

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Travels in the Lowcountry of South Carolina, USA

By Sandy Dimke, AFIAP, PPSA

**W**ill you be traveling to the Southeast USA soon? Consider stopping in the Beaufort, South Carolina area. That's Beaufort; pronounced "BEW" as in BEAUTIFUL. There are other Beauforts throughout the USA and around the world but none as lovely as our "beautiful Beaufort."

The area surrounding Beaufort, from Savannah, Georgia, north along the coast to Charleston, South Carolina, is known as the "Lowcountry." Similar in topography to that of the Netherlands, our Lowcountry consists of long fingers of water stretching into the land from the ocean and rivers. The highest hill is 30 feet. This makes for sweeping vistas, coastlines with beach "boneyards" of barren trees, marshes that stretch into the creeks and rivers and century-old live oak trees with picturesque Spanish moss dripping from the branches.

Your first stop, entering Beaufort County from the north, is the Old Sheldon Church Ruins. Undoubtedly one of the most photographed sites in all of South Carolina, this should not be missed. Built in the mid 1700's as a "chapel of ease" for plantation owners, it was burned during the American Revolution, rebuilt, and burned again during the Civil War. You will be rewarded with unique and dramatic images from every angle. <https://www.oldshealdonchurch.com/>. Drone photography is permitted.



Old Sheldon Church Ruins



Tomotley Oaks

Tomotley Plantation is about a mile from Old Sheldon Church. Although privately owned, the view of the allée of oaks from the public roadway is worth the short drive. Please respect private property and do not trespass.

In early morning, Hunting Island State Park offers wonderful sunrises. Recent hurricanes created havoc, but south beach now has uprooted trees resting on the shore to photograph. Night and Milky Way photography is perfect since city lights are several miles

away: <https://southcarolinasparks.com/hunting-island>

In town, "The Point" has stunning vintage homes that were not destroyed during the Civil War but were used by Union troops as hospitals and offices. In Springtime, when flowers are abundant, every home seems to be framed by century-old azaleas, jasmine, and camellias.

Also in Spring, bird enthusiasts head to Port Royal, the town adjacent to Beaufort, to photograph at the rookery at the Cypress Wetlands. Egrets, Herons, ibis and Spoonbills nest in the trees and ducks and alligators inhabit the wetlands. A boardwalk circles the area. Nearby there is also a working shrimp boat dock on 11th Street that's especially photogenic at sunset.

These are just some of the highlights of the Beaufort, South Carolina area. Come visit us soon.

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### Alligator Farm Zoological Park, St. Augustine, Florida, USA

By Barbara Kuebler, EFIAP

**A**re you looking for a great bird photography opportunity? If so, St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park in north-east Florida, USA, is the place to go. As you round the corner to enter the famous Wading Bird Rookery, sounds and smells awaken your senses. There is non-stop action. Decked in colorful breeding plumage, birds perform elaborate courtship and mating displays. They fly back and forth overhead against an open sky, carrying sticks or fish to feed their chicks. Territorial disputes occur and there is heightened activity when the squawking chicks are hungry.

From mid-February through July the rookery is an amazing place! Hundreds of wild wading birds return each year to build nests, lay eggs, and raise their young. An elevated boardwalk winds around a large native swamp filled with alligators. There are few places where you can experience nature at such close range. These birds return each year and are oblivious to the thousands of people who come to see them.

The rookery is noisy and densely populated. The peak nest count varies from 400-800 nests annually. Many species of wading birds roost and breed here. With the arrival of great egrets, spoonbills, and woodstorks, colonies start forming in the two large live oak trees. The smaller herons come next and nest in foliage about 12 feet off the ground. Last to come are the small snowy and cattle egrets who manage to wedge their tiny nests in the "v" shaped leaf base of the cabbage palms. On the boardwalk you will be shooting at eye level, sometimes so close you could reach out and touch them.



Great Egret Chick being Fed

My favorite time to visit is mid-April through May. New birds arrive daily, displaying and nest building continue, and wood stork chicks scream constantly. Chicks range in size from newly hatched to big fuzzy fledglings. The weather is pleasant. For more information: <https://www.alligatorfarm.com>

St. Augustine, the oldest city in the USA, offers many historical sites, century-old buildings, museums, and beautiful white sand beaches. St. Augustine has convenient lodging and also offers many photo-opportunities.



Roseate Spoonbill Flying

# PAA News and Updates

## Photographic Alliance of America

By Joanne Stolte, HonFPSA, MPSA, EFIAP, ESFIAP  
President, Photographic Alliance of America • FIAP Liaison

### FIAP News Includes More PAA Member Photo Recommendations



The quarterly *FIAP News* includes mini articles that recommend a setting someplace in the world that provides photographic opportunities. Each issue of the *FIAP News* since August 2021 has included a mini article by a PAA member sharing a photo opportunity location in the USA! Four of these articles were described in the May 2022 PAA article in the PSA Journal.

In the August 2022 issue of the *FIAP News* **Sandy Dimke, PPSA, AFIAP**, of Seabrook, SC, explored photography in the area surrounding Beaufort, South Carolina, from Savannah, GA, north along the coast to Charleston, SC, known as the "Lowcountry." The November 2022 issue included an article by **Barbara Kuebler, FPSA, MPSA, EFIAP**, of Jupiter, FL, where she described photographing wild wading birds at the Alligator Farm Zoological Park in St. Augustine, Florida. **Carolyn Todd-Larson, PPSA, AFIAP**, of State College, PA, outlined the various areas in Mount Desert Island & Acadia National Park near Bar Harbor, Maine, in the February 2022 *FIAP News*.

Past issues of the *FIAP News* are linked from the FIAP web site at: <https://www.fiap.net/en/fiap-news>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Mount Desert Island & Acadia National Park near Bar Harbor, Maine, USA

By Carolyn Todd-Larson, AFIAP, PPSA



MDR Historical Museum, Somerville

the water on kayaks, canoes, sailboats, or motor-boat excursions. There is something for everyone at Acadia, including fabulous photography.

To get there, connect from a major city such as Boston or Philadelphia to a Maine airport. Hancock County Airport is closest to Acadia, served by small commuter planes. Bangor is about 81 km or an hour's drive. Portland is 286 km, or about a 3-hour drive. Be sure to have a GPS device to guide you to your destination the most direct way.

Bar Harbor and Southwest Harbor have numerous hotels and bed and breakfasts. I prefer cottage rentals, available through sites like VRBO or local realtors. On arrival, be sure to stop at the Acadia Visitors' Center for an orientation and to find out about park activities led by rangers.

If you have only a day, focus on the Park Loop Road, a 20-mile road, much of which is one-way. Stop at various points along the way such as Jesup Path, Thunder Hole, Otter Cliff, and Bubble Pond. Walk the nature trail at Jordan Pond. But to truly get the most out of Acadia and Mount Desert Island, plan at least a week's visit.

For sunrise, park at the Gorham Mountain lot on Ocean Drive and walk onto the rocks. Catch Otter Cliff at its best, or head up to the summit of Cadillac Mountain. For Cadillac, reservations are required between May and October: <https://www.recreation.gov/timed-entry/400900>.

Eagle Lake Carriage Path is my favorite for walks and bicycling. Somerville has my favorite bridge on the island. Southwest Harbor and Bass Harbor feature working lobster boats. Northeast Harbor is home to million-dollar yachts and Asticou Gardens. The Seawall section of Acadia includes two gentle hikes: Wonderland and Ship's Harbor. Near there is also the iconic Bass Harbor Lighthouse.

There will always be something more that you can photograph on Mount Desert Island. And if you fall in love with the island and its people, you will yearn to return.



Ocean Drive at Sunrise