legs and bite.



Butterfly, Bayou Sauvage NWR, Louisiana



Brown pelican, Perdido Key, Florida

Heading east on the I-10 along the Gulf coast takes you through four states in less than three hours: Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. Zipping through the centre of Mobile was fun, with the cityscape on our left, battleship USS Alabama on our right, then across Mobile Bay, with its blue water and white sands. Here we saw our first brown pelicans as we hurtled along to our rental place in Florida.

Sunday 20 May: Perdido Key, Johnson Beach, Big Lagoon and Bayou Tarkiln - Florida

We stayed for four nights in a self-catering house in Perdido Key, a smallish resort at the end of the Florida 'panhandle', close to the border with Alabama. Our place was on the inland side of the gulf islands, in a well-treed area with access to Bayou Garcon. Common in and around the garden were Carolina wrens, Carolina chickadees, eastern towhees, northern mockingbirds, red-bellied woodpeckers and brown thrashers as well as the ubiquitous cardinals, blue jays, red-winged blackbirds and mourning doves. Ospreys, laughing gulls, barn swallows and chimney swifts were often overhead. I also found singles of blue-grey gnatcatcher, ruby-throated hummingbird, downy woodpecker, pine warbler and eastern bluebird. On the bayou, which is really a huge estuary, there were usually an osprey, a common loon and a brown pelican or two, green and great blue herons and a purple martin nest-box colony.

Today we explored the local area around Perdido Key. Johnson Beach National Seashore stretches along the gulf island for miles eastwards and is completely undeveloped. There is a thriving population of least terns in the dunes, with birds constantly flying low over the road. Along the beach were sanderlings, ruddy turnstones and a willet, and a wave of black terns moved eastwards really close in, actually over the beach. On the inland side a boardwalk takes you through the dunes to the edge of Big Lagoon, where a couple of ospreys were fishing and an eastern towhee was singing.

Moving on to Big Lagoon State Park, we enjoyed a walk in mixed dune/slash pine/lake habitat; beautiful bright green lizards here, and birds included a singing immature male orchard oriole. Then on to Bayou Tarkiln Preserve State Park, which also has a good boardwalk through slash pine forest, leading to a large bayou. There were brown-headed nuthatches and pine warblers in the forest and hundreds of pitcher plants; apparently the site has four pitcher plant species.



Least tern, Johnson Beach, Perdido Key, Florida



White-top pitcher plants, Bayou Tarkiln, Florida

Monday 21 May: Perdido Key, Johnson Beach, Orange Beach, Alabama Point - Florida and Alabama

Another visit to Johnson Beach in the morning, starting from further east this time. We spotted a couple of snowy plovers in the dunes, blending in well (they are much paler than the Kentish plover of Europe, generally accepted as the same species) and a reddish egret flew over. Next we headed west, into Alabama, to try some of the birding sites around Orange Beach. Unfortunately the road was very busy because of a weekend rock festival. The car park for Gulf State Park beach was closed, and the State Park centre signs directed us into the middle of a camp site, so we turned back. Eventually we found somewhere to park near Lake Shelby and had a walk through the forest to the lake. Great crested flycatcher, brown-headed nuthatch and downy woodpecker were the highlights here; no birds were visible on the lake but we did see an alligator.

On our way back we stopped at Alabama Point, a white sand beach at the entrance to Bayou Saint John. This had plenty of least terns and sanderlings despite being busy with sunbathers and swimmers. Later in the afternoon, on our way to Pensacola, a Mississippi kite was over the road near Sorrento. This or another was in the same place the next day.

Tuesday 22 May: Perdido Key, Pensacola Beach, Fort Pickens - Florida

From our rental home's viewpoint over the bayou this morning I saw a couple of black-bellied whistling ducks and a royal tern, as well as numerous more distant terns which seemed mainly to be Sandwich.

We stopped briefly at Pensacola Beach and went to the boardwalk (the shopping/restaurant sort not the nature reserve sort!), where least terns and collared doves were flying around. Carrying on south took us to Fort Pickens, which was a worthwhile trip. The former fort is a museum/nature reserve in the Gulf Island National Seashore, and the area is largely free from the crowds of Orange Beach or Pensacola Beach. Lots of ospreys were nesting (10+ birds seen), sanderlings and turnstones were on the beaches, common loons and brown pelicans at sea. On land just common birds apart from another weird nighthawk encounter, with no fewer than three birds displaying in the heat at mid-day around the museum car park. One dive-bombed me outside the museum building, or maybe I just happened to be on his display flightpath.



Snowy plover, Johnson Beach, Perdido Key, Florida



Common nighthawk, Fort Pickens, Gulf Islands, Florida

Wednesday 23 May: Mobile Bay Ferry, Dauphin Island, Bellingrath Gardens, Pascagoula River - Alabama and Mississippi

We spent our last full day travelling back to New Orleans along the gulf coast, which entails a ferry across the mouth of Mobile Bay. They go every 1.5 hours and we aimed to catch the 1145, but we arrived there in time for the 1015 boat and there were spaces to spare, so we boarded it. During the 45 minute crossing I saw about 30 Sandwich terns, 3 or 4 laughing gulls, some brown pelicans and a royal tern. Black clouds were all around us, and we all felt sure to get a soaking, but we dodged the showers somehow.

Dauphin Island, where the ferry boat docks, is considered one of the top birding sites in southeast USA, so we had to make a visit, even though migration seemed to be over. We enjoyed walking around the Audubon Bird Sanctuary, where we met an Australian birder who had lived in the area in the past. He said he was rusty, but was still better than us! The habitat here is pine forest, lake and seashore, similar to where we'd been and the birds we saw were also similar, including ospreys, great blue heron, snowy egrets, and the common land birds. It was hot, and there weren't any migrant passerines visible, although I suspect some species would still have been going through.

Heading west from here, on impulse we followed a sign to 'Bellingrath Gardens', mainly to stop for toilets and to avoid the heavy shower that had now materialised. The rain stopped and as we had no other plans for the day we decided to go round the garden. A huge green English lawn was a surprise, as was a boardwalk round a bayou with nesting ospreys, and there was good forest habitat for birds. There was a good selection of common birds including downy woodpeckers, Carolina wrens, Carolina chickadees and tufted titmouse.

After we arrived at our motel in Moss Point, Mississippi, I made a quick visit to Pascagoula River Audubon Centre where the staff let me in for free for half an hour after the official closing time. Again, nice mixed forest and wetland habitat with white-winged doves among other common birds.

Thursday 24 May: Mississippi Sandhill Crane Refuge - Mississippi

On our final morning we went to the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge. We knew we weren't likely to see the cranes as their nesting area is away from the visitor area, but we wanted to visit anyway. The trail took us through an area of open pine forest where pitcher plants were abundant. I was hoping for Bachman's sparrow here, which we didn't encounter, but eastern bluebird, eastern kingbird and orchard oriole were on show. Unfortunately so too were the deer flies which were a nuisance at this site.



Bellingrath Gardens bayou, Alabama



Lizard and slash pines, Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR, Mississippi

On our way to the Louis Armstrong airport in New Orleans we stopped at Gulfport for lunch. It seemed suitably appropriate in this land of contradictions that one of the last birds we saw, from the window of the IHOP restaurant, was a displaying common nighthawk.

Conclusion

We really enjoyed our trip down the Mississippi, which gave a fascinating insight into the contrasts and conflicts of this area, which has seen so much pain but which showed us nothing but friendship and welcome. Our favourite places were probably the great cities of Chicago and New Orleans; elsewhere there was beautiful architecture, fascinating history, and good birding. Travelling in the USA is easy and we found the roads throughout in excellent condition and well signed and, away from the big cities, other drivers were courteous and sensible. We'd both done a lot of reading about the south before we came and thought we might feel a bit out of place as white Europeans. We never did, although it's fair to say we did attract comment: in some rural places, people stopped their cars to say "Hi there, where y'all from?" What we weren't expecting is that we'd get a friendly "Hi, how're y'all doin'?" from most people we passed on sidewalks - even in cities like Memphis or Natchez.

As this was my eighth visit to the eastern states I wasn't expecting large numbers of new birds and was pleased to see 9 lifers (shown in **bold**) and a further 8 new species for North America among the 151 species total for the trip. We were lucky to encounter scissor-tailed flycatcher, as this was at the extreme eastern edge of its range, and to catch a good variety of northern warblers in Illinois; most of the other species we saw are south-eastern birds that could probably be found in any suitable habitat within their range. There were many other possible species we could have seen - rails, various warblers, sparrows, wrens and flycatchers for example - but I suspect many of these would have required specific locations and more effort! I would highly recommend our route for anyone keen to combine birding with general interest.

Birds seen in southern Canada and USA, 25th April - 24th May 2018

Species	Canada	USA						
	Ontario	Illinois	Missouri	Kentucky/ Tennessee	Arkansas	Mississippi/ Alabama	Louisiana	Florida
Common loon	2 Niagara	1 Lake of Egypt	-	-	-	-	-	1 Perdido Key 1 Fort Pickens
Horned grebe	4 Niagara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brown pelican	-	-	-	-	-	6 Mobile Sev Mobile Bay ferry	-	20+ Perdido Key Sev Gulf Islands
Double-crested cormorant	130+ Niagara	3 Pere Marquette	-	-	-	-	2 Donaldsonville	-

Species	Canada	USA						
	Ontario	Illinois	Missouri	Kentucky/ Tennessee	Arkansas	Mississippi/ Alabama	Louisiana	Florida
Neotropic cormorant	-	-	-	-	-	-	10+ Lake Martin	-
Anhinga	-	-	-	-	-	1 Yazoo NWR 1 Dauphin Island	2 Lake Martin 2 Bayou Sauvage	-
Great blue heron	1 Websters Falls	4+ Grafton 3+ Lake of Egypt	-	Many nr Reelfoot Lake	1 Hulseys hatchery	-	1 Lake Martin 1 Bayou Sauvage	2 Perdido Key
Great white egret	-	1 Cahokia	-	4+ Kentucky	-	1 Moorhead many Yazoo NWR 1 Moss Point	200+ Eunice-Crowley 3 Donaldsonville 3 Bayou Sauvage	-
Snowy egret	-	-	-	-	-	C200 Yazoo NWR 4 Dauphin Island	20+ Eunice-Crowley 2 Donaldsonville 1 Bayou Sauvage	-
Reddish egret	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 Bayou Sauvage	1 Perdido Key
Tricoloured heron	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 Bayou Sauvage	-
Little blue heron	-	1 Cahokia 1 Lake of Egypt	-	-	-	10+ Yazoo NWR	4+ Lake Martin 2 Donaldsonville	-
Cattle egret	4 Niagara	-	-	-	-	-	Sev Eunice-Crowley	-
Green heron	-	2 Lake of Egypt	-	1 Memphis	1 Hulseys hatchery	-	1 Lake Martin 1 Donaldsonville	2 Perdido Key
Yellow-crowned night heron	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 Bayou Sauvage 1 Lake Martin	-
Roseate spoonbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	3+ Eunice-Crowley	-
White-faced ibis	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 Donaldsonville	-
Canada goose	C10 Niagara	C10 Pere Marquette Sev Lake of Egypt	-	Sev Memphis	Sev Lake Hamilton	-	-	-
Black-bellied whistling-duck	-	-	-	-	-	2 Yazoo NWR	3 Donaldsonville 6 Bayou Sauvage	2 Perdido Key
Fulvous whistling-duck	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 Eunice-Crowley	-
Wood duck	-	1 Lake of Egypt	-	-	C10 Hulseys hatchery	8 Indianola	-	-
Mallard	2 Niagara	12 Cahokia 1 Lake of Egypt	-	Sev Memphis	6+ Hulseys hatchery	-	-	-
Blue-winged teal	-	6+ Cahokia	-	-	7 Hulseys hatchery	-	-	-
Greater scaup	1 Niagara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Long-tailed duck	10+ Niagara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bufflehead	5+ Niagara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Red-breasted merganser	2 Niagara	C10 Chicago	-	-	-	-	-	-
Turkey vulture	2 Hamilton 5 Niagara	Common	Sev	Sev	Common	Common	Sev	2 Perdido Key

Species	Canada	USA						
	Ontario	Illinois	Missouri	Kentucky/ Tennessee	Arkansas	Mississippi/ Alabama	Louisiana	Florida
Black vulture	-	-	-	-	1	3 Natchez	8 Bayou Sauvage	4 Perdido Key
Mississippi kite	-	-	-	-	-	3 Indianola 1 Vicksburg 2 Natchez	23 Lake Martin 2 Oak Alley Plantation 1 New Orleans	1 nr Sorrento
Swallow-tailed kite	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 Oak Alley Plantation	-
Cooper's hawk	-	1 Garden of Gods	-	-	-	-	-	-
Red-shouldered hawk	-	-	-	-	1 Hulsey hatchery	-	-	-
Broad-winged hawk	-	-	-	-	-	1 Vicksburg 1 nr Natchez	-	-
Red-tailed hawk	2 Hamilton 2 Niagara	Sev	1 Hannibal	-	-	-	1 nr Baton Rouge	-
Bald eagle	-	-	-	-	1 Hulsey hatchery	-	-	-
Osprey	-	-	-	-	-	2 Mobile 1 Lake Shelby 4+ Dauphin Island	1 Lake Martin	7+ Perdido Key 6+ Fort Pickens
Ring-necked pheasant	-	1 Midewin	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wild turkey	-	1 nr Pere Marquette 1 nr Creal Springs	-	-	-	-	-	-
American coot	-	6 Chicago	-	-	-	-	-	-
Snowy plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 Perdido Key
Killdeer	-	2 Cahokia	2 Hannibal	Sev nr Reelfoot Lake	1 Hulsey hatchery	C4 Indianola	1 Eunice- Crowley 4 Donaldsonville	1 Fort Pickens
Black-necked stilt	-	-	-	-	-	-	2+ Eunice- Crowley	-
Lesser yellowlegs	-	-	-	-	5+ Hulsey hatchery	-	-	-
Willet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 Perdido Key
Ruddy turnstone	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4 Perdido Key 2 Fort Pickens
Sanderling	-	-	-	-	-	Sev Alabama Point	-	10+ Perdido Key C10 Fort Pickens
Pectoral sandpiper	-	-	-	-	5+ Hulsey hatchery	-	-	-
White-rumped sandpiper	-	-	-	-	6+ Hulsey hatchery	-	-	-
Semipalmated sandpiper	-	-	-	-	4+ Hulsey hatchery	-	-	-
Least sandpiper	-	-	-	-	10+ Hulsey hatchery	-	-	-
Laughing gull	-	-	-	-	-	C10 Mobile Bay 10+ Alabama Point	5 Eunice- Crowley 4 New Orleans 5 Bayou Sauvage	20+ Perdido Key
Ring-billed gull	4 Hamilton 5,000+ Niagara	2 Chicago 2 Midewin	-	-	-	-	-	-

Species	Canada	USA						
	Ontario	Illinois	Missouri	Kentucky/ Tennessee	Arkansas	Mississippi/ Alabama	Louisiana	Florida
American herring gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11 Perdido Key
Caspian tern	1 Niagara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Royal tern	-	-	-	-	-	1 Mobile Bay	-	5+ Perdido Key
Sandwich tern	-	-	-	-	-	30+ Mobile Bay	-	3+ Perdido Key
Common tern	10 Niagara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Forster's tern	-	3 Lake of Egypt	-	2 Memphis	-	-	-	-
Least tern	-	-	-	-	-	C20 Alabama Point	-	C60 Perdido Key C20 Fort Pickens
Black tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20 Perdido Key
Mourning dove	Common	Sev	Sev	Sev	Sev	20+ Indianola 2 Natchez	3 Donaldsonville 2 New Orleans	Common
White-winged dove	-	-	-	-	-	1 Pascagoula River	9+ Donaldsonville	-
Eurasian collared dove	-	-	-	-	-	2 Natchez	3 Donaldsonville	-
Feral pigeon	-	Sev Chicago	-	-	-	Sev Indianola & Natchez	10+ Donaldsonville	-
Monk parakeet	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 New Orleans	-
Yellow-billed cuckoo	-	1 Lake of Egypt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barred owl	-	-	-	-	-	1 Yazoo	-	-
Common nighthawk	-	-	-	-	-	1 Gulfport	1 Donaldsonville	3 Fort Pickens
Chimney swift	-	4 Springfield Sev Pere Marquette	4 Hannibal Sev Ste Genevieve	Sev Memphis	-	2 Vicksburg Sev Natchez	Sev Eunice, Donaldsonville etc	Common
Ruby-throated hummingbird	-	-	-	-	-	1 St Catherines Creek	-	1 Perdido Key
Red-headed woodpecker	-	2 Lake of Egypt	1 Hannibal 1 nr Louisiana	-	-	-	2 Eunice	1 Perdido Key
Red-bellied woodpecker	Sev Hamilton 1 Queenston	Sev Pere Marquette	1 Hannibal	-	1 Hulsey hatchery	1 Natchez 1 Pascagoula River 1 Lake Shelby	1 Lake Martin	2 Perdido Key
Downy woodpecker	1 Hamilton	1 Pere Marquette	-	-	-	1 St Catherines Creek 1 Lake Shelby 2 Bellingrath Gardens	1 Donaldsonville	2 Perdido Key
Hairy woodpecker	2 Websters Falls 1 Hamilton	-	-	-	-	1 Natchez	-	-
Northern flicker	2 Hamilton	1 Midewin 1 Lake of Egypt	1 Hannibal	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern wood-pewee	-	1 Garden of Gods	-	1 Reelfoot Lake	-	1 Yazoo NWR 1 St Catherines Creek	-	-
Acadian flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-	1 Indianola 2 Yazoo 1 St Catherines Creek	1 Lake Martin	-

Species	Canada	USA						
	Ontario	Illinois	Missouri	Kentucky/ Tennessee	Arkansas	Mississippi/ Alabama	Louisiana	Florida
Eastern phoebe	-	1 Springfield 3 Pere Marquette 1 Ferne Clyffe	-	-	-	-	-	-
Great crested flycatcher	-	1 Lake of Egypt	-	-	-	1 Lake Shelby	-	-
Eastern kingbird	-	5 Cahokia 2 Lake of Egypt	-	-	3 Hulsey hatchery	5 Natchez 2 Sandhill Crane NWR	1 Donaldsonville	1 Perdido Key
Scissor-tailed flycatcher	-	-	-	-	5 Hulsey hatchery	-	-	-
Loggerhead shrike	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 Lake Hutchinson	-
Redd-eyed vireo	-	2 Pere Marquette 1 Lake of Egypt	-	-	3+ Hot Springs NP 2 Lake Ouachita	-	-	-
Philadelphia vireo	-	1 Pere Marquette	-	-	-	-	-	-
White-eyed vireo	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 Eunice 1 Lake Martin	-
Blue jay	Common	Common	-	-	Sev Hulsey hatchery	Sev Natchez	Common	Common
American crow	Sev	Sev	-	Sev	Common	Common	Sev New Orleans	-
Fish crow	-	-	-	-	-	-	Sev	Sev
Purple martin	-	C10 Cahokia	C20 Hannibal	C40 Mamphis	10 Hulsey hatchery	Sev Lake Shelby	C40 Donaldsonville	C10 Perdido Key
Rough-winged swallow	4+ Niagara	4+ Chicago 4+ Joliet Sev Rim Rock	-	3 Memphis	3 Lake Hamilton 10 Hulsey hatchery 4 Lake Ouachita	Sev Natchez	-	-
Bank swallow	-	1+ Pere Marquette	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tree swallow	-	1+ Pere Marquette 2+ Lake of Egypt	-	-	-	-	1 Donaldsonville	-
Cliff swallow	20+ Pere Marquette	-	-	1 Memphis	-	C100 Natchez	10+ Donaldsonville	-
Barn swallow	-	1 Chicago 1 Midewin 20+ Pere Marquette Sev Lake of Egypt	1 Hannibal	1+ Memphis	1+ Lake Hamilton Sev Hulsey hatchery	1 Pascagoula River	1 Eunice-Crowley 1 Donaldsonville Sev New Orleans	1 Perdido Key
Tufted titmouse	-	2 Pere Marquette 2 Lake of Egypt 2 Garden of Gods	1 nr Hannibal 1 Ste Genevieve	-	1 Lake Ouachita	1 Pascagoula River	-	-

Species	Canada	USA						
	Ontario	Illinois	Missouri	Kentucky/ Tennessee	Arkansas	Mississippi/ Alabama	Louisiana	Florida
Black-capped chickadee	2 Hamilton	1 Pere Marquette (or Carolina?)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carolina chickadee	-	1 Garden of Gods	-	-	1 Hot Springs NP	1 Yazoo NWR 1 St Catherines Creek Sev Lake Shelby 2+ Pascagoula River	Sev Eunice 5+ Lake Martin 2 Laura Plantation Sev New Orleans	Sev Perdido Key
White-breasted nuthatch	1 Hamilton	1 Garden of Gods	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brown-headed nuthatch	-	-	-	-	1 Hulsey hatchery	4 Lake Shelby	-	1 Bayou Tarkiln
Carolina wren	1 Hamilton	-	-	-	2 Garvan Gardens	Sev Bellingrath Garden	2 Eunice 1 Vermilionville, Lafayette	3+ Perdido Key
House wren	-	2 Lake of Egypt	1 Hannibal	-	-	-	-	-
Blue-grey gnatcatcher	-	1 Pere Marquette 1 Lake of Egypt 1 Garden of Gods	-	-	1 Hot Springs NP 1 Garvan Gardens	-	-	1+ Perdido Key
Eastern bluebird	-	2 Lake of Egypt	-	-	3+ Hulsey hatchery	1 Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR	-	2 Perdido Key
American robin	10+ Hamilton C10 Websters Falls Sev Niagara	C20 Joliet C30 Midewin V common elsewhere	Many Hannibal	Many Memphis	Common	-	-	-
Wood thrush	-	1 Rim Rock	-	-	-	-	-	-
Veery	-	1 Pere Marquette	-	-	-	-	-	-
Swainson's thrush	-	1 Pere Marquette 1+ Fern Cliff 1 Garden of Gods	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grey catbird	-	2 Lake of Egypt 1 Fern Cliff	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northern mockingbird	-	1 nr Garden of Gods	-	Sev Memphis area	Sev Hot Springs	Sev Indianola Common Natchez and elsewhere	Sev New Orleans and elsewhere	Very Common
Brown thrasher	1 Hamilton	1 Midewin 1 Lake of Egypt	-	Sev Kentucky	2+ Hulsey hatchery	3 Natchez	1 Vermilionville, Lafayette	4+ Perdido Key
Starling	Sev Hamilton area & Niagara	Common						
Northern parula	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 Lake Martin	-
Tennessee warbler	-	1 Lake of Egypt	-	2 Reelfoot Lake	-	-	-	-

Species	Canada	USA						
	Ontario	Illinois	Missouri	Kentucky/ Tennessee	Arkansas	Mississippi/ Alabama	Louisiana	Florida
Yellow warbler	-	3+ Pere Marquette 1 Lake of Egypt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chestnut-sided warbler	-	1 Lake of Egypt 1 Rim Rock	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cape May warbler	-	2 Lake of Egypt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blackburnian warbler	-	1 Lake of Egypt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yellow-rumped (myrtle) warbler	-	3 Lake of Egypt	-	2 Memphis	-	-	-	-
Prothonotary warbler	-	-	-	-	-	1 St Catherine's Creek	3 Lake Martin	-
Palm warbler	-	2+ Lake of Egypt	-	1 Reelfoot Lake	-	-	-	-
Pine warbler	-	-	-	-	1 Lake Ouachita	-	1 Eunice	2+ Perdido Key 3+ Bayou Talkin
Blackpoll warbler	-	3+ Lake of Egypt 1 Ferne Clyffe	-	1 Reelfoot Lake	-	-	-	-
Yellow-throated warbler	-	1 Garden of Gods 1 Rim Rock	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black-and-white warbler	-	-	-	-	3 Hot Springs NP	-	-	-
Prothonotary warbler	-	-	-	-	-	1 St Catherine's Creek	3 Lake Martin	-
Louisiana waterthrush	-	-	-	1 Reelfoot Lake	-	-	-	-
Summer tanager	-	1 Pere Marquette 1 Rim Rock	1 nr Hannibal	-	2 Lake Ouachita	Heard commonly in forests		
Northern cardinal	C20 Hamilton 1 Websters Falls	1 Joliet Common S Illinois	1 Hannibal	Sev Memphis	1 Lake Ouachita	Common		
Blue grosbeak	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 Bayou Sauvage	-
Indigo bunting	-	-	-	Many along roadsides	-	1 Indianola	1+ Bayou Sauvage	-
Painted bunting	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 Lake Martin	-
Dickcissel	-	-	-	-	-	2 Three Way Road, nr Indianola	-	-
Eastern towhee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 Big Lagoon 1 Bayou Talkin 3+ Perdido Key
Field sparrow	-	4+ Midewin	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chipping sparrow	12+ Hamilton 1 Dundas	1 Joliet Sev Pere Marquette common S Illinois	1 Hannibal	-	1 Hot Springs NP 2 Lake Hamilton	Sev St Catherine's Creek	-	-
Savannah sparrow	-	2+ Midewin	4+ Hannibal	-	-	-	-	-

Species	Canada	USA						
	Ontario	Illinois	Missouri	Kentucky/ Tennessee	Arkansas	Mississippi/ Alabama	Louisiana	Florida
White-throated sparrow	4 Hamilton	1 Chicago 1 Pere Marquette 2 Ferne Clyffe	-	-	-	-	-	-
Song sparrow	1 Hamilton 1 Niagara	4+ Joliet 1 Cahokia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dark-eyed (slate-coloured) junco	1 Hamilton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern meadowlark	-	-	-	-	-	Sev Three Way Road, nr Indianola	-	-
Brown-headed cowbird	3+ Hamilton 1 Websters falls	2 Joliet 1 Lake of Egypt	Sev Hannibal	Sev Memphis	2 Lake Hamilton 2 Hulsey hatchery	-	2 Lake Martin 1 Bayou Sauvage	3 Perdido Key
Bronzed cowbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 Donaldsonville 3 Audubon Park, New Orleans	-
Red-winged blackbird	2 Hamilton 2 Websters Falls Sev Niagara	10+ Joliet Sev Pere Marquette 1 Lake of Egypt	-	-	Sev Hulsey hatchery	Common Indianola and elsewhere	Sev Lake Martin	-
Common grackle	3 Hamilton Sev Niagara	Sev Chicago Sev Lake of Egypt and elsewhere (inland bronzed form)	-	Common Memphis	Common			
Boat-tailed grackle	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 Bayou Sauvage	-
Northern (Baltimore) oriole	-	1 Pere Marquette	-	-	-	-	-	-
Orchard oriole	-	1 Pere Marquette	-	-	-	5 Natchez 1 Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR	-	1 Perdido Key
House Finch	-	1 Joliet 1 Pere Marquette 5 Lake of Egypt	2 Hannibal	Sev Memphis	2+ Hot Springs	-	-	4+ Perdido Key 2 Fort Pickens
American Goldfinch	4 Hamilton	4+ Joliet 2+ Pere Marquette 1 Lake of Egypt	-	3 Memphis	-	-	-	-
House sparrow	Common							

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