

Florida 2013-14, Introduction

Contributed by Jos
Last Updated Sunday, 16 February 2014

Coming hot on the heels of my late-summer overland journey from southern California to the Arctic coast of northern Alaska, this rather more sedate return to the USA saw me travelling to the far south-east of North America, enjoying a two-week winter break in sunny Florida.

With concentrations of waterbirds, both resident and wintering, Florida is a treat in winter, sites such as the Everglades and Merritt Island a feast for the eyes with incredible numbers of herons, cormorants, pelicans and ducks packing in. Add on top, a whole range of additional species such as Mangrove Cuckoo, the endemic Florida Scrub Jay, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Crested Caracara and the reintroduced Whooping Cranes and you'll soon appreciate that Florida certainly does have attractions beyond its better-known beaches, theme parks and Miami skyline.

With targets including Florida Scrub Jay, Whooping Crane, Crested Caracara, Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Brown-headed Nuthatch, my itinerary took me on an anti-clockwise loop starting and finishing in Miami. After spending a few days in the Everglades National Park, I then headed north to the excellent Lake Kissimmee area and thereafter to Merritt Island, an incredible locality indeed. From there, after a short detour to Blue Springs to view the Manatee populations, I crossed to the Gulf of Mexico to sample the offerings on Sabel Island and Corkscrew Swamp. Finally, with a few days to spare, I returned to the south-east, finishing the trip with visits to the Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Florida Keys and a last spin in the Everglades. For convenience, this report is divided into: a. Daily Log. A day-to-day account of the birds and birding from the 18 December to 1 January, with all highlights and background. To read, [CLICK HERE](#). b. Systematic List of all Birds and Mammals. A full list detailing the numbers and localities of all species seen, also including reptiles. In total, 167 species of birds were seen in the two weeks, along with nine species of mammal and eight identified reptiles. To read, [CLICK HERE](#).