

Report from the past ©2025 Joseph T. Sinclair

These are my Florida bird shots taken over five days of sitting in a blind in the Everglades for 14 hours each day. Booooring.

But I lie. I took these photos at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park south of St. Augustine in 2003 with my trusty Sony V1 Zeiss 4X 5MP P&S camera. In fact, I shot all of these and many other photos in about an hour.



The alligator farm is kind of a dumpy site, not the kind of place one would classify as a state-of-the-art zoo. But it has one acre of high bushes with an elevated wooden walkway going through it. And that's where the birds are in May and June. The birds are safe because of the alligators in the surrounding area under the

walkway (keeps predators away). It serves as a nesting site for hundreds of birds including great egrets, wood storks, snowy egrets, roseate spoonbills, and several species of herons. There is no enclosure; it's wild.

Many of the birds have little apparent fear of humans. Some of the birds are as close as an arm's length away from the walkway. Wildlife photographers and naturalists from across the country come here to take photos. But the hour I was there, no other photographers were present. Because I was visiting with my family, I was unable to spend much time taking photos. But were I to visit Florida again, I would definitely go out of my way to visit the birds for a full day of photography.

My digital photography capabilities were a little underwhelming in 2003. I would love to have another chance to shoot these birds, even though I'm not a wildlife photographer.

As for the alligators and crocodiles, it's tough to get photos that show them in a natural state at this place. Nonetheless, it's worth spending a

little time to get some gator shots. Although the gators keep predators away from the birds, it's not wise for a bird to fly on down to thank them, as one photo shows.

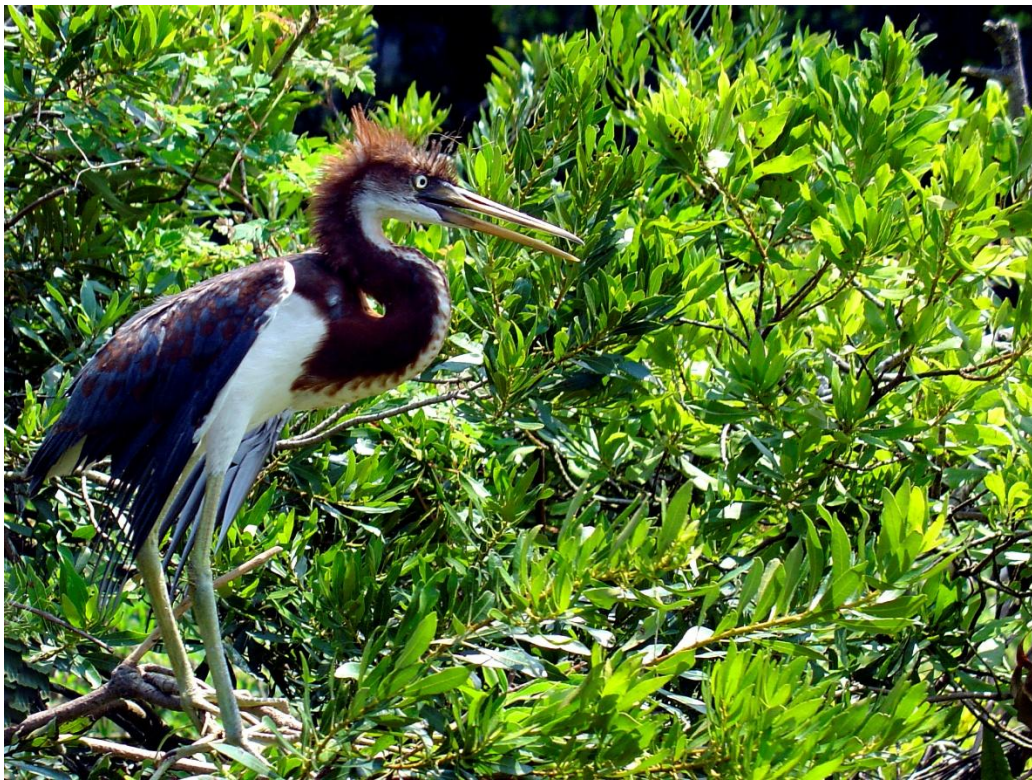














A nearby huge bonus for photographers is the 1672 Castillo de San Marcos historic fort at St. Augustine. It's a photographer's dream. But that's another story.





Think of what you can do with a day (or more) of shooting in the St. Augustine area!

And hey! For those with a taste for *le haut artificiel*, Disney World is only about 110 miles away.