



Little St. Simons Lodge © Cassie Wright

PRE-TRIP ITINERARY

Little St. Simons Island

A SPECIAL NATURE CONSERVANCY DEPARTURE

MAY 12 - 18, 2019

- Estimated Price: \$2,700, per person double occupancy, \$4,145 per person single occupancy
- Trip cost is based on a minimum of 30 participants in shared accommodations. Final trip costs will be based on actual number of participants.



Protecting nature. Preserving life.

Welcome to Little St. Simons Island! The Nature Conservancy is working with the owners and staff of Little St. Simons to ensure the beaches, forests and salt marshes remain healthy and continue to flourish as an important part of the South Atlantic coastal region—an area that supports one of the East Coast’s most prosperous commercial and recreational fisheries. The Conservancy holds a conservation easement on LSSI and works closely with LSSI ecological manager and other staff to recommend best management practices and to determine research and monitoring priorities, putting conservation of the island’s habitats and species first. Please join us for a special week exploring this pristine, protected area. Thank you for your interest travelling with The Nature Conservancy.



Kayaking on Little St. Simons © Cassie Wright

Trip Overview

With more than 7,400 miles of shoreline, the Georgia coast is among the world's most naturally diverse and intact coastal habitats. With sandy beaches, acres of maritime forests and nearly one-third of all the salt marshes in the eastern United States, more than 55,000 resident and migratory shorebirds and seabirds use the Georgia coast each year.

The Altamaha River Delta—a 135-square mile area beginning at the Southern tip of Sapelo Island and extending south to encompass Wolf, Egg, Little Egg and Little St. Simons islands in McIntosh and Glynn counties—is among the most noted Georgia habitats for seabirds and shorebirds, including the American oystercatcher. From the loggerhead sea turtle to the shortnose sturgeon, from the northern right whale to the blue crab, species of all shapes and sizes benefit from Georgia's robust coastal estuaries.

The Conservancy long ago made the Altamaha River a focus of its freshwater and coastal conservation work, purchasing its first parcels in the watershed in the late 1960s—two small islands that are formed from the sediment and sand the river washes downstream. The Conservancy's long commitment to the Altamaha and coast has become a testing ground for a bold new conservation strategy of protecting entire landscapes and ecosystems. The Conservancy has protected more than 280 miles of ecologically important lands within the watershed, including creating a more than 50-mile contiguous corridor of conserved lands all the way out to coastal barrier islands. By increasing coastal resilience, The Nature Conservancy aims to reduce the current and growing risks to coastal communities from natural hazards and climate change through the use of natural solutions and smart development.

In 1999, the Mexico-based Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network recognized the Altamaha River Delta as the 40th major reserve for shorebirds. The National Audubon Society has designated the delta as one of the country's top 500 Important Birding Areas.

Our work in this region is contributing to our global goal of safeguarding 60,000 miles of the world's most precious sources of fresh water. As the global population soars, demands for food, energy and shelter are putting unprecedented pressure on our planet—and water is at the heart of this crisis. The Nature Conservancy's plan is to fundamentally change the way our most precious resource—water—is used and managed so that nature and people can thrive together. We are also striving to reach our global goal of protecting 400 million hectares of ocean and coastal waters through ocean planning. No matter where we live, oceans make our lives better. They give us fish to eat, clean air to breathe, new medicines to treat disease, storm protection and recreational opportunities.

Our work in the Altamaha River watershed and on Little St. Simons Island is also contributing to our shared conservation agenda of conserving over 780,000 square miles of forests, grasslands and working lands. Protecting land is where The Nature Conservancy's story began. It is our legacy and our future.

Day 1: ARRIVAL

- Midday Jacksonville, FL arrival; shuttle service to Hampton River Marina
- Afternoon Departure from Hampton River Marina
Check in to The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island
- Evening Social Hour on The Lodge porch
Group dinner & evening naturalist program
- Overnight [The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island](#)

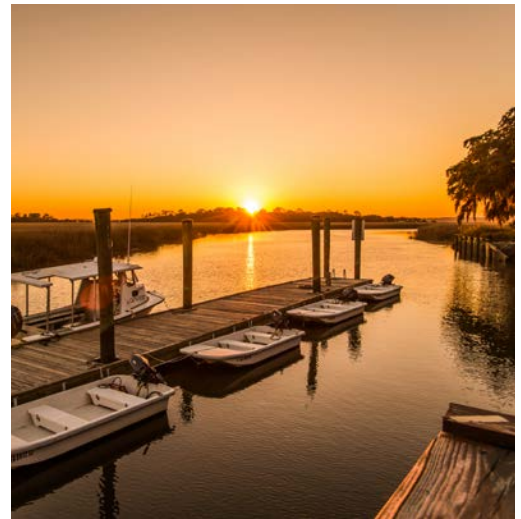
Please plan to arrive at the Jacksonville International Airport by 12:00 pm. You will be driven as a group to the Hampton River Marina, which is approximately 1.5 hours away. The boat from the marina to Little St. Simons Island has a capacity of 18 people, so it will make two trips; some guests will depart at 2:00 pm, while others will depart at 3:30 pm. On the boat ride, you will get the chance to cruise through coastal Georgia salt marshes; keep an eye out for wildlife!

After settling into your rooms, we will congregate at 6:00 pm for a social hour, during which you can meet your fellow travelers and your hosts. Enjoy local Georgia shrimp on the Lodge's patio and relax in the shade of ancient moss draped oaks. The Lodge's chef will have dinner prepared by 7:00 pm and we will move to the dining room. At 8:15 pm, you will learn more about the ecology of the surrounding area and what you can expect for the week ahead.

Day 2: LSSI

- 7:00 am Continental Breakfast at Lodge (optional)
Morning Birding (optional)
- Morning Group Breakfast at Lodge; Activity Options presentation
Boat Class
Choice between two Morning Activities
- Afternoon Lunch at Lodge
Choice between two Afternoon Activities
- Evening Social Hour & Group Dinner
- Overnight The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island

Early in the morning, a continental breakfast will be available for those who wish to grab a quick bite and head out on their own. At 7:15 am, a morning birding excursion will be available and will return to the Lodge in time for breakfast with the group. At the 9:00 am group breakfast, a naturalist will explain the activity options for the day and will be available to answer any questions you may have. Please note that anyone who wishes to use a skiff **MUST** attend a boat class. We will hold a social hour at 6:00 pm, and dinner at 7:00 pm.



Sunset on the Island © Cassie Wright



Wildlife Spotting © Clay Bolt



Yellow Rat Snake © Clay Bolt



Bird watching © Marc del Santro

Days 3-6 Activity Options

The format for days 3 - 6 will allow you the chance to enjoy the island to the fullest. You will have the option to enjoy activities that are most interesting to you. Daily, we will convene for lunch and will meet again for social hour and dinner. Options include:

North End Adventure: Enjoy a guided informative truck trip up island to learn about the island's cultural and natural history.

Hikes: Embark on a guided hike from the Lodge along the trails and see the flora and fauna with an island naturalist. Island hiking is easy.

Creek Paddling: Explore the tidal salt marshes surrounding Little St. Simons Island by kayak or canoe. After a quick refresher on paddling technique, your naturalist will guide you on a leisurely trip through this remarkable habitat. You'll see birds and other wildlife you wouldn't be able to see from the trails.

Creek Fishing: See what's biting in the tidal creeks or in the surf; the Lodge provides spin gear and fly rods, bait and artificial lures for a variety of species including redfish, flounder or trout.

Reptile-Amphibian Safari: Enjoy a guided truck excursion to a variety of habitats in search of native reptiles and amphibians.

South End Adventure: Go on a truck adventure to Little St. Simons Island's south end, where Slash and Loblolly pine trees tower. You will learn why the pine forest habitat exists and how fires play an important role in plant succession on the island.

Birding at Myrtle Pond: Join a naturalist on a truck excursion to the viewing towers and blinds at Myrtle Pond. We will expect to see least bitterns, glossy ibis, black necked stilts and yellowlegs to name a few.

Shorebirding Sancho Panza Beach: Join one of our naturalists for a shorebirding excursion on the northeast reaches of Little St. Simons Island.

Bike Trip: Bike along the beach, learning about tide line treasures and beach ecology along the way.

Botany Excursion: An island naturalist will take you on a fascinating trip to the island's various botanical communities, describing the ecological importance and historical significance of the plants. Did you know that Spanish Moss is neither Spanish in origin or a moss? It's actually a relative of the pineapple family and was once used to stuff mattresses.

Pond Adventure: Take a tour of the natural freshwater ponds around the island that harbor an abundance of American alligators and wading birds such as herons and egrets.

Bike Adventure: Learn more of the flora and fauna on a guided bike adventure with an island naturalist. You might spot armadillos or a variety of resident and migratory birds along the way. Or join a naturalist for a perspective of how the cultural history has shaped the natural history of Little St. Simons Island.

Morning Birding: Early risers enjoy a naturalist-led walk on the beach in search of migrating shorebirds. You've not seen a sunrise until you've seen a southern sunrise on the east coast. The pinks and oranges in the sky provide a perfect backlighting for the birds that frolic in the shallows at this time of morning. Bring your binoculars or use the guide's scope to get a close up view of the bills and beaks that have their breakfast here on these shores.

Boat Tour on Nearby Waterways: Join a few local experts on a boat-based excursion through tidal creeks and salt marsh habitat.

Garden Walk: Enjoy a guided walk through our Organic Garden and learn about the herbs, vegetables, flowers, fruits, cover crops and compost.

If you are seeking a quieter afternoon, simply relax on the banks of Mosquito Creek under a live oak with a good book.

Day 3: LSSI

- Morning Group Breakfast at Lodge
Choice between two Morning Activities
- Mid-day Truck shuttle departs for Picnic
Picnic at South End Launch
- Afternoon Choice between two Afternoon Activities
- Evening Social Hour and Group Dinner
Evening naturalist program
- Overnight The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island

Day 4: LSSI

- 7:00 am Continental Breakfast (optional)
Early morning birding (optional)
- Morning Group Breakfast at Lodge
Choice between two Morning Activities
- Mid-day Lunch at Lodge
- Afternoon Choice between two Afternoon Activities
- Evening Social Hour and Group Dinner
- Overnight The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island

Day 5: LSSI

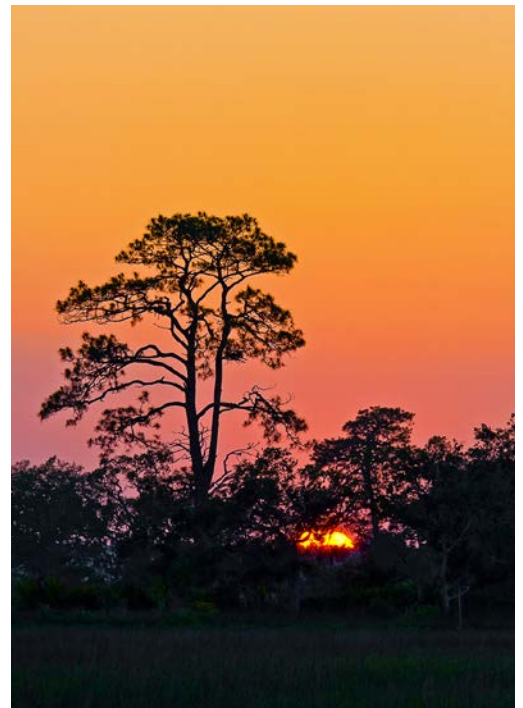
- Morning Group Breakfast at Lodge
Choice between two Morning Activities
- Mid-day Truck shuttle departs
Picnic at the beach
- Afternoon Choice between two Afternoon Activities
- Evening Social Hour and Group Dinner
Evening naturalist program
- Overnight The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island

Day 6: LSSI

- 7:00 am Continental Breakfast (optional)
Early morning birding (optional)
- Morning Group Breakfast at Lodge
Choice between two Morning Activities



Sun through Moss © Blake Gordon



Beautiful Island Sunset © Marc del Santro



American Green Tree Frog © Clay Bolt

Mid-day Lunch at Lodge
Afternoon Choice between two Afternoon Activities
Evening Social Hour
Farewell Group Dinner
Overnight The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island

Day 7: LSSI

Morning Group Breakfast at Lodge
Pack up; check out
Departure from Island at 10:00 am or 11:30 am
Arrival Hampton River Marina at 10:30 am or 12:00 pm
TBD Shuttle to Jacksonville International Airport

We hope that you have enjoyed your stay on Little St. Simons Island, and will return home with many memories! After breakfast, the boat between the island and the marina will make two trips: one at 10:00 am and one at 11:30 am. As a group, you will be driven from the marina to the Jacksonville International Airport to catch your flight home, or to your next destination.

PLEASE NOTE: This itinerary is representative of your trip, and like all natural history excursions, activities are subject to modification based on weather, tides and unforeseen events and the lodge will be working to confirm the exact itinerary much closer to departure when some of the unknown factors can be estimated. We will do our best to keep you informed on any necessary changes. When considering whether this trip is right for you, look closely at the itinerary and consider your ability level. Travelers should be able to walk as much as a mile or two over uneven terrain and get in and out of trucks and boats in order to participate in all activities. With this departure, travelers not wishing to participate in certain events can always opt to spend a day or half the day at the lodge on their own relaxing, reading or watching birds from the porch. Expect to spend 4 to 8 hours outdoors most days. A range of weather conditions may be possible on this trip. Please pay special attention to the trip materials and pack accordingly.

Thank you for traveling with The Nature Conservancy!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please do not hesitate to contact Little St. Simons Island if you have any questions or needs regarding trip logistics.

Email: shana@littlessi.com
Phone: (888) 733-5774 or (912) 634-5382



American Alligator © Marc del Santro



Little St. Simons Beach © Blake Gordon



Mosquito Creek © Marc del Santro