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September 2007



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Rappahannock River Valley

*National Wildlife
Refuge*

Birds



Scarlet Tanager
Les Brooks



This goose, designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1996, with a goal of protecting 20,000 acres along a 65-mile stretch of the lower Rappahannock River. As of June 2007, the refuge consisted of 17 tracts, distributed on both sides of the river, totaling 7,711 acres. This total includes 1,359 acres in conservation easements.

Hardwood and pine forests, steep shady ravines, forested swamps, tidal marshes, wet meadows, ponds, and grasslands make up the diverse habitats which have attracted about 208 species of birds. An additional 22 species are listed as rare, accidental, or infrequent occurrences.

Focus species or suites include bald eagles, waterfowl, forest interior birds, grassland birds, shrub/early succession species, and marshbirds. Several refuge tracts lie within one of the most important concentration areas for bald eagles in the Chesapeake Bay region. Winter counts recorded a peak of nearly 400 eagles. Barn owls also nest in the high cliffs of this area. Three of the refuge tracts are destinations on the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. The Lower Rappahannock Important Bird Area, designated on the basis of the bald eagles, barn owls, Virginia’s only population of the coastal plain swamp sparrow, and other birds of conservation concern, includes 8 refuge tracts.

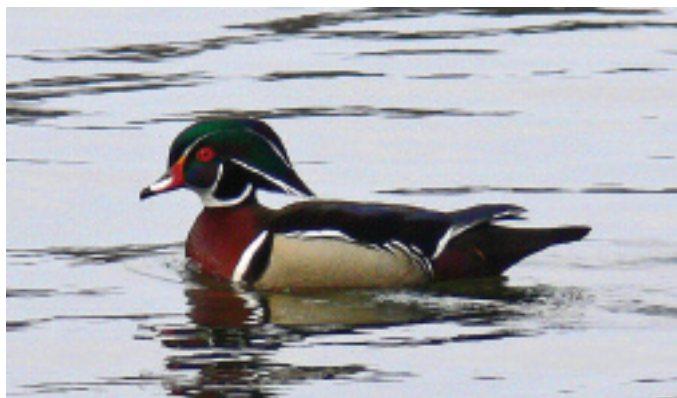
The Wilna tract, open to the public year round from sunrise to sunset, offers a great diversity of bird watching opportunities throughout the year.



Blue grosbeak

Les Brooks

In spring and summer, grassland and shrub birds include grasshopper sparrow, eastern meadowlark, dickcissel, eastern kingbird, yellow-breasted chat, indigo bunting, blue grosbeak, prairie warbler; eastern towhee, American woodcock, bobwhite quail, wild turkey, American kestrel, and perhaps a barn owl. In the forested trails near Wilna Pond, look or listen for scarlet tanager, summer tanager, orchard oriole, northern parula, prothonotary warbler, Louisiana waterthrush, yellow-throated warbler, Kentucky warbler, yellow-throated vireo, and red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks. Check the pond too for wood duck, red-winged blackbird, green heron, and great blue heron. The shallow end contains many snags—there you might find pileated and red-headed woodpeckers any time of the year. Also in the spring or summer walk along the deep forest trail to find black and white warbler, hooded warbler, wood thrush, ovenbird, Acadian flycatcher, and maybe a Chuck-will’s-widow, great horned or barred owl.



Larry Meade

Wood duck

During spring migration, these same forests are also stopovers for beautiful long distance migrants such as: magnolia warbler; blue-winged warbler; American redstart; black throated blue and black-throated green warblers; yellow warbler; Blackburnian warbler; mourning warbler; warbling vireo and blue-headed warbler; veery; and Swainson's thrush. Check the grasslands too for bobolinks dancing across the tops of the grasses.

In winter, the river and its tributaries teem with waterfowl. The sounds of geese and swans can be heard from miles away. Many grassland species winter here: northern harrier; Cooper's hawk; sharp-shinned hawk; savannah sparrow; swamp sparrow; horned lark; American pipit; dark-eyed junco and white-throated sparrow. In the flocks of mixed blackbirds, you might spot a few rusty blackbirds. Return to the forest trails to see if you can find kinglets, brown creeper, and winter wren amidst all the robins and scores of grackles.

We are continuously working to enhance our visitor services program and facilities. Please check with the refuge headquarters to learn about other birding opportunities.

Season

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

- Birds known to nest on or near the refuge
Italics indicate threatened/endangered species

Relative Abundance

Relative abundance indicates how frequently you might see a bird in its favored habitat.

| | | |
|---|------------|--|
| a | abundant | a species which is very numerous |
| c | common | likely to be seen or heard in suitable habitat |
| u | uncommon | present, but not certain to be seen |
| o | occasional | seen only a few times during a season |
| r | rare | may be present but not every year |

Swans – Geese – Ducks

| | Sp | S | F | W |
|----------------------------------|----|---|---|---|
| ___ Snow Goose _____ | o | | | o |
| ___ • Canada Goose _____ | a | c | a | a |
| ___ • Mute Swan _____ | o | o | o | o |
| ___ Tundra Swan _____ | c | | u | a |
| ___ • Wood Duck _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Gadwall _____ | u | | u | u |
| ___ American Wigeon _____ | u | | u | u |
| ___ • American Black Duck _____ | u | u | c | c |
| ___ • Mallard _____ | c | c | c | a |
| ___ Blue-winged Teal _____ | c | | o | c |
| ___ Northern Shoveler _____ | c | | o | c |
| ___ Northern Pintail _____ | c | | o | c |
| ___ Green-winged Teal _____ | c | | u | c |
| ___ Canvasback _____ | o | | | a |
| ___ Ring-necked Duck _____ | c | | o | c |
| ___ Greater Scaup _____ | u | | u | u |
| ___ Lesser Scaup _____ | c | | u | c |
| ___ Long-tailed Duck _____ | o | | o | o |
| ___ Bufflehead _____ | c | | c | a |
| ___ Common Goldeneye _____ | o | | | o |
| ___ Hooded Merganser _____ | c | | c | c |
| ___ Common Merganser _____ | c | | c | c |
| ___ Red-breasted Merganser _____ | c | | c | c |
| ___ Ruddy Duck _____ | c | | c | a |



Larry Lynch

Red-tailed hawk

| | Sp | S | F | W |
|------------------------------------|-----|---|---|-----|
| GALLINACEOUS BIRDS | | | | |
| ___ • Wild Turkey _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ • Northern Bobwhite _____ | o/u | c | c | o/u |
| LOONS | | | | |
| ___ Red-throated Loon _____ | | | | r |
| ___ Common Loon _____ | u | | c | c |
| GREBES | | | | |
| ___ Pied-billed Grebe _____ | c | r | u | u |
| ___ Horned Grebe _____ | o | | u | o |
| PELICANS | | | | |
| ___ Brown Pelican _____ | | | | o |
| CORMORANTS | | | | |
| ___ Double-crested Cormorant _____ | c | c | c | c |

| | Sp | S | F | W |
|--|----|---|---|-----|
| BITTERNS – HERONS - EGRETS | | | | |
| ___ American Bittern _____ | r | u | r | r |
| ___ • Least Bittern _____ | c | c | | |
| ___ • Great Blue Heron _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Great Egret _____ | o | o | o | |
| ___ • Green Heron _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ Black-crowned Night-Heron _____ | o | o | | r |
| ___ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron _____ | r | | | |
| NEW WORLD VULTURES | | | | |
| ___ • Black Vulture _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ • Turkey Vulture _____ | c | c | c | c |
| OSPREY – KITES – HAWKS - EAGLES | | | | |
| ___ • Osprey _____ | c | c | | |
| ___ • Bald Eagle _____ | a | c | c | a |
| ___ Sharp-shinned Hawk _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ • Cooper’s Hawk _____ | o | o | c | c |
| ___ • Red-shouldered Hawk _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Broad-winged Hawk _____ | o | | o | |
| ___ • Red-tailed Hawk _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Rough-legged Hawk _____ | | | | r r |
| ___ Northern Harrier _____ | u | | u | c |
| FALCONS - CARCARAS | | | | |
| ___ Peregrine Falcon _____ | r | | | r |
| ___ • American Kestrel _____ | c | o | c | c |
| ___ Merlin _____ | r | | | r |
| RAILS | | | | |
| ___ Clapper Rail _____ | r | r | | r |
| ___ • King Rail _____ | u | u | | u |
| ___ • Virginia Rail _____ | c | u | | u |
| ___ Sora _____ | r | | | r |
| ___ Common Moorhen _____ | r | | | |
| ___ American Coot _____ | u | | o | r |
| CRANES | | | | |
| ___ Sandhill Crane _____ | | | | r r |
| PLOVERS | | | | |
| ___ Semipalmated Plover _____ | | | | r |
| ___ • Killdeer _____ | c | c | c | c |

SANDPIPERS - PHALAROPES

| | Sp | S | F | W |
|------------------------------|----|---|---|---|
| ___ Greater Yellowlegs _____ | c | | u | |
| ___ Lesser Yellowlegs _____ | u | | u | |
| ___ Solitary Sandpiper _____ | u | | u | |
| • Spotted Sandpiper _____ | u | u | u | |
| ___ Least Sandpiper _____ | r | | | |
| ___ Pectoral Sandpiper _____ | | | r | |
| ___ Dunlin _____ | r | | r | r |
| ___ Stilt Sandpiper _____ | | | r | |
| ___ Wilson's Snipe _____ | u | u | u | u |
| • American Woodcock _____ | c | u | u | c |

SKUAS – JAEGER – GULLS – TERNS

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ Laughing Gull _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ Bonaparte's Gull _____ | r | | r | r |
| ___ Ring-billed Gull _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Herring Gull _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Great Black-backed Gull _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Caspian Tern _____ | u | o | u | |
| ___ Royal Tern _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ Common Tern _____ | r | | r | |
| ___ Forster's Tern _____ | c | o | c | |
| ___ Least Tern _____ | u | u | u | |
| ___ Black Tern _____ | r | | o | |

PIGEONS - DOVES

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|
| • Mourning Dove _____ | a | a | a | a |
| • Rock Pigeon _____ | c | c | c | c |

CUCKOOS – ANIS

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| • Black-billed Cuckoo _____ | o | o | o | |
| • Yellow-billed Cuckoo _____ | c | c | c | |



Larry Lynch

American Woodcock chick



Teta Keain

Chuck-will's widow

BARN OWLS

| | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|
| • Barn Owl _____ | c | c | c | c |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|

TYPICAL OWLS

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| • Great Horned Owl _____ | c | c | c | c |
| • Eastern Screech Owl _____ | c | c | c | c |
| • Barred Owl _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Long-eared Owl _____ | | | | r |
| ___ Short-eared Owl _____ | | | r | r |

NIGHTJARS

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| ___ Common Nighthawk _____ | c | u | u | |
| • Chuck-will's-widow _____ | c | c | u | |
| • Whip-poor-will _____ | u | u | u | |

SWIFTS

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|--|
| • Chimney Swift _____ | c | c | c | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|--|

HUMMINGBIRDS

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| • Ruby-throated Hummingbird _____ | c | c | c | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|

KINGFISHER

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| • Belted Kingfisher _____ | c | c | c | c |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|

WOODPECKER

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| • Red-headed Woodpecker _____ | u | u | u | u |
| • Red-bellied Woodpecker _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker _____ | u | r | u | c |
| • Downy Woodpecker _____ | c | c | c | c |
| • Hairy Woodpecker _____ | o | o | o | o |
| • Northern Flicker _____ | c | c | c | c |
| • Pileated Woodpecker _____ | c | c | c | c |



John Drummond

Grasshopper sparrow

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

| | Sp | S | F | W |
|-------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|
| ___ Olive-sided Flycatcher _____ | | | r | |
| • Eastern Wood-Pewee _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher _____ | r | | r | |
| • Acadian Flycatcher _____ | c | c | c | |
| • Willow Flycatcher _____ | o | o | r | |
| ___ Least Flycatcher _____ | r | r | | |
| • Eastern Phoebe _____ | c | c | c | c |
| • Great Crested Flycatcher _____ | c | c | c | |
| • Eastern Kingbird _____ | c | c | c | |

VIREOS

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| ___ • White-eyed Vireo _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ Warbling Vireo _____ | r | | r | |
| • Yellow-throated Vireo _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ Blue-headed Vireo _____ | o | o | o | |
| • Red-eyed Vireo _____ | c | c | c | |

CROWS – JAYS – MAGPIES

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ • Blue Jay _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ • American Crow _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Fish Crow _____ | u | u | u | u |

LARKS

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|-----|
| ___ Horned Lark _____ | u | | u | a/u |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|-----|

SWALLOWS

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| ___ • Purple Martin _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ • Tree Swallow _____ | a | c | c | |
| ___ • Northern Rough-winged Swallow _____ | o | o | u | |
| ___ Bank Swallow _____ | r | u | r | |
| ___ • Cliff Swallow _____ | r | o | r | |
| ___ • Barn Swallow _____ | a | a | c | |

Sp S F W

TITMICE - CHICKADEES

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ • Carolina Chickadee _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ • Tufted Titmouse _____ | c | c | c | c |

NUTHATCHES

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ Red-breasted Nuthatch _____ | o | | o | o |
| • White-breasted Nuthatch _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Brown-headed Nuthatch _____ | o | | o | o |

CREEPERS

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| ___ Brown Creeper _____ | o | | u | c |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|---|

WRENS

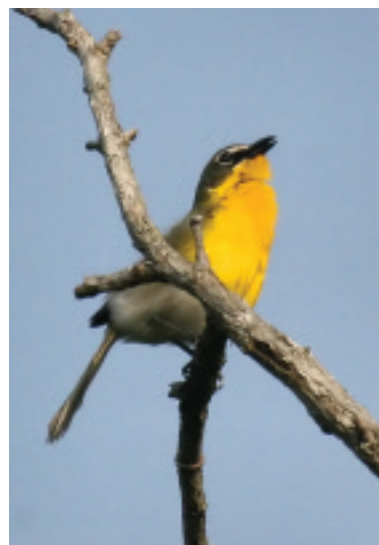
| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ • Carolina Wren _____ | c | c | c | c |
| • House Wren _____ | o | o | o | r |
| ___ Winter Wren _____ | o | | o | o |
| ___ Sedge Wren _____ | | r | | |
| • Marsh Wren _____ | c | c | c | u |

KINGLETS

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| ___ Golden-crowned Kinglet. _____ | u | | u | c |
| ___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet _____ | u | | u | c |

OLD WORLD WARBLERS

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| ___ • Blue-gray Gnatcatcher _____ | c | c | c | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|



Les Brooks

Yellow breasted chat

THRUSHES

| | Sp | S | F | W |
|-------------------------------|----|---|---|---|
| ___ • Eastern Bluebird _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Veery _____ | u | | u | |
| ___ Gray-cheeked Thrush _____ | r | | r | |
| ___ Bicknell's Thrush _____ | r | | r | |
| ___ Swainson's Thrush _____ | o | | o | |
| ___ Hermit Thrush _____ | u | | u | c |
| ___ • Wood Thrush _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ • American Robin _____ | c | c | c | a |

MIMIC THRUSHES

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ • Gray Catbird _____ | c | c | c | u |
| ___ • Northern Mockingbird _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ • Brown Thrasher _____ | c | c | c | u |

STARLINGS

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ • European Starling _____ | c | c | c | a |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|

WAGTAILS - PIPITS

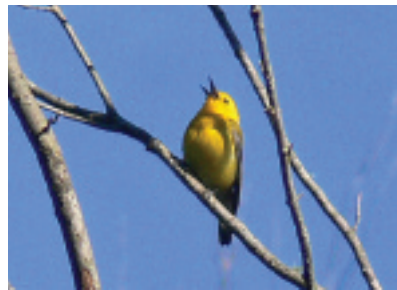
| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|-----|
| ___ American Pipit _____ | r | | r | u/a |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|-----|

WAXWINGS

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ • Cedar Waxwing _____ | c | u | c | c |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|

WOOD WARBLERS

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ Blue-winged Warbler _____ | u | | r | |
| ___ Orange-crowned Warbler _____ | r | | r | r |
| ___ Nashville Warbler _____ | | | r | |
| ___ • Northern Parula _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ • Yellow Warbler _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ Chestnut-sided Warbler _____ | u | | u | |
| ___ Magnolia Warbler _____ | u | | u | |
| ___ Cape May Warbler _____ | u | | u | |



Larry Meade

Prothonotary warbler



Les Brooks

Cedar waxwing

| | Sp | S | F | W |
|--|----|---|---|---|
| ___ Black-throated Blue Warbler _____ | c | | u | |
| ___ Yellow-rumped Warbler _____ | c | | a | a |
| ___ Black-throated Green Warbler _____ | u | | u | |
| ___ Blackburnian Warbler _____ | o | | r | |
| ___ • Yellow-throated Warbler _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ • Pine Warbler _____ | c | c | c | o |
| ___ • Prairie Warbler _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ Palm Warbler _____ | u | | u | r |
| ___ Bay-breasted Warbler _____ | u | | u | |
| ___ Blackpoll Warbler _____ | c | | u | |
| ___ Cerulean Warbler _____ | r | | | |
| ___ • Black-and-white Warbler _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ American Redstart _____ | c | | u | |
| ___ • Prothonotary Warbler _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ • Worm-eating Warbler _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ Swainson's Warbler _____ | r | r | | |
| ___ • Ovenbird _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ Northern Waterthrush _____ | u | | u | |
| ___ • Louisiana Waterthrush _____ | c | u | u | |
| ___ • Kentucky Warbler _____ | c | u | u | |
| ___ Mourning Warbler _____ | o | | u | |
| ___ • Common Yellowthroat _____ | c | c | c | o |
| ___ • Hooded Warbler _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ Canada Warbler _____ | r | | r | |
| ___ • Yellow-breasted Chat _____ | c | c | c | |



Baltimore oriole

Les Brooks

TANAGERS

| | Sp | S | F | W |
|-----------------------------|----|---|---|---|
| ___ • Summer Tanager _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ • Scarlet Tanager _____ | c | c | c | |

SPARROWS - TOWHEES

| | Sp | S | F | W |
|---|----|---|---|---|
| ___ • Eastern Towhee _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ American Tree Sparrow _____ | r | | | r |
| ___ • Chipping Sparrow _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Clay-colored Sparrow _____ | | | | r |
| ___ • Field Sparrow _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Vesper Sparrow _____ | | | r | |
| ___ Savannah Sparrow. _____ | u | | c | a |
| ___ • Grasshopper Sparrow _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ Le Conte's Sparrow _____ | | | | r |
| ___ • Seaside Sparrow _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ Fox Sparrow _____ | | | | u |
| ___ • Song Sparrow _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Lincoln's Sparrow _____ | | | r | |
| ___ Swamp Sparrow _____ | c | | c | c |
| ___ • Coastal Plain Swamp Sparrow (subsp) _____ | c | c | | |
| ___ White-crowned Sparrow _____ | | | | u |
| ___ White-throated Sparrow _____ | c | | c | a |
| ___ Dark-eyed Junco _____ | c | | c | a |

Sp S F W

CARDINALS – GROSBEAKS - ALLIES

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ • Northern Cardinal _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak _____ | u | | u | |
| ___ • Blue Grosbeak _____ | c | c | u | |
| ___ • Indigo Bunting _____ | c | c | c | |
| ___ • Dickcissel _____ | u | u | | |

BLACKBIRDS - ORIOLES

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ Bobolink _____ | u | | u | |
| ___ • Red-winged Blackbird _____ | a | a | a | a |
| ___ • Eastern Meadowlark _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ Rusty Blackbird _____ | | | o | u |
| ___ • Common Grackle _____ | c | c | c | a |
| ___ • Brown-headed Cowbird _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ • Orchard Oriole _____ | c | c | o | |
| ___ Baltimore Oriole _____ | u | | u | |

FINCHES

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ Purple Finch _____ | u | | u | u |
| ___ • House Finch _____ | c | c | c | c |
| ___ White-winged Crossbill _____ | | | | r |
| ___ • American Goldfinch _____ | a | c | c | a |

Old World Sparrows

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| ___ • House Sparrow _____ | u | u | u | u |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|



Singing Dickcissel

Les Brooks