

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Clarks River

*National Wildlife Refuge
Bird List*



*Refuge Mission
Statement:*

*“The mission of the
National Wildlife
Refuge System is to
administer a national
network of lands and
waters for the
conservation,
management, and where
appropriate, restoration
of the fish, wildlife and
plant resources and
their habitats within the
United States for the
benefit of present and
future generations of
Americans.”*

*National Wildlife
Refuge System
Improvement Act of
1997*

Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge



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

Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) consists of beautiful bottomland hardwood forest habitats, and is located in western Kentucky. The refuge lies along the East Fork of the Clarks River in Marshall, McCracken, and Graves counties. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Bottomland Hardwood Preservation Program first identified the Clarks River area as a high priority site for protection in 1978. In 1991, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to consider the site for protection as a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The refuge was established in 1997 under the Emergency Wetland Resources Act of 1986, and has a proposed acquisition boundary of approximately 18,000 acres.

The East Fork of the Clarks River is a comparatively slow-moving river due to the area's low topography and flat floodplain. It is also one of the few rivers in the area that has not been dammed or channelized. Localized flooding for short periods is the norm in this region, as moderate rains frequently cause the streams to flood over their banks. The Clarks River meanders for about six miles, from the East and West Fork convergence, until it reaches the Tennessee River near Paducah, Kentucky.

The refuge currently consists of approximately 8,500 acres and is the only refuge located solely within the bounds of the state of Kentucky. The city of Benton, Kentucky can be found near the southeastern end of the refuge, whereas the city of Paducah, Kentucky is situated near the refuge's northwestern boundary.

*cover photo:
Eric Brown*

The most significant resources of the Clarks River Refuge are the wetland habitat complexes formed by the river, creeks, beaver ponds, and natural ponding in the area. This natural wetland ecosystem is relatively intact and has high wildlife habitat values, especially for migratory birds and other wildlife species representative of bottomland hardwood forest habitats.

Bottomland forests are flooded several inches to several feet each year, typically in the winter and spring months. They are especially valuable in terms of providing wildlife habitat, preventing soil erosion, and protecting water quality.

On Clarks River NWR, the bottomland hardwood forests are composed mainly of overcup oak, bald cypress, and tupelo gum trees. Slightly higher, better-drained areas are covered with willow oak, swamp chestnut oak, red oak, sweet gum, sycamore, ash, and elm. These forests provide excellent habitat for species such as wood ducks, neotropical songbirds, white-tailed deer, and wild turkey. Squirrels, raccoons, rabbits, beavers, mink, bobcats, and many reptiles and amphibians also utilize the valuable bottomland hardwood habitats.

The bottomland hardwood forests of Clarks River NWR provide ideal habitat for migratory waterfowl and wading birds such as herons and egrets. Waterfowl use the habitats of the Clarks River as a winter feeding and resting area. Most waterfowl species begin to arrive in early autumn, with numbers typically peaking in December or January. Wood ducks can be seen utilizing the refuge year round and actively use the refuge for nesting.

The bottomland hardwood forests of this refuge are also utilized by many species of neotropical songbirds. These birds spend approximately

eight months of the year wintering in Central and South America, and the remaining months on their breeding grounds in North America's temperate latitudes. Over 200 species of neotropical songbirds can be found using the habitats of the refuge as a stopover (for resting and feeding) during migration or for nesting. The imperiled cerulean warbler, Swainson's warbler, and prothonotary warbler are three of the five birds on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's list of high priority species of management concern. All three of these species are dependent on bottomland hardwood forests and can be found in small numbers on the refuge during the nesting season. Other neotropical songbird species to watch for are summer and scarlet tanagers, Kentucky warblers, indigo buntings, and Acadian flycatchers, all of which readily use the refuge. For those interested in seeking out these and other birds, the following checklist is provided as an aid. The checklist is based on observations by staff, visiting ornithologists, and birdwatchers who have visited the refuge. By design, it is not all encompassing and, because of this, some of the generalized information that it contains may not necessarily seem appropriate for given species. Also, if you observe a species that is not listed here, please report it to us. Your information will be useful as we prepare future editions of this checklist. We do appreciate your help in updating our records.

The taxonomy and nomenclature used by this checklist follow the **Checklist of North America Birds**, American Ornithologists' Union, Seventh Edition, July 2000, as amended through the forty-sixth supplement, July 2005.

How to use your checklist

Symbols that appear in this checklist represent the following:

Seasons

Sp Spring.....March-May (migration)

S Summer.....June-July (breeding)

F Fall.....August-November (migration)

W Winter.....December-February

Likelihood of Occurrence

c- common (certain to be seen or heard in suitable habitat)

fc- fairly common (less certain to be seen or heard but usually present in smaller numbers)

u- uncommon (present but not easily seen or heard and may be overlooked)

r- rare (annual but irregular in small numbers)

vr- very rare (irregular but generally expected five or fewer times in a given ten year period)

o- occasional (three or fewer records for the refuge but additional observations are possible)

a- absent (not likely during this season)

ir- irruptive (appears in numbers which may fluctuate widely from year to year)

e- expected (should occur but no existent records)

*- known or suspected to have nested on refuge or known to nest locally.

This checklist includes more than 200 species of birds and is based on observations of refuge staff and visiting ornithologists.

SP S F W

Order Anseriformes

Waterfowl

___ Greater White-fronted Goose	u	a	u	u
___ Snow Goose	u	a	u	u
___ Ross's Goose	r	a	r	r
___ Canada Goose*	c	c	c	c
___ Wood Duck*	c	c	c	c
___ Gadwall	fc	a	fc	c
___ American Wigeon	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Mallard*	c	c	c	c
___ Blue-winged Teal	fc	r	fc	r
___ Northern Shoveler	u	a	u	c
___ Northern Pintail	r	a	r	fc
___ Green-winged Teal	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Ring-necked Duck	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Lesser Scaup	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Bufflehead	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Common Goldeneye	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Hooded Merganser*	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Ruddy Duck	fc	a	fc	fc

Order Galliformes

Turkey and Quail

___ Wild Turkey*	c	c	c	c
___ Northern Bobwhite*	fc	fc	fc	fc

Order Gaviiformes

Loons

___ Common Loon	uc	a	uc	uc
-----------------	----	---	----	----

Order Podicipediformes

Grebes

___ Pied-billed Grebe	fc	u	fc	fc
___ Horned Grebe	u	a	u	u

Order Pelecaniformes

Pelicans and Allies

___ American White Pelican	e	e	e	e
___ Double-crested Cormorant*	fc	fc	fc	fc

Order Ciconiiformes

Hérons, Egrets and Allies

___ American Bittern	u	vr	u	a
___ Great Blue Heron*	c	c	c	c
___ Great Egret*	c	c	c	r
___ Snowy Egret*	u	u	u	a
___ Little Blue Heron*	c	c	c	a
___ Cattle Egret*	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Green Heron*	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron*	fc	fc	fc	vr
___ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron*	u	u	u	a
___ Black Vulture*	c	c	c	c
___ Turkey Vulture*	c	c	c	c

SP S F W

Order Falconiformes

Hawks, Falcons, and Allies

___ Osprey*	c	c	c	a
___ Mississippi Kite*	fc	c	fc	a
___ Bald Eagle*	fc	fc	fc	fc
___ Northern Harrier	fc	vr	fc	fc
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk	u	vr	fc	fc
___ Cooper's Hawk*	fc	fc	fc	fc
___ Red-shouldered Hawk*	c	c	c	c
___ Broad-winged Hawk*	u	u	u	a
___ Red-tailed Hawk*	c	c	c	c
___ American Kestrel*	c	c	c	c

Order Gruiformes

Rails, Gallinules, and Cranes

___ American Coot	c	vr	c	c
-------------------	---	----	---	---

Order Charadriiformes

Shorebirds, Gulls, and Terns

___ Killdeer*	c	c	c	c
___ Greater Yellowlegs	r	r	r	r
___ Lesser Yellowlegs	r	r	r	r
___ Solitary Sandpiper	r	a	r	a
___ Spotted Sandpiper	r	a	r	r
___ Upland Sandpiper	r	a	r	a
___ Least Sandpiper	r	a	r	r
___ Wilson's Snipe	u	vr	u	u
___ American Woodcock*	u	r	u	u
___ Bonaparte's Gull	fc	a	fc	c
___ Ring-billed Gull	c	fc	c	c
___ Herring Gull	fc	r	fc	fc

Order Columbiformes

Doves

___ Rock Pigeon*	c	c	c	c
___ Mourning Dove*	c	c	c	c

Order Cuculiformes

Cuckoos and Roadrunners

___ Black-billed Cuckoo	r	r	r	a
___ Yellow-billed Cuckoo*	c	c	fc	a

Order Strigiformes

Owls

___ Eastern Screech-Owl*	c	c	c	c
___ Great Horned Owl*	c	c	c	c
___ Barred Owl*	c	c	c	c

Order Caprimulgiformes

Nightjars

___ Common Nighthawk*	c	c	c	a
___ Chuck-will's-widow*	c	c	u	a
___ Whip-poor-will*	u	c	u	a

SP S F W

Order Apodiformes

Swifts and Hummingbirds

___ Chimney Swift*	c	c	c	a
___ Ruby-throated Hummingbird*	c	c	c	a

Order Coraciiformes

Kingfisher

___ Belted Kingfisher*	fc	fc	fc	fc
------------------------	----	----	----	----

Order Piciformes

Woodpeckers

___ Red-headed Woodpecker*	u	u	u	u
___ Red-bellied Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	c	a	c	c
___ Downy Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
___ Hairy Woodpecker*	fc	fc	fc	fc
___ Northern Flicker	c	c	c	c
___ Pileated Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c

Order Passeriformes

Family Tyrannidae Flycatchers

___ Olive-sided Flycatcher	a	u	a	u
___ Eastern Wood-Pewee*	c	c	c	a
___ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	uc	a	uc	a
___ Acadian Flycatcher*	c	c	c	a
___ Willow Flycatcher*	u	u	u	a
___ Least Flycatcher	u	r	u	a
___ Eastern Phoebe*	c	c	c	fc
___ Great Crested Flycatcher*	c	c	c	a
___ Eastern Kingbird*	c	c	c	a
___ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher*	r	r	r	a

Family Laniidae

Shrike

___ Loggerhead Shrike*	u	u	u	u
------------------------	---	---	---	---

Family Vireonidae

Vireos

___ White-eyed Vireo*	c	c	c	a
___ Yellow-throated Vireo*	c	c	c	a
___ Blue-headed Vireo	fc	a	fc	a
___ Warbling Vireo*	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Philadelphia Vireo	r	a	r	a
___ Red-eyed Vireo*	c	c	c	a

Family Corvidae

Jays and Crows

___ Blue Jay*	c	c	c	c
___ American Crow*	c	c	c	c
___ Fish Crow*	fc	fc	fc	fc

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
<i>Family Hirundinidae</i>				
Swallows				
___ Purple Martin*	c	c	c	a
___ Tree Swallow*	c	c	c	a
___ N. Rough-winged Swallow*	c	c	c	a
___ Bank Swallow*	c	c	c	a
___ Cliff Swallow*	c	c	c	a
___ Barn Swallow*	c	c	c	a
<i>Family Paridae</i>				
Chickadees and Titmice				
___ Carolina Chickadee*	c	c	c	c
___ Tufted Titmouse*	c	c	c	c
<i>Family Sittidae</i>				
Nuthatches				
___ Red-breasted Nuthatch	ir	a	ir	ir
___ White-breasted Nuthatch*	c	c	c	c
<i>Family Certhiidae</i>				
Creepers				
___ Brown Creeper	fc	a	fc	c
<i>Family Troglodytidae</i>				
Wrens				
___ Carolina Wren*	c	c	c	c
___ House Wren*	u	u	u	r
___ Winter Wren	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Marsh Wren	r	a	r	vr
<i>Family Regulidae</i>				
Kinglets				
___ Golden-crowned Kinglet	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	c	a	c	c
<i>Family Sylviidae</i>				
Gnatcatchers				
___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*	c	c	c	a
<i>Family Turdidae</i>				
Thrushes				
___ Eastern Bluebird*	c	c	c	c
___ Veery	u	vr	e	a
___ Gray-cheeked Thrush	u	a	c	a
___ Swainson's Thrush	u	a	u	a
___ Hermit Thrush	u	a	u	fc
___ Wood Thrush*	c	c	c	a
___ American Robin*	c	c	c	c

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
<i>Family Mimidae</i>				
Mimic Thrushes				
___ Gray Catbird*	u	u	u	r
___ Northern Mockingbird*	c	c	c	c
___ Brown Thrasher*	c	c	c	c
<i>Family Sturnidae</i>				
Starling				
___ European Starling*	r	r	r	r
<i>Family Motacillidae</i>				
Pipits				
___ American Pipit	r	a	r	uc
<i>Family Bombycillidae</i>				
Waxwings				
___ Cedar Waxwing*	fc	fc	fc	fc
<i>Family Parulidae</i>				
Warblers				
___ Blue-winged Warbler*	u	u	u	a
___ Golden-winged Warbler	e	u	e	a
___ Tennessee Warbler*	c	a	u	a
___ Orange-crowned Warbler	u	a	u	a
___ Nashville Warbler	fc	a	fc	a
___ Northern Parula*	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Yellow Warbler*	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Chestnut-sided Warbler	fc	a	fc	a
___ Magnolia Warbler	u	a	u	a
___ Cape May Warbler	e	a	e	a
___ Black-throated Blue Warbler	e	a	e	a
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	c	a	c	c
___ Black-throated Green Warbler	fc	u	fc	a
___ Blackburnian Warbler	u	a	u	a
___ Yellow-throated Warbler*	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Pine Warbler*	c	c	c	c
___ Prairie Warbler*	fc	a	fc	u
___ Palm Warbler	fc	a	fc	u
___ Bay-breasted Warbler	u	a	u	a
___ Blackpoll Warbler	e	a	e	a
___ Cerulean Warbler*	o	o	o	a
___ Black-and-white Warbler*	c	c	c	a
___ American Redstart*	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Prothonotary Warbler*	c	c	c	a
___ Worm-eating Warbler*	u	u	u	a
___ Ovenbird	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Northern Waterthrush*	u	u	u	a
___ Louisiana Waterthrush*	c	c	c	a
___ Kentucky Warbler*	c	c	c	a
___ Mourning Warbler	e	a	e	e
___ Common Yellowthroat*	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Hooded Warbler	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Wilson's Warbler	e	u	e	a

SP S F W

___ Canada Warbler	e	u	e	a
___ Yellow-breasted Chat*	c	c	c	a

Family Thraupidae

Tanagers

___ Summer Tanager*	fc	fc	fc	a
___ Scarlet Tanager*	fc	fc	fc	a

Family Emberizidae

New World Sparrows

___ Eastern Towhee*	c	c	c	c
___ Chipping Sparrow*	c	c	c	u
___ Field Sparrow*	c	c	c	c
___ Vesper Sparrow	u	r	u	r
___ Lark Sparrow	u	u	u	a
___ Savannah Sparrow	fc	u	fc	c
___ Grasshopper Sparrow*	c	c	c	a
___ Henslow's Sparrow*	u	u	u	a
___ Fox Sparrow	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Song Sparrow*	c	c	c	c
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	u	a	u	u
___ Swamp Sparrow	c	a	c	c
___ White-throated Sparrow	c	a	c	c
___ White-crowned Sparrow	fc	a	fc	fc
___ Dark-eyed Junco	c	a	c	c

Family Cardinalidae

Cardinal, Grosbeaks, and Allies

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

Family Icteridae

Blackbirds and Allies

___ Red-winged Blackbird*	c	c	c	c
___ Eastern Meadowlark*	c	c	c	c
___ Rusty Blackbird	u	a	u	fc
___ Common Grackle*	c	c	c	c
___ Brown-headed Cowbird*	c	c	c	c
___ Orchard Oriole*	c	c	c	a
___ Baltimore Oriole*	c	c	c	a

Family Fringillidae

Finches

___ Purple Finch*	ir	a	a	ir
___ House Finch*	c	c	c	c
___ Pine Siskin	ir	a	ir	ir
___ American Goldfinch*	c	c	c	c

SP

S

F

W

*Family Passeridae***Old World Sparrows**

___House Sparrow*

c

c

c

c

For more information about the refuge or information contained in this publication contact:

Refuge Manager

Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge

91 US Hwy 641 North

P.O. Box 89

Benton, KY 42025

(270) 527 5770

email: fw4rwclarksriver@fws.gov

Fax: (270) 527 5770

Accessibility Statement:

The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities of the Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge. Discrimination complaints should be filed with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240 or (800) 344 WILD.

Sighting Notes

Date _____

Time _____

Weather _____

No. of Species _____

Route or Area _____

**Clarks River
National Wildlife Refuge
91 US Highway 641 North
P.O. Box 89
Benton, KY 42025
Phone 270/527 5770
Fax 270/527 5052
fw4rwclarksriver@fws.gov**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD**

September 2005

