



# BIRDING ITINERARY

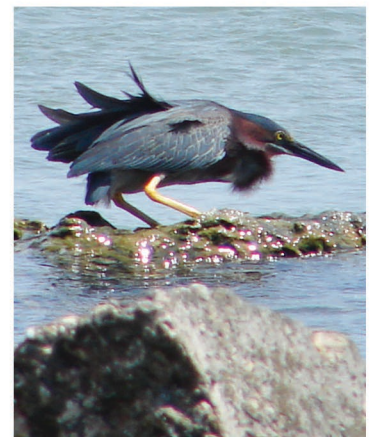
## GALVESTON'S WEST END

Galveston Island has the best year-round birding! We encourage you to explore and enjoy discovering all that the island has to offer. This itinerary is designed to be enjoyed during any season of the year.

**Need help with identification?** Guided tours are available; visit [www.birdingforfun.com](http://www.birdingforfun.com) or call 832-372.8236. Contact Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council (GINTC) at 409.789.8125.

**Not sure where to start?** Try this **self-guided birding tour** of some of the West End's hotspots – spend a few hours, or a full day, the choice is up to you!

**1** **Moody Gardens, One Hope Boulevard, Galveston**  
Start your tour by checking the water retention ponds at the far end of the blue Aquarium pyramid parking lot. (Parking is free.) Scan through the fence for Sora, Green Heron, and shorebirds such as Dunlin and Western Sandpiper. Migrants including Louisiana Waterthrush and Common Yellowthroat are also possible during spring. Walk down the reservoir drainage canal to Offatt's Bayou, checking both for additional species. In fall and winter, migrants such as Pine Warbler and Common Loon are possible. Before you leave the parking lot, scan the triangular structures on the top of the hotel for Peregrine Falcon.



Green Heron (photo by Bobby Rivers)

Return up Hope Boulevard to Jones Road and turn left, then turn right on Stewart Road. Scan the fields along the way for raptors, waterfowl, and Sandhill Crane in fall and winter. The power lines are often good for American Kestrel, White-tailed Kite, Red-tailed Hawk, and Crested Caracara. The small ponds near the road are usually quite productive, as well.



Osprey (photo by Dave Williams)

### **8 Mile Road & Sportsman Road (UTC 066)**

**2** Turn right on 8 Mile Road, and take your time birding the fields and ponds on both sides of the road. Wilson's Snipe, Neotropic Cormorant, Roseate Spoonbill, Crested Caracara, Peregrine Falcon, White-tailed Kite and other shorebirds, herons and egrets, are possible year-round. In winter, Sandhill Crane and various species of waterfowl may be seen; during spring migration, Scarlet and Summer Tanager, Painted Bunting, *(continued on other side)*

## BIRDING ITINERARY: GALVESTON'S WEST END

2

### 8 Mile Road & Sportsman Road (UTC 066) *continued*

Baltimore Oriole, and other migrants appear on the fence lines. The gravel area at the end of 8 Mile Road is a great place to park, and get out and stretch your legs. American Oystercatcher, Ruddy Turnstone, and other shorebirds are common here year-round.

Turn on Sportsman Road, and scan the marshes on the left for Reddish Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, and Tricolored Heron. Look carefully in the ditches for Clapper Rail. Check the piers on the right for American Oystercatcher, Willet, and terns. In fall and winter, Belted Kingfisher and Osprey are common. Where the road dead-ends, scan the sand bars and jetty for plovers and sandpipers, Black Skimmer, and terns. Continue birding as you return to Stewart.



Reddish Egret (photo by Bobby Rivers)



Roseate Spoonbills (photo by Rose Poole)

### 7½ Mile Road

Turn left on Stewart, and then right on 7½ Mile Road. Park on the right side of the road near the first pond, and check the bushes between the ponds carefully for Black-crowned Night-Heron. In spring, these bushes also attract warblers and other migrants. Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Common Gallinule, Roseate Spoonbill, White and White-faced Ibis, and other waders are common year-round. In winter, check for Ring-necked Duck, American Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, and Pied-billed Grebe. Watch overhead for raptors such as White-tailed Kite, Crested Caracara, and Osprey.

3

4

### Lafitte's Cove (UTC 068)

Continue west on Stewart, checking ponds on both sides for waders and waterfowl. Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon, and Northern Shoveler are common in winter.

Turn right on Eckert Drive into Lafitte's Cove, and park in the Nature Center parking lot. Check the ponds on the other side of the road for Roseate Spoonbill, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Wilson's Snipe, and shorebirds. In winter, Bufflehead and Redhead may be seen. Cross back to boardwalk, quietly checking for Sora and the occasional Glossy Ibis in the pond on the right. In winter, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal are common. Just past the boardwalk, the pond on the left is also good for waterfowl. Follow the trail to the right to check for Black-crowned Night-Heron and Green-winged Teal. During spring, the woods on the left are excellent for colorful migrants such as Baltimore Oriole, Indigo Bunting, Northern Parula, Hooded Warbler, tanagers, and up to 6 species of vireos. There are multiple water drips and a maze of trails, so plan to spend some time here.



Hooded Warbler (photo by Kristine Rivers)