

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wheeler

National Wildlife Refuge Bird List



Birds of Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge

Wheeler NWR, located along the Tennessee River, is one of over 565 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. It was established in 1938 as a wintering area for migratory birds and continues this role today. It's 35,000 acres provide a great diversity of habitats including forested wetlands, upland hardwoods, tributaries, swamps, impoundments, embayments, pine uplands, and agricultural fields. This diversity provides for an amazing variety of birdlife and makes the refuge fertile grounds for enjoying the great activity of bird watching.

How to use your checklist

The checklist is designed to be informative and simple to use. It is arranged in the order established by the American Ornithologists' Union. Symbols which appear in this checklist represent the following:

Seasonal Appearance

Sp	Spring	March - May
S	Summer	June - August
F	Fall	September - November
W	Winter	December - February

Seasonal Abundance

a - **ABUNDANT**: Present in moderate to large numbers and easily found in suitable habitat at the right time of year.

c - **COMMON**: Present in small to moderate numbers and usually found in suitable habitat at the right time of year.

u - **UNCOMMON**: Present in small numbers and sometimes but not always found with some effort in suitable habitat at the right time of year.

o - **OCCASIONAL**: Occurs annually in very small numbers. Not to be expected on any given day, but might be found with extended effort over the course of the appropriate season(s).

r - **RARE**: Occurs less than annually, but there tends to be a pattern over time at the right time of year in suitable habitat; 4 or more records in last 10 years.

x - **ACCIDENTAL**: An exceptional occurrence that might not be repeated for years; 3 or fewer records in last 10 years.

***** - nests on the refuge

I - Introduced species

This checklist includes 300 species of birds and is based on observations by refuge personnel, visiting ornithologists, and birders. If you should find a species not on this list, please notify refuge personnel at either the Refuge Headquarters or Visitor Center. We appreciate your help in updating our records.

To report unusual sightings or for further information, contact:

Refuge Manager
Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Refuge Headquarters Road
Decatur, Alabama 35603
wheeler@fws.gov



	<i>Sp</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
WATERFOWL				
___ Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	-	x	x	-
___ Fulvous Whistling-Duck	-	-	-	x
___ Greater White-fronted Goose	c	-	c	c
___ Snow Goose	u	-	c	u
___ Ross' Goose	o	-	o	u
___ Brant	-	-	x	x
___ Barnacle Goose	-	-	x	x
___ Cackling Goose	-	-	-	r
___ Canada Goose*	c	u	c	a
___ Mute Swan (I)	-	x	x	-
___ Tundra Swan	r	-	r	r
___ Wood Duck*	a	c	a	a
___ Gadwall	c	o	c	a
___ Eurasian Wigeon	-	-	x	r
___ American Wigeon	c	-	a	a
___ American Black Duck*	u	o	c	c
___ Mallard*	c	c	a	a
___ Blue-winged Teal*	c	o	c	o
___ Northern Shoveler	c	o	c	a
___ Northern Pintail	u	o	c	a
___ Green-winged Teal	c	-	c	a
___ Canvasback	u	-	u	c
___ Redhead	u	-	u	u
___ Ring-necked Duck	c	-	c	a
___ Greater Scaup	o	-	o	u
___ Lesser Scaup	c	-	c	a
___ Harlequin Duck	-	-	-	x
___ Surf Scoter	-	-	x	-
___ White-winged Scoter	r	-	r	r
___ Black Scoter	-	-	-	r
___ Long-tailed Duck	r	-	r	r
___ Bufflehead	c	-	c	a
___ Common Goldeneye	u	-	u	c
___ Hooded Merganser*	c	u	c	c
___ Common Merganser	r	-	r	r
___ Red-breasted Merganser	o	-	o	u
___ Ruddy Duck	u	-	u	c
GALLINACEOUS BIRDS				
___ Northern Bobwhite*	u	u	u	u
___ Wild Turkey*	o	o	o	o
LOONS AND GREBES				
___ Red-throated Loon	x	-	-	x
___ Common Loon	u	x	u	c
___ Pied-billed Grebe*	c	u	c	c
___ Horned Grebe	u	-	u	c
___ Red-necked Grebe	x	-	-	x
___ Eared Grebe	x	-	-	-

	<i>Sp</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
STORKS				
___ Wood Stork	x	r	x	-
CORMORANTS				
___ Double-crested Cormorant	c	u	c	c
ANHINGA				
___ Anhinga	r	r	r	-
PELICANS				
___ American White Pelican	c	r	c	c
HERONS				
___ American Bittern	u	-	u	x
___ Least Bittern*	o	r	o	-
___ Great Blue Heron*	c	c	a	a
___ Great Egret*	c	c	c	a
___ Snowy Egret	r	r	r	-
___ Little Blue Heron	o	u	u	-
___ Tricolored Heron	r	r	-	-
___ Cattle Egret	c	c	u	x
___ Green Heron*	c	c	c	x
___ Black-cr. Night-Heron	u	u	u	u
___ Yellow-cr. Night-Heron*	u	c	u	-
IBISES				
___ White Ibis	r	u	u	-
___ Glossy Ibis	r	-	r	x
___ White-faced Ibis	x	-	-	-
VULTURES, HAWKS AND ALLIES				
___ Black Vulture*	u	u	u	u
___ Turkey Vulture*	c	u	c	c
___ Osprey*	c	c	u	o
___ Mississippi Kite	r	r	r	-
___ Bald Eagle*	u	u	u	c
___ Northern Harrier	u	-	c	c
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk*	u	o	c	u
___ Cooper's Hawk*	u	u	c	u
___ Red-shouldered Hawk*	c	u	c	c
___ Broad-winged Hawk*	c	u	c	-
___ Swainson's Hawk	-	-	-	x
___ Red-tailed Hawk*	c	u	c	a
___ Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	r	r
___ Golden Eagle	-	-	r	r
RAILS AND ALLIES				
___ Yellow Rail	x	-	x	-
___ King Rail	r	x	r	x
___ Virginia Rail	u	-	u	r
___ Sora	c	-	c	r
___ Purple Gallinule	x	x	-	-
___ Common Moorhen	u	u	u	-
___ American Coot*	a	u	a	a

	<i>Sp</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
CRANES				
___ Sandhill Crane	c	-	a	a
___ Whooping Crane (I)	u	-	u	c
SHOREBIRDS				
___ Black-bellied Plover	o	o	u	-
___ American Golden-Plover	u	o	u	-
___ Semipalmated Plover	c	u	c	-
___ Piping Plover	x	-	x	-
___ Killdeer*	a	c	a	a
___ Black-necked Stilt	x	-	x	-
___ American Avocet	r	r	o	r
___ Spotted Sandpiper*	c	o	c	o
___ Solitary Sandpiper	c	r	c	-
___ Greater Yellowlegs	c	u	c	u
___ Willet	r	-	r	-
___ Lesser Yellowlegs	c	u	c	u
___ Upland Sandpiper	o	-	o	-
___ Whimbrel	x	-	x	-
___ Hudsonian Godwit	x	-	x	-
___ Marbled Godwit	o	-	o	-
___ Ruddy Turnstone	o	r	o	-
___ Red Knot	-	-	x	-
___ Sanderling	r	r	u	-
___ Semipalmated Sandpiper	c	u	c	-
___ Western Sandpiper	c	u	c	r
___ Least Sandpiper	c	u	c	c
___ White-rumped Sandpiper	u	r	o	-
___ Baird's Sandpiper	r	r	r	-
___ Pectoral Sandpiper	c	r	c	x
___ Dunlin	c	o	c	u
___ Stilt Sandpiper	u	u	u	-
___ Buff-breasted Sandpiper	r	o	u	-
___ Short-billed Dowitcher	u	o	c	x
___ Long-billed Dowitcher	u	o	u	x
___ Wilson's Snipe	c	r	c	a
___ American Woodcock*	u	u	u	u
___ Wilson's Phalarope	r	r	u	-
___ Red-necked Phalarope	x	-	x	-
GULLS AND TERNS				
___ Sabine's Gull	-	-	x	-
___ Bonaparte's Gull	c	-	u	c
___ Laughing Gull	r	r	r	r
___ Franklin's Gull	r	r	r	x
___ Ring-billed Gull	c	u	c	a
___ Herring Gull	u	r	u	c
___ Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	x
___ Least Tern	o	r	r	-
___ Caspian Tern	u	r	u	-

	<i>Sp</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
___ Black Tern	u	-	u	-
___ Common Tern	u	-	u	-
___ Forster's Tern	c	r	c	c
___ Pomarine Jaeger	-	-	-	x
PIGEONS AND DOVES				
___ Rock Pigeon* (I)	a	a	a	a
___ Eurasian Collared-Dove*(I)	c	c	c	c
___ Mourning Dove*	a	a	a	a
___ Common Ground-Dove	x	x	x	x
CUCKOOS				
___ Yellow-billed Cuckoo*	c	c	c	-
___ Black-billed Cuckoo	u	-	u	-
OWLS				
___ Barn Owl*	r	r	r	r
___ Eastern Screech-Owl*	c	c	c	c
___ Great Horned Owl*	c	u	c	c
___ Barred Owl*	c	u	u	c
___ Short-eared Owl	r	-	r	r
___ Northern Saw-Whet Owl	-	-	-	x
NIGHTJARS				
___ Common Nighthawk*	c	c	c	-
___ Chuck-will's-widow*	c	c	u	-
___ Eastern Whip-poor-will	u	-	u	-
SWIFTS				
___ Chimney Swift*	c	c	a	-
HUMMINGBIRDS				
___ Ruby-throated Hummingbird*	c	c	a	-
KINGFISHERS				
___ Belted Kingfisher*	u	u	c	c
WOODPECKERS				
___ Red-headed Woodpecker*	c	u	c	c
___ Red-bellied Woodpecker*	c	c	a	a
___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	u	-	c	c
___ Downy Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
___ Hairy Woodpecker*	u	u	u	c
___ Northern Flicker*	c	c	c	c
___ Pileated Woodpecker*	c	u	c	c
FALCONS				
___ American Kestrel*	c	u	c	c
___ Merlin	o	-	u	o
___ Peregrine Falcon	o	-	u	o
FLYCATCHERS				
___ Olive-sided Flycatcher	r	-	u	-
___ Eastern Wood-Pewee*	c	c	c	-
___ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	o	-	u	-
___ Acadian Flycatcher*	c	c	c	-

	<i>Sp</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
___ Alder Flycatcher	o	-	o	-
___ Willow Flycatcher*	o	r	o	-
___ Least Flycatcher	o	-	o	-
___ Eastern Phoebe*	c	c	c	c
___ Vermilion Flycatcher	x	-	-	x
___ Great Crested Flycatcher*	c	c	u	-
___ Eastern Kingbird*	c	c	c	-
___ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher*	u	o	u	-

SHRIKES

___ Loggerhead Shrike*	u	u	u	u
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VIREOS

___ White-eyed Vireo*	c	c	c	x
___ Yellow-throated Vireo*	c	u	c	-
___ Blue-headed Vireo	u	-	u	u
___ Warbling Vireo	r	-	r	-
___ Philadelphia Vireo	u	-	u	-
___ Red-eyed Vireo*	c	c	c	-

JAYS AND CROWS

___ Blue Jay*	c	c	c	c
___ American Crow*	c	c	c	c
___ Fish Crow	o	r	o	o

LARKS

___ Horned Lark*	c	c	c	a
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MARTINS AND SWALLOWS

___ Purple Martin*	c	c	u	-
___ Tree Swallow*	c	u	c	o
___ N. Rough-winged Swallow*	c	c	c	r
___ Bank Swallow	c	-	c	-
___ Cliff Swallow*	c	c	c	-
___ Barn Swallow*	c	c	c	x

CHICKADEES AND TITMICE

___ Carolina Chickadee*	c	c	c	c
___ Tufted Titmouse*	c	c	c	c

NUTHATCHES

___ Red-breasted Nuthatch	u	-	u	o
___ White-breasted Nuthatch*	c	c	c	c
___ Brown-headed Nuthatch*	u	o	u	u

CREEPERS

___ Brown Creeper	u	-	u	c
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WRENS

___ House Wren	u	r	u	o
___ Winter Wren	u	-	u	c
___ Sedge Wren	u	-	u	r
___ Marsh Wren	u	-	u	o
___ Carolina Wren*	c	c	c	c
___ Bewick's Wren	x	x	x	x

	<i>Sp</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
GNATCATCHERS				
___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*	c	c	c	o
KINGLETS				
___ Golden-crowned Kinglet	u	-	c	c
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	c	-	c	c
THRUSHES				
___ Eastern Bluebird*	c	c	c	c
___ Veery	u	-	u	-
___ Gray-cheeked Thrush	u	-	u	-
___ Swainson's Thrush	u	-	u	-
___ Hermit Thrush	u	-	u	c
___ Wood Thrush*	c	c	c	-
___ American Robin*	a	c	c	a
MIMIC THRUSHES				
___ Gray Catbird*	c	c	c	o
___ Northern Mockingbird*	c	c	c	c
___ Brown Thrasher*	c	c	c	c
STARLING				
___ European Starling* (I)	a	a	a	a
PIPITS				
___ American Pipit	u	-	c	c
WAXWINGS				
___ Cedar Waxwing*	c	o	c	a
LONGSPURS				
___ Lapland Longspur	u	-	u	c
WARBLERS				
___ Ovenbird*	c	u	c	-
___ Worm-eating Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___ Louisiana Waterthrush*	u	r	u	-
___ Northern Waterthrush	c	-	c	x
___ Golden-winged Warbler	u	-	c	-
___ Blue-winged Warbler	u	r	c	-
___ Black-and-white Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___ Prothonotary Warbler*	c	c	c	-
___ Swainson's Warbler*	u	u	r	-
___ Tennessee Warbler	c	-	a	-
___ Orange-crowned Warbler	c	-	c	u
___ Nashville Warbler	u	-	u	-
___ Connecticut Warbler	r	-	r	-
___ Mourning Warbler	r	-	r	-
___ Kentucky Warbler*	c	c	c	-
___ Common Yellowthroat*	a	c	c	u
___ Hooded Warbler*	u	u	c	-
___ American Redstart*	c	u	c	-
___ Cape May Warbler	u	-	u	-
___ Cerulean Warbler	u	o	u	-
___ Northern Parula*	c	u	c	-

	<i>Sp</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
___ Magnolia Warbler	c	-	a	-
___ Bay-breasted Warbler	u	-	u	-
___ Blackburnian Warbler	u	-	u	-
___ Yellow Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___ Chestnut-sided Warbler	u	-	c	-
___ Blackpoll Warbler	c	-	x	-
___ Black-throated Blue Warbler	r	-	r	-
___ Palm Warbler	c	-	c	u
___ Pine Warbler*	c	c	c	c
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	a	-	a	a
___ Yellow-throated Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___ Prairie Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___ Black-throated Green Warbler	c	-	c	-
___ Canada Warbler	u	-	u	-
___ Wilson's Warbler	o	-	u	-
___ Yellow-breasted Chat*	c	c	c	-

SPARROWS

___ Eastern Towhee*	c	c	c	c
___ Bachman's Sparrow	r	r	-	-
___ American Tree Sparrow	-	-	-	x
___ Chipping Sparrow*	c	u	c	u
___ Field Sparrow*	c	c	c	a
___ Vesper Sparrow	u	-	u	u
___ Lark Sparrow*	c	c	c	x
___ Savannah Sparrow	c	-	c	c
___ Grasshopper Sparrow*	u	u	u	x
___ Henslow's Sparrow	r	-	r	v
___ Le Conte's Sparrow	-	-	-	r
___ Nelson's Sparrow	v	-	-	-
___ Fox Sparrow	u	-	u	c
___ Song Sparrow*	c	u	c	a
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	u	-	u	-
___ Swamp Sparrow	c	-	c	a
___ White-throated Sparrow	a	-	a	a
___ White-crowned Sparrow	u	-	c	c
___ Dark-eyed Junco	c	-	c	c

TANAGERS

___ Summer Tanager*	c	c	c	-
___ Scarlet Tanager*	c	u	c	-

GROSBEAKS

___ Northern Cardinal*	a	a	a	a
___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak	c	-	c	-
___ Blue Grosbeak*	c	c	c	-
___ Indigo Bunting*	a	c	a	x
___ Dickcissel*	c	c	c	x

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES AND ALLIES

	<i>Sp</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
___ Bobolink	c	-	u	-
___ Red-winged Blackbird*	c	c	a	a
___ Eastern Meadowlark*	c	c	c	c
___ Western Meadowlark	-	-	x	x
___ Yellow-headed Blackbird	x	-	x	x
___ Rusty Blackbird	u	-	c	c
___ Brewer's Blackbird	u	-	u	u
___ Common Grackle*	c	c	a	a
___ Brown-headed Cowbird*	c	c	a	a
___ Orchard Oriole*	c	c	u	-
___ Baltimore Oriole*	u	u	u	-

FINCHES

___ Purple Finch	u	-	u	u
___ House Finch* (I)	a	a	a	a
___ Red Crossbill	-	-	-	x
___ Pine Siskin	u	-	u	u
___ American Goldfinch*	c	u	c	c
___ Evening Grosbeak	r	-	r	r

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

___ House Sparrow* (I)	a	a	a	a
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All photos: George Lee

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