

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Florida Keys

*National Wildlife Refuges
Bird List*



photo: USFWS

Welcome to the Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuges. There are three Refuges in the lower Florida Keys: Key West, Great White Heron and National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuges. These refuges are part of a subtropical ecoregion and provide habitat for many species of birds, some of which are unique to the Florida Keys and south Florida. Combined, the refuges total approximately 23,000 acres of land. However, the open water within the boundaries of Key West and Great White Heron Refuges, covers an area of about 400,000 acres. All of the refuges were established to protect wildlife and their habitat. Key West National Wildlife Refuge and Great White Heron Refuge were established in 1908 and 1938 respectively, to protect herons and egrets from plume hunters. National Key Deer Refuge was established in 1957 to protect the endangered Key Deer and other wildlife.

The best times for birding are during the spring and fall migration. Some of the more unique birds that can be seen are great white herons, antillean nighthawk, gray kingbird, black-whiskered vireo, white-crowned pigeon and the elusive mangrove cuckoo. Together, these three Refuges protect habitat for 285 species of birds.

Key West and Great White Heron Refuges are composed of many small islands locally known as the Backcountry. Key West National Wildlife Refuge lies west of Key West. Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge encompasses many of the Keys north of U.S. Highway 1 from Key West to just west of Marathon. These two Refuges are accessible only by boat. National Key Deer Refuge and surrounding non-refuge lands also afford the best opportunities for birding. Respect private property - if the property is privately owned you must obtain permission to enter. It is recommended that you lock your car and lock your valuables in the trunk or take them with you when you leave it.

Directions (north, south, east, and west) are given relative to compass headings, not to directions on US 1.

Bahia Honda State Park (MM 37.5): An entrance fee is required. Continue through the gate, go right, and then park in the lot on the left. Walk the beach for shorebirds, gulls, and terns. Go to the parking area on the right - warblers may be seen in trees near the old store. Other birds can be found along the beach at the east end and along the road past the camping area.



East end of West Summerland Key (MM 34.9): just west of the Bahia Honda Bridge, turn north and follow to the “Donut” (a manmade cove). This is a good area for shorebirds, terns, and gulls. Snowy plovers have been seen here.

Big Pine Key (MM 32.9): just after entering onto the Key, turn south onto Long Beach Drive and stop along the road at any convenient spot. Ovenbirds, warblers, waterthrushes, siskins, buntings, and orioles may be present during migration and in winter.

Big Pine Key (MM 30.2): turn north at the traffic light and then an immediate left onto Key Deer Blvd. (the Refuge office is in the shopping center on the right). Short-tailed hawk and turkey vultures may be observed soaring overhead. At the Blue Hole, 2.5 miles north on Key Deer Blvd., pied-billed grebes and green-backed

herons may be present. The masked duck and least grebe also have been seen here so it is worth a visit. Opposite the Blue Hole, travel onto Big Pine St. and then left onto Koehn Blvd. Shorebirds may be present at the mud flats near the end of the road and at the boat ramp.

To go to No Name Key, go east on Watson Blvd., left at the stop sign, and follow Watson Blvd. over the large bridge to No Name Key. Yellow headed blackbird, dark-eyed junco, cave swallow, and Swainsons warbler have been found here. The end of the road is also a good location for mangrove cuckoo and black-whiskered vireo.

Before leaving Big Pine a good spot to look for antillean nighthawks is in the vicinity of the west end of Watson Blvd and along Narcissus Ave. Antilleans are frequently present late in the day during spring and summer.

Summerland Key (MM 25): Take the first left after the bridge and a salt pond is on your right. Ibis and egrets can be found here. Take a right onto Margaret St and then the next left. A fresh water pond is on the left. Ducks, least bittern, sora rail, and white-crowned pigeon are found here. Moorhens nest here.

Sugarloaf Key (MM 17): Turn south at traffic light and drive slowly to the end of the road. Hawks, harriers, woodpeckers can be seen along here. There is the possibility of ducks on the pond on the right and pine siskin, indigo bunting, and grosbeak in the pine trees after crossing the bridge.

How to use your checklist

The checklist is arranged in the order established by the *American Ornithologist's Union Checklist of North American Birds*, 8th edition, 1984, with supplements. This list and the recommended birding areas were provided by Marge Brown with the assistance of Wayne Hoffman, W. B. Robertson, and refuge staff.

If you should find an unlisted species, please let us know at the Refuge Headquarters., P. O. Box 430510, Big Pine Key, Fl. 33043-0510, or you can call us at 305/872 2239. We appreciate your help in updating our records.

Ethics of Bird Watching

Do not disturb nesting birds. This could lead to exposing eggs and young to extreme temperatures and predation.

Likewise do not disturb wintering, resting, and feeding birds. They need their energy reserves to withstand the stresses of harsh weather, migration, and hunting for food.

Possession of migratory birds, their feathers, nests or eggs is against the law. Use of tape recordings to attract birds is prohibited on Refuge lands.

Do not litter! Many birds die when they become entangled in fishing lines, 6-pack rings and other trash.

Injured birds may be reported to the refuge at (305) 872-2239.

Key To Symbols

Seasonal appearance

Sp-Spring: March, April, and May

S-Summer: June, July, and August

F -Fall: September, October, and November

W -Winter: December, January, and February

Seasonal abundance

c-common (commonly observed in proper habitat).

u-uncommon (uncommonly observed in proper habitat).

r-rare (rarely observed).

o-occasional (observed fewer than ten times). Please report all sightings. Confirmed breeding in checklist area.

*****-nests here

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Loons				
___ Red-Throated Loon	o		o	o
___ Common Loon	u		u	u
Grebes				
___ Least Grebe			o	
___ Pied-billed Grebe *	u	u	u	u
___ Horned Grebe	o			o
Shearwaters and Petrels				
___ Greater Shearwater		o		
___ Sooty Shearwater	o			o
___ Audubon's Shearwater		o		o
___ Wilson's Storm-Petrel		o		
___ Band-rumped Storm Petrel (Key West specimen)			o	
Tropicbirds				
___ White-tailed Tropicbird	o			
Boobies and Gannets				
___ Masked Booby	o		o	o
___ Brown Booby	r	r	r	r
___ Northern Gannet	r		r	u
Pelicans				
___ American White Pelican		r	r	r
___ Brown Pelican *	c	c	c	c
Darters and Cormorants				
___ Double Crested Cormorant *	c	c	c	c
___ Anhinga	u	r	u	u
Frigatebirds				
___ Magnificent Frigatebird	c	c	c	c
Bitterns, Herons, Egrets and Their Allies				
___ American Bittern	o			
___ Least Bittern *	r	r	r	r
___ Great Blue Heron (dk morph) *	c	c	c	c
___ Great White Heron (lt morph) *	c	c	c	c
___ Great Egret *	c	c	c	c
___ Snowy Egret *	u	u	u	u
___ Little Blue Heron *	u	u	u	u
___ Tricolored Heron *	c	u	c	u
___ Reddish Egret *	c	c	c	c
___ Cattle Egret	c	c	c	c
___ Green-backed Heron *	c	c	c	c
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron	r		r	r
___ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *	c	c	c	c

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Ibises and Spoonbills				
___ White Ibis *	c	c	c	c
___ Glossy Ibis	o	o	o	o
___ Roseate Spoonbill	u	u	r	r
Storks				
___ Wood Stork			o	o
Flamingos				
___ Greater Flamingo	o		o	o
Ducks, Geese, Swans				
___ Fulvous Whistling Duck	o		o	o
___ Canada Goose				o
___ Snow Goose			o	o
___ Wood Duck			o	
___ Green-winged Teal	r		r	r
___ White-cheeked Pintail	o			o
___ Northern Pintail	u		u	u
___ Blue-winged Teal	c		c	c
___ Northern Shoveler	u		u	u
___ Gadwall				o
___ American Wigeon	c		c	c
___ Ring-necked Duck	u		u	u
___ Lesser Scaup	u		u	u
___ Oldsquaw			o	
___ Black Scoter			o	o
___ Hooded Merganser				o
___ Common Merganser			o	o
___ Red-breasted Merganser	u	r	c	c
___ Masked Duck	o			
Vultures				
___ Black Vulture		o	o	o
___ Turkey Vulture *	c	c	c	c
Osprey, Kites, Eagles, and Harriers				
___ Osprey *	c	c	c	c
___ Swallow-tailed Kite	r	r	r	r
___ Mississippi Kite			o	o
___ Bald Eagle *	u	u	u	u
___ Northern Harrier	u		u	u
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk	c		c	c
___ Cooper's Hawk	r		r	r
___ Red-Shouldered Hawk *	u	u	u	u
___ Broad-winged Hawk	c		c	c
___ Short-tailed Hawk	r		c	r
___ Swainson's Hawk	r		c	r
___ Red-tailed Hawk	r		r	r

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Falcons				
___American Kestrel	c		c	c
___Merlin	u		c	u
___Peregrine Falcon	u		c	u
Rails, Gallinules, Coots				
___Black Rail	u	u	u	u
___Clapper Rail *	u	u	u	u
___Virginia Rail	o		o	o
___Sora Rail	r		r	r
___Purple Gallinule *	r	r	r	r
___Common Moorhen *	u	u	u	u
___American Coot *	c	r	c	c
Limpkins				
___Limkin	o	o	o	o
Plovers				
___Black-bellied Plover	c	u	c	c
___Lesser Golden-Plover	r		r	r
___Snowy Plover	o			o
___Wilson's Plover *	c	c	c	c
___Semipalmated Plover	c		c	c
___Piping Plover	r		r	r
___Killdeer *	u	r	u	u
___Mountain Plover				o
Oystercatchers				
___American Oystercatcher	o		o	
Stilts and Avocets				
___Black-necked Stilt *	u	u	u	
___American Avocet	o		o	o
Sandpipers and Phalaropes				
___Greater Yellowlegs	u		u	u
___Lesser Yellowlegs	u		u	u
___Solitary Sandpiper	u		r	
___Willet *	c		c	c
___Spotted Sandpiper	u		u	u
___Upland Sandpiper	r		r	
___Whimbrel	r		r	c
___Ruddy Turnstone	c	u	c	c
___Red Knot	u	r	u	r
___Sanderling	c	r	c	c
___Semipalmated Sandpiper	r	r	r	r
___Western Sandpiper	c	r	c	c
___Least Sandpiper	c	r	c	c
___White-rumped Sandpiper	u			
___Pectoral Sandpiper	r	r	r	
___Purple Sandpiper				r

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
___ Dunlin	u		c	u
___ Stilt Sandpiper	r		r	r
___ Short-billed Dowitcher	c	u	c	c
___ Common Snipe			r	r
___ Wilson's Phalarope	o		o	o
___ Red-necked Phalarope		o		
Jaegers, Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers				
___ Pomarine Jaeger	o		o	o
___ Parasitic Jaeger	o		o	o
___ Laughing Gull *	c	c	c	c
___ Bonaparte's Gull	r		r	r
___ Ringed-billed Gull	c	r	c	c
___ Herring Gull	u	r	c	c
___ Lesser Black-backed Gull			r	r
___ Great Black-backed Gull	r		r	r
___ Black-legged Kittiwake (specimen)				o
___ Gull Billed Tern	o			
___ Caspian Tern	u		u	c
___ Royal Tern	c	c	c	c
___ Roseate Tern*		u		
___ Sandwich Tern *	c		c	c
___ Common Tern	u		u	u
___ Forster's Tern	u		c	c
___ Least Tern *	u	c	c	
___ Bridled Tern	r	r	r	
___ Sooty Tern	r	r	r	
___ Black Tern	r	r		
___ Brown Noddy	o	o		
___ Black Skimmer				c
Alcids				
___ Dovekie				o
Pigeons and Doves				
___ Rock Dove *	c	c	c	c
___ White-crowned Pigeon *	u	c	u	u
___ Eurasian Collared Dove *	c	c	c	c
___ White-winged Dove *	u	u	u	u
___ Mourning Dove *	c	c	c	c
___ Common Ground-Dove *	c	c	c	c
___ Inca Dove (nested 1963-80, Key West, probably extirpated)				
___ Ruddy Quail-Dove (1 captured, Key West)	o			
___ Key West Quail Dove			o	
___ Key West Scaly-naped Pigeon (2 specimens)	o		o	

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Cuckoos and Anis				
___Blacked-billed Cuckoo	r		r	
___Yellow-billed Cuckoo *	u	u	u	
___Mangrove Cuckoo *	u	u	r	r
___Smooth-billed Ani	r	r	r	r
Owls				
___Barn Owl			o	o
___Screech Owl	o			
___Burrowing Owl	o		o	o
___Barred Owl		o		
___Long-eared Owl			o	
___Short-eared Owl		u		
Goatsuckers				
___Common Nighthawk *	c	c	c	
___Antillean Nighthawk *	c	c	c	
___Chuck-will's Widow	u	u	u	r
___Whip-poor-will	r			r
Swifts				
___Chimney Swift	r		u	
___Antillean Palm Swift		o		
Hummingbirds				
Black-chinned Hummingbird	o			
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	u	r	u	u
Kingfishers				
___Belted Kingfisher	c	u	c	c
Woodpeckers				
___Red-bellied Woodpecker *	c	c	c	c
___Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	u		u	u
___Northern Flicker			o	o
Tyrant Flycatchers				
___Olive-sided Flycatcher				o
___Eastern Wood-pewee	r	u	u	
___Eastern Phoebe	r	r	r	r
___Great-crested Flycatcher *	u	u	u	u
___LaSagra's Flycatcher		o		
___Brown-crested Flycatcher	o			o
___Loggerhead Kingbird	o			
___Western Kingbird	u		u	u
___Eastern Kingbird	c	c	c	
___Gray Kingbird *	c	c	c	c
___Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	u		u	u

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Swallows				
___Purple Martin	c	c	c	
___Cuban Martin	o			
___Southern Martin		o		
___Tree Swallow	c		c	u
___Rough-winged Swallow	r		r	r
___Bahama Swallow	o	o		o
___Bank Swallow	r		r	r
___Cave Swallow	o			
___Barn Swallow	c	c	c	r
___Cliff Swallow				o
Jays and Crows				
___Blue Jay	o	o		
___American Crow	o	o	o	o
___Fish Crow	r		r	r
Wrens				
___Carolina Wren			o	
___House Wren	r		r	r
Old World Warblers & Thrushes				
___Ruby-crowned Kinglet				o
___Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	c	u	c	c
___Veery	r	u		
___Gray-checked Thrush	r	r		
___Swainson's Thrush	r	u		
___Hermit Thrush				o
___Wood Thrush	r		r	
___American Robin	r		r	r
Mockingbirds & Thrashers				
___Gray Catbird	c		c	c
___Northern Mockingbird *	c	c	c	c
___Bahama Mockingbird	o	o	o	
___Brown Thrasher *	u	u	u	u
Pipits				
___American Pipit	o			o
___Water Pipit				r
Waxwings				
___Cedar Waxwing	c		c	c
Shrikes				
___Loggerhead Shrike				o
Starling				
___European Starling *	c	c	c	c

Vireos

___ White-eyed Vireo *	c	c	c	c
___ Bell's Vireo			o	
___ Solitary Vireo	u		r	r
___ Philadelphia Vireo	o		o	
___ Yellow-throated Vireo	u		u	u
___ Red-eyed Vireo	c		c	
___ Black-whiskered Vireo *	c	c	r	

Wood Warblers

___ Blue-winged Warbler	r		r	r
___ Golden-winged Warbler	o		o	
___ Tennessee Warbler	u		u	r
___ Orange-crowned Warbler	u	r	u	
___ Nashville Warbler	o		o	
___ Northern Parula Warbler	c		c	c
___ Yellow Warbler (Cuban Race) *	u	u	u	u
___ Chestnut-sided Warbler	o		o	
___ Magnolia Warbler	u		u	r
___ Cape May Warbler	u		u	u
___ Black-throated Blue Warbler	c		c	
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	c		c	c
___ Black-throated Green Warbler	u		c	u
___ Blackburnian Warbler	u		u	
___ Yellow-throated Warbler	c		c	c
___ Pine Warbler	o		o	o
___ Prairie Warbler *	c	c	c	c
___ Palm Warbler	c		c	c
___ Bay-breasted Warbler	o		o	
___ Blackpoll Warbler	c		r	
___ Cerulean Warbler		r	r	
___ Black-and-white Warbler	c		c	c
___ American Redstart	c		c	u
___ Prothonotary Warbler	u		u	
___ Worm-eating Warbler	u		u	r
___ Swainson's Warbler	o		o	o
___ Ovenbird	c		c	u
___ Norther Waterthrush	c		c	u
___ Louisiana Waterthrush	r		r	
___ Kentucky Warbler	u		u	
___ Connecticut Warbler	r		r	
___ Common Yellowthroat	c		c	c
___ Hooded Warbler	u		u	
___ Wilson's Warbler	r		r	
___ Yellow-breasted Chat				o

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Tanagers				
___ Summer Tanager	u	u	r	
___ Scarlet Tanager	u		u	
Cardinals and Buntings				
___ Northern Cardinal	c	c	c	c
___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak	u		u	
___ Blue Grosbeak	u		u	
___ Indigo Bunting	u		c	r
___ Painted Bunting	u		u	u
___ Dickcissel	o		o	o
Sparrows				
___ Rufous-sided Towhee				o
___ Chipping Sparrow			o	o
___ Clay colored Sparrow			o	o
___ Vesper Sparrow	o			o
___ Lark Sparrow			o	o
___ Savannah Sparrow	u		u	u
___ Grasshopper Sparrow	r		r	r
___ LeConte's Sparrow				o
___ Sharp-tailed Sparrow				o
___ Swamp Sparrow			r	r
___ White-crowned Sparrow				o
___ Dark-eyed Junco	o			o
Blackbirds and Orioles				
___ Bobolink	c		c	
___ Red-winged Blackbird *	c	c	c	c
___ Tawny-shouldered Blackbird				o
___ Yellow-headed Blackbird			o	o
___ Brewer's Blackbird			o	
___ Common Grackle *	c	c	r	r
___ Shiny Cowbird	u			
___ Brown-headed Cowbird		o	o	o
___ Orchard Oriole	c		c	
___ Northern Oriole (bred once, Key West)	c		c	u
Finches				
___ Pine Siskin (irruptive)	r		r	r
___ American Goldfinch			c	u
Weavers				
___ House Sparrow*	c	c	c	c

photo: L. Page Brown



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