

BIRDS of the OUTER BANKS

Nearly 400 species of birds have been sighted within the Outer Banks of North Carolina. This impressive number is due to several factors, which include: the rich diversity of habitats; the fact that the ocean off the Banks is biologically rich, in part because of the mixing of subtropical waters from the south with the temperate waters from the mid-Atlantic; and the limited extent of land, which tends to concentrate vagrants. In spite of its rich potential, the Banks is actually underbirded. In fact, sometimes a visiting birder discovers a species that has never been recorded in this area before.

The area covered by this list includes all of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, from Nags Head south to Ocracoke village, to include Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. Also included is the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site on Roanoke Island. Note that the bar-graph statuses provided in this list are based on the sites where species are easiest to find. For instance, the statuses given for most waterfowl species are based on their abundances at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. Some resident landbird species that are easy to find at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site are much harder to find further south on the Banks, e.g. Brown-headed Nuthatch.

WHEN and WHERE

Birding is always exciting on the Outer Banks though the greatest variety of species occurs during spring and fall migrations. For those seeking out migratory shorebirds, the various inlet tidal flats, the ponds at Pea Island and Bodie Island, and the salt pond at Cape Hatteras Point offer the greatest concentrations. However, the ponds at Pea Island and Bodie Island offer the greatest variety, and typically the best chance of seeing one of the rarer species.

Landbird migration in fall can be excellent, but typically only after strong cold fronts. The best areas to look for these migrants are along the dikes at Pea Island; the northern tip of Pea Island, near the Oregon Inlet bridge; and at Fort Raleigh, especially in and around the Elizabethan Gardens and along the section of the hiking trail that ends at Croatan Sound.

In winter, ocean-watching is generally best from Cape Hatteras northward. Occasionally in winter, especially in severe weather, Cape Hatteras Point may be almost blanketed with gulls, providing the opportunity to see several of the rarer species. Often in late May, impressive numbers of pelagic birds—storm-petrels, shearwaters, jaegers—may be seen in northward migration passing just off the tip of Cape Hatteras Point.

Even if you visit the Outer Banks during a slower period, don't forget that exciting birds can turn up any time.

ABUNDANCE DESIGNATIONS

- COMMON:** Certain to be found in proper habitat
- FAIRLY COMMON:** Will usually be found
- UNCOMMON:** Present, but will usually be missed
- OCCASIONAL:** May require several visits to find
- RARE:** Not recorded every year
- VERY RARE TO ACCIDENTAL:** Found less often than five times a decade. See separate list at end of checklist

LOONS

- Red-throated Loon
- Common Loon

GREBES

- Pied-billed Grebe
- Horned Grebe
- Red-necked Grebe
- Eared Grebe

SHEARWATERS

- Cory's Shearwater
- Greater Shearwater
- Sooty Shearwater
- Manx Shearwater
- Audubon's Shearwater

STORM-PETRELS

- Wilson's Storm-Petrel
- Leach's Storm-Petrel

PELICANS & ALLIES

- Northern Gannet
- American White Pelican
- Brown Pelican
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Cormorant
- Magnificent Frigatebird

BITTERNS & HERONS

- American Bittern
- Least Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Great Egret
- Snowy Egret
- Little Blue Heron
- Tricolored Heron
- Reddish Egret
- Cattle Egret
- Green Heron
- Black-crowned Night-Heron
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

IBISES

- White Ibis
- Glossy Ibis

VULTURES

- Turkey Vulture

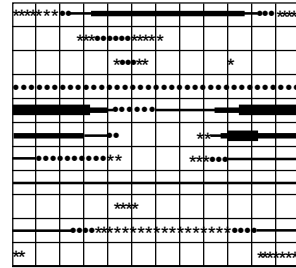
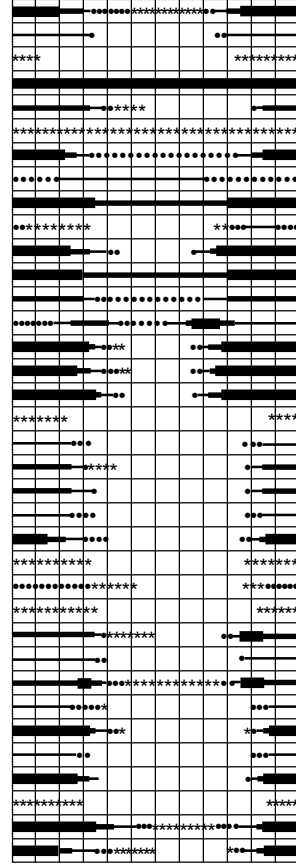
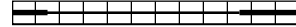
GEESE & DUCKS

- Snow Goose (*light morph*)
- "Blue Goose"
- Ross's Goose
- Canada Goose
- Brant
- Mute Swan
- Tundra Swan
- Wood Duck
- Gadwall
- Eurasian Wigeon
- American Wigeon
- American Black Duck
- Mallard
- Blue-winged Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Northern Pintail
- Green-winged Teal
- "Common Teal"
- Canvasback
- Redhead
- Ring-necked Duck
- Greater Scaup
- Lesser Scaup
- King Eider
- Common Eider
- Harlequin Duck
- Surf Scoter
- White-winged Scoter
- Black Scoter
- Long-tailed Duck
- Bufflehead
- Common Goldeneye
- Hooded Merganser
- Common Merganser
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Ruddy Duck

HAWKS & EAGLES

- Osprey
- Swallow-tailed Kite
- Mississippi Kite
- Bald Eagle
- Northern Harrier
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Cooper's Hawk
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Broad-winged Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Rough-legged Hawk

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FALCONS

- American Kestrel
- Merlin
- Peregrine Falcon

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Northern Bobwhite

RAILS & ALLIES

- Yellow Rail
- Black Rail
- Clapper Rail
- King Rail
- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Common Moorhen
- American Coot

PLOVERS

- Black-bellied Plover
- American Golden-Plover
- Wilson's Plover
- Semipalmated Plover
- Piping Plover
- Killdeer

OYSTERCATCHERS

- American Oystercatcher

AVOCETS & STILTS

- Black-necked Stilt
- American Avocet

SANDPIPERS

- Greater Yellowlegs
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Willet
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Upland Sandpiper
- Whimbrel
- Long-billed Curlew
- Hudsonian Godwit
- Marbled Godwit
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Red Knot
- Sanderling
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Western Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- White-rumped Sandpiper
- Baird's Sandpiper
- Pectoral Sandpiper
- Purple Sandpiper
- Dunlin
- Curlew Sandpiper
- Stilt Sandpiper
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper

SANDPIPERS (cont'd.)

- Ruff
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Long-billed Dowitcher
- Wilson's Snipe
- American Woodcock
- Wilson's Phalarope
- Red-necked Phalarope
- Red Phalarope

JAEGERS, GULLS & TERNS

- South Polar Skua
- Pomarine Jaeger
- Parasitic Jaeger
- Long-tailed Jaeger
- Laughing Gull
- Little Gull
- Black-headed Gull
- Bonaparte's Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- California Gull
- Herring Gull
- Thayer's Gull
- Iceland Gull
- Lesser Black-backed Gull
- Glaucous Gull
- Great Black-backed Gull
- Black-legged Kittiwake
- Gull-billed Tern
- Caspian Tern
- Royal Tern
- Sandwich Tern
- Roseate Tern
- Common Tern
- Forster's Tern
- Least Tern
- Sooty Tern
- Black Tern

SKIMMERS

- Black Skimmer

ALCIDS

- Dovekie
- Razorbill

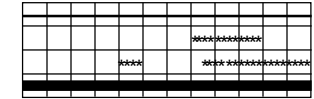
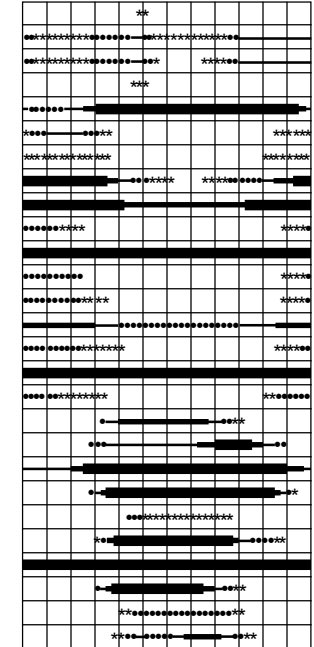
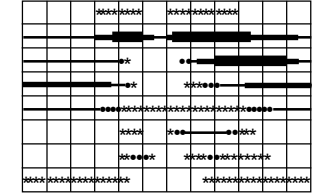
DOVES

- Rock Dove
- Eurasian Collared-Dove
- White-winged Dove
- Mourning Dove

CUCKOOS

- Black-billed Cuckoo
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo

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OWLS

- Barn Owl
- Eastern Screech-Owl
- Great Horned Owl
- Short-eared Owl
- Northern Saw-whet Owl

NIGHTJARS

- Common Nighthawk
- Chuck-will's-widow
- Whip-poor-will

SWIFTS

- Chimney Swift

HUMMINGBIRDS

- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Rufous Hummingbird

KINGFISHER

- Belted Kingfisher

WOODPECKERS

- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker

FLYCATCHERS

- Eastern Wood-Pewee
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
- Acadian Flycatcher
- Willow/Alder Flycatcher
- Least Flycatcher
- Eastern Phoebe
- Great Crested Flycatcher
- Western Kingbird
- Eastern Kingbird
- Gray Kingbird
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

VIREOS

- White-eyed Vireo
- Yellow-throated Vireo
- Blue-headed Vireo
- Warbling Vireo
- Philadelphia Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo

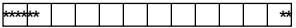
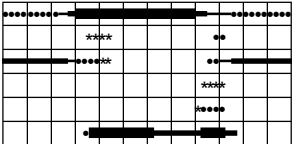
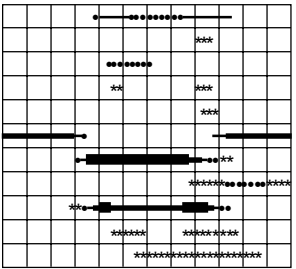
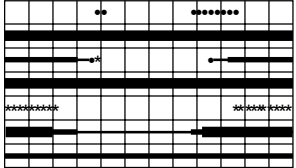
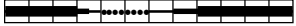
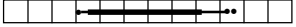
JAYS & CROWS

- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Fish Crow

LARKS

- Horned Lark

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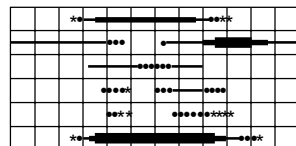
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SWALLOWS

- Purple Martin
- Tree Swallow
- N. Rough-winged Swallow
- Bank Swallow
- Cliff Swallow
- Barn Swallow

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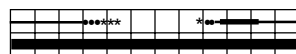
TITMICE

- Carolina Chickadee
- Tufted Titmouse



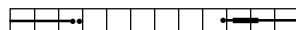
NUTHATCHES

- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Brown-headed Nuthatch



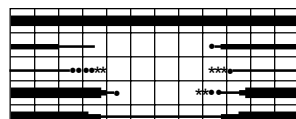
CREEPERS

- Brown Creeper



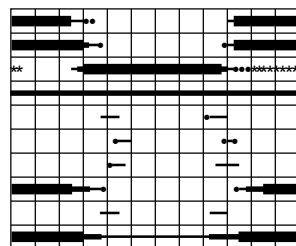
WRENS

- Carolina Wren
- House Wren
- Winter Wren
- Sedge Wren
- Marsh Wren



THRUSHES & ALLIES

- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- Eastern Bluebird
- Veery
- Gray-cheeked Thrush
- Swainson's Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- Wood Thrush
- American Robin



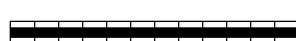
MIMICS

- Gray Catbird
- Northern Mockingbird
- Brown Thrasher



STARLINGS

- European Starling



PIPITS

- American Pipit



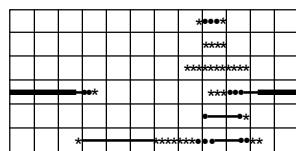
WAXWINGS

- Cedar Waxwing



WARBLERS

- Blue-winged Warbler
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Tennessee Warbler
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Nashville Warbler
- Northern Parula

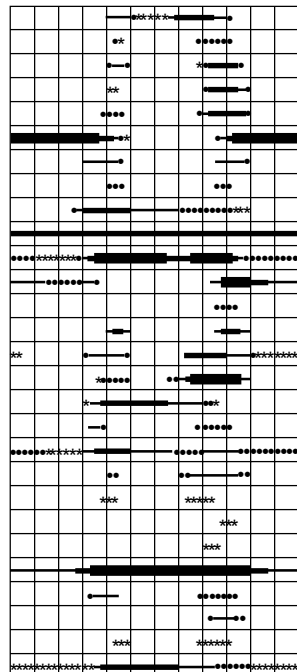


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WARBLERS (cont'd.)

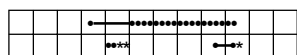
- Yellow Warbler
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Magnolia Warbler
- Cape May Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Pine Warbler
- Prairie Warbler
- Palm Warbler
- Bay-breasted Warbler
- Blackpoll Warbler
- Black-and-white Warbler
- American Redstart
- Prothonotary Warbler
- Worm-eating Warbler
- Ovenbird
- Northern Waterthrush
- Kentucky Warbler
- Connecticut Warbler
- Mourning Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- Hooded Warbler
- Wilson's Warbler
- Canada Warbler
- Yellow-breasted Chat

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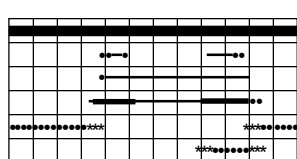
TANAGERS

- Summer Tanager
- Scarlet Tanager



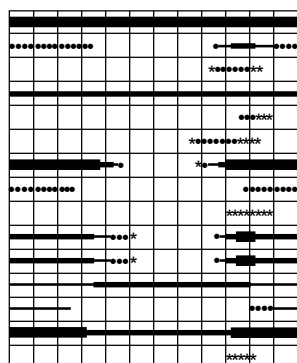
CARDINALS & ALLIES

- Northern Cardinal
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Blue Grosbeak
- Indigo Bunting
- Painted Bunting
- Dickcissel



SPARROWS & ALLIES

- Eastern Towhee
- Chipping Sparrow
- Clay-colored Sparrow
- Field Sparrow
- Vesper Sparrow
- Lark Sparrow
- Savannah Sparrow
- "Ipswich Sparrow"
- Grasshopper Sparrow
- Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
- Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow
- Seaside Sparrow
- Fox Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow

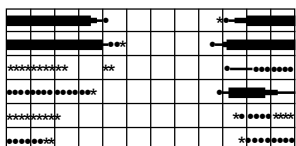


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SPARROWS & ALLIES (cont'd.)

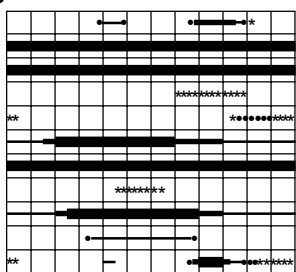
- Swamp Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Lapland Longspur
- Snow Bunting

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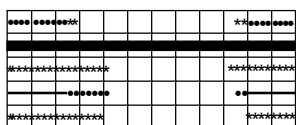
BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES

- Bobolink
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Yellow-headed Blackbird
- Rusty Blackbird
- Common Grackle
- Boat-tailed Grackle
- Shiny Cowbird
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Orchard Oriole
- Baltimore Oriole



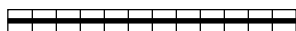
FINCHES

- Purple Finch
- House Finch
- Pine Siskin
- American Goldfinch
- Evening Grosbeak



OLD WORLD SPARROWS

- House Sparrow



J F M A M J J A S O N D

FIELD NOTES

ACCIDENTAL SPECIES

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Pacific Loon | Arctic Tern |
| Western Grebe | Bridled Tern |
| Northern Fulmar | White-winged Tern |
| Black-capped Petrel | Common Murre |
| White-faced Storm-Petrel | Thick-billed Murre |
| Band-rumped Storm-Petrel | Common Ground-Dove |
| White-tailed Tropicbird | Snowy Owl |
| Masked Booby | Burrowing Owl |
| Brown Booby | Antillean Nighthawk |
| Anhinga | Olive-sided Flycatcher |
| "Great White Heron" | Vermilion Flycatcher |
| White-faced Ibis | Ash-throated Flycatcher |
| Roseate Spoonbill | Tropical Kingbird |
| Wood Stork | Fork-tailed Flycatcher |
| Black Vulture | Loggerhead Shrike |
| Fulvous Whistling-Duck | Northern Shrike |
| Greater White-fronted Goose | Cave Swallow |
| Cinnamon Teal | White-breasted Nuthatch |
| Garganey | Bewick's Wren |
| Northern Goshawk | Northern Wheatear |
| Swainson's Hawk | Sage Thrasher |
| Golden Eagle | Sprague's Pipit |
| Purple Gallinule | Black-throated Gray Warbler |
| Sandhill Crane | Townsend's Warbler |
| Spotted Redshank | Cerulean Warbler |
| "Eurasian Whimbrel" | Swainson's Warbler |
| Black-tailed Godwit | Louisiana Waterthrush |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | Western Tanager |
| Little Stint | American Tree Sparrow |
| Great Skua | Lark Bunting |
| Franklin's Gull | LeConte's Sparrow |
| Common (Mew) Gull | Western Meadowlark |
| Yellow-legged Gull | Brewer's Blackbird |
| Sabine's Gull | Red Crossbill |
| "Cayenne Tern" | White-winged Crossbill |
| | Common Redpoll |

Date: _____

Observers: _____

Location: _____

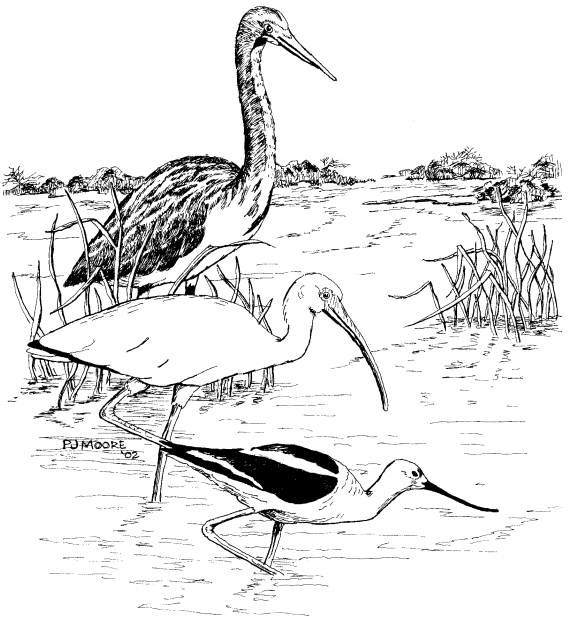
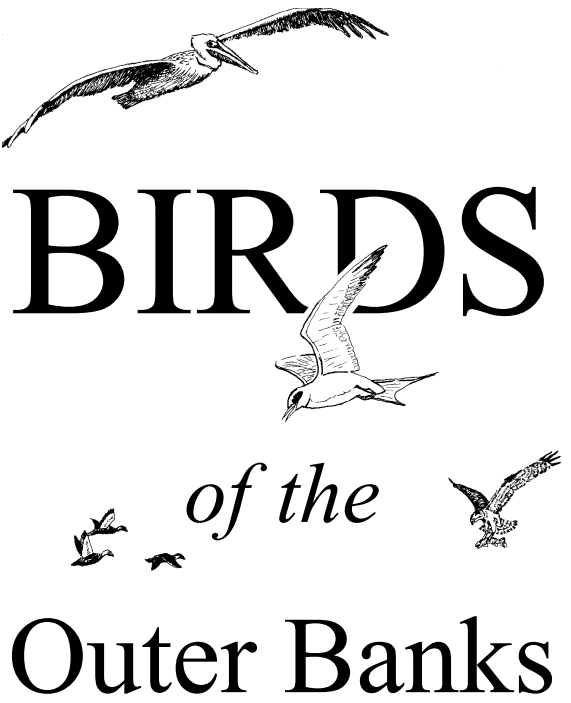
Please report any unusual sightings at a Visitor Center or in one of the log books located outside the Hatteras Island Ranger Station or the Pea Island Visitor Center.

Compiled By:
John Fussell, III
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Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society

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