



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Birds of

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge

Birding at Cabeza Prieta NWR

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge is the third-largest National Wildlife Refuge in the contiguous United States. The eight mountain ranges, broad valleys, playas, sand dunes, lava flows, bosques, and charcos provide habitat for 235 known species of birds.

Take care while birding on the refuge, as it includes some of the most arid desert in North America. Roads are rough, requiring 4 wheel-drive and high ground clearance. Bring plenty of water with you as there is no drinking water provided. Entry to the refuge requires each person 18 years and older to have a visitor permit (free). The permit is available online at bmgr.recaccess.com and is valid for 365 days beginning on the date of issue. Print two copies of your permit so you have one to keep with you and one for your vehicle; or save the permit as a screenshot on your smartphone or tablet.

Much of the refuge is set aside as Congressionally designated wilderness. If you wish to enter the wilderness area, it is enjoyed on foot or via horseback only. A Special Use Permit is required to bring pack and saddle stock animals. Contact the refuge for more information on Special Use Permits. Please help to retain wilderness values and character by avoiding driving off the Camino del Diablo, Christmas Pass, and Charlie Bell Roads.

Interested in helping the refuge? Submit your bird sightings to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at ebird.org. When you use eBird, you help inform staff, researchers, and the public about bird distribution, abundance, and habitat use.

Most of the birds on this checklist are migratory, passing through Cabeza Prieta in spring and fall. "Spring" and "Fall" do not coincide with traditional calendar seasons, however, because some birds begin spring migrations in late February and fall migrations may start in late July.

This checklist of 235 bird species represents species documented on the refuge and is designed to be both informative and simple to use. The common names of the birds and the taxonomic order are in accordance with the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist of North American Birds, 7th edition (1998), 63rd supplement (2022). Please let us know if you detect a species that is omitted from this list. We welcome your help in updating our records.

Seasons

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

Sightability

C Common; suitable habitat is available; should not be missed during appropriate season.
 U Uncommon; present, but in moderate numbers; not seen on every visit during season.
 O Occasional; present, only a few times per season; also includes those species that do not occur each year, while in some years may be fairly common.
 R Rare; observed only every 1 to 5 years; records are sporadic and few.
 X Accidental; Has been seen only once or twice.

* Known or suspected to nest on the refuge

Italics =Federal Threatened or Endangered Status

The hypothetical birds have not been seen within the refuge boundary, but there are records from nearby areas, such as Ajo and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.

Common Name Sp Su F W

Ducks, Geese, and Swans

Snow Goose	x		
Canada Goose		x	
Gadwall	x		
American Wigeon	x tt	o	x
Mallard		o	
Blue-winged Teal	x		
Cinnamon Teal	r r	o	
Northern Shoveler		o	o
Northern Pintail		o	
Green-winged Teal	o	o	r
Redhead	x		
Ring-necked Duck		hypothetical	
Lesser Scaup		x	
Bufflehead	x	x	
Common Goldeneye			x
Hooded Merganser		hypothetical	
Common Merganser	x		
Red-breasted Merganser	x		
Ruddy Duck		o	

New World Quail

Gambel's Quail *	c	c	c
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Grebes

Least Grebe		hypothetical	
Pied-billed Grebe	r r	r r	
Eared Grebe	x	r	x

Common Name

Sp Su F W

Pigeons and Doves

Band-tailed Pigeon	x	x	x
Eurasian Collared-Dove	o	o	o
Inca Dove	o	o	o
Common Ground-Dove	o	o	o
White-winged Dove *	c	c	u o
Mourning Dove *	c	c	c c

Cuckoos and Roadrunners

Greater Roadrunner *	u	u	u u
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Goatsuckers

Lesser Nighthawk *	c	c	u
Common Nighthawk *		x	
Common Poorwill *	c	u	u o

Swifts

Vaux's Swift	o	o	
White-throated Swift	r	r	r o

Hummingbirds

Black-chinned Humm.	o	o	o
Anna's Hummingbird	c	c	c c
Costa's Hummingbird *	c	u	u c
Rufous Hummingbird	o	r	o
Allen's Hummingbird	x		
Calliope Hummingbird	r		r

Rails, Gallinules, and Coots

Virginia Rail		u	
Sora	u	u	
Common Gallinule	u	u	u
American Coot	r	r	r r

Stilts and Avocets

Black-necked Stilt	o	o	
American Avocet	o	o	

Plovers

Killdeer	o	o	o o
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Sandpipers and Phalaropes

Long-billed Curlew	x		x
Baird's Sandpiper	x		x
Least Sandpiper		o	o
Pectoral Sandpiper		x	
Western Sandpiper	r		r
Long-billed Dowitcher		x	
Wilson's Snipe			r
Spotted Sandpiper	o	o	
Solitary Sandpiper	r		r
Greater Yellowlegs		x	
Willet	r		r
Wilson's Phalarope		r	

Gulls and Terns

Ring-billed Gull	r		o
Black Tern	r		r

Storks

Wood Stork		x	x
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Frigatebirds

Magnificent Frigatebird	x	x	
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Cormorants

Double-cr. Cormorant	x		
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Pelicans

Am. White Pelican	o	o	
Brown Pelican		x	

Common Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Common Name	Sp	Su	F	W	Common Name	Sp	Su	F	W
Herons, Bitterns, and Allies					Yellow-throated Vireo		x			Longspurs				
Great Blue Heron	o	o			Hutton's Vireo			r		Chestnut-col. Longspur			r	
Great Egret	o	o			Plumbeous Vireo	r		r	r	Wood-Warblers				
Snowy Egret	r		r		Warbling Vireo	c	r	c		Northern Waterthrush			r	
Cattle Egret	o	o			Cassin's Vireo	o		r	r	Orange-cr. Warbler	u	r	u	o
Green Heron	r		r		Crows and Jays					Lucy's Warbler *	o	r	o	
Black-cr. Night-Heron	x	x			Pinyon Jay		x			Nashville Warbler	u			
Ibis					Steller's Jay			x		MacGillivray's Warbler	o	o	o	
White-faced Ibis	r		r		Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay			x	x	Common Yellowthroat	o			
American Vultures					Clark's Nutcracker			x		American Redstart		x		
Black Vulture	u	o	u	r	Common Raven *	c	c	c	c	Yellow Warbler	o	r	o	
Turkey Vulture *	c	c	c	o	Larks					Blackpoll Warbler		x		
Hawks, Kites, and Eagles					Horned Lark *	u	u	u	u	Yellow-rumped Warbler	c		c	c
Osprey	o		o	x	Swallows					Black-thr. Gray Warbler	u		u	r
White-tailed Kite	r	x		x	Purple Martin			o	o	Townsend's Warbler	u		o	x
Northern Harrier	u		u	o	Tree Swallow	u	r	o	o	Hermit Warbler	o		r	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	o		o	o	Violet-green Swallow	o		o	r	Wilson's Warbler	c		c	x
Cooper's Hawk	u		u	u	N. Rough-winged Swallow	o		o	o	Yellow-breasted Chat	o		o	
Harris' Hawk *	u	u	u	u	Bank Swallow	o		o		Towhees, Sparrows, and Allies				
Swainson's Hawk	u		o		Cliff Swallow	o	o	o		Green-tailed Towhee	u		u	u
Zone-tailed Hawk	r	r	r	r	Barn Swallow	o		o		Spotted Towhee	o		o	
Red-tailed Hawk *	c	c	c	c	Verdins					Rufous-winged Sparrow	x			
Ferruginous Hawk	r		r	o	Verdin *	c	c	c	c	Canyon Towhee *	o	o	o	o
Golden Eagle *	o	o	o	o	Nuthatches					Abert's Towhee	r		r	
Barn Owls					Red-breasted Nuthatch			x		Cassin's Sparrow		x		
Barn Owl	u	u	u	u	Wrens					Chipping Sparrow	u		u	o
Typical Owls					Rock Wren *	c	u	c	c	Brewer's Sparrow	c		c	u
Western Screech-Owl *	u	u	u	u	Canyon Wren *	u	u	u	u	Black-chinned Sparrow	o		o	o
Great Horned Owl *	c	c	c	c	House Wren	u		u	o	Vesper Sparrow	o		o	o
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	r	r	r		Bewick's Wren	o		o	o	Lark Sparrow	o	x	o	o
Elf Owl *	u	u			Cactus Wren *	c	c	c	c	Black-thr. Sparrow *	c	c	c	c
Burrowing Owl	o	o	o	o	Gnatcatchers					Sagebrush Sparrow	u		u	u
Long-eared Owl	r		o		Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	o		o	o	Bell's Sparrow		r		
Short-eared Owl			r		Blk-tailed Gnatcatcher *	c	c	c	c	Lark Bunting	o		o	o
Kingfishers					Kinglets					Savannah Sparrow	o		o	o
Belted Kingfisher	o	r	o		Golden-crowned Kinglet			x		Grasshopper Sparrow		x	x	
Woodpeckers					Ruby-crowned Kinglet	u		u	c	Fox Sparrow		r	r	
Lewis' Woodpecker			r		Thrushes					Song Sparrow	o		r	
Gila Woodpecker *	c	c	c	c	Western Bluebird	r		o		Lincoln's Sparrow	u		u	u
Red-naped Sapsucker	r		r	o	Mountain Bluebird	r		x	o	White-crowned Sparrow	c		c	c
Ladder-bac. Woodpecker*	u	u	u	u	Townsend's Solitaire	r		r	o	Golden-cr. Sparrow		hypothetical		
No. (Red-shafted) Flicker*	o	x	o	u	Swainson's Thrush	u		o		Dark-eyed Junco	o		o	o
Gilded Flicker *	c	c	c	c	Hermit Thrush	o		o	u	Tanagers, Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Buntings				
Caracaras and Falcons					Rufous-backed Robin			r		Summer Tanager		x	x	
Crested Caracara	o	o	o	o	American Robin	o		o	u	Western Tanager	u	o	u	r
American Kestrel *	c	u	c	c	Mockingbirds and Thrashers					Northern Cardinal	u	r	o	o
Merlin			x	x	Gray Catbird			r	r	Pyrrhuloxia *	o	o	o	o
Peregrine Falcon	o		o	r	Curve-billed Thrasher *	c	c	c	c	Black-headed Grosbeak	c	c	c	c
Prairie Falcon *	u	u	u	u	Bendire's Thrasher *	o	o	o	r	Rose-br. Grosbeak	r			
Tyrant Flycatchers					LeConte's Thrasher *	u	u	u	u	Blue Grosbeak	x	x	x	
Olive-sided Flycatcher	o		o		Crissal Thrasher *	u	u	u	u	Lazuli Bunting	u	r	u	
Western Wood-Pewee	u		u		Sage Thrasher	o		x	o	Indigo Bunting	x	x		
Willow Flycatcher	o		o		Northern Mockingbird *	c	o	u	c	Varied Bunting	r	r		
Least Flycatcher			x		Starlings					Blackbirds				
Hammond's Flycatcher	o		o		European Starling					Red-winged Blackbird	r	r	r	r
Gray Flycatcher	o		o	r	Waxwings					Western Meadowlark *	u		u	u
Dusky Flycatcher	o		o		Cedar Waxwing	r		r	o	Yellow-headed Blackbird	r	o	r	
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	u	r	u	x	Silky-Flycatchers					Rusty Blackbird		x		
Black Phoebe	o	r	o	o	Phainopepla *	c	o	c	c	Brewer's Blackbird	r		o	o
Say's Phoebe *	c	o	c	c	Old World Sparrow					Great-tailed Grackle	o	o	o	o
Vermilion Flycatcher	u		u	o	House Sparrow	o	o	o	o	Bronzed Cowbird	r	r		
Ash-thr. Flycatcher *	c	c	u	u	Pipits					Brown-headed Cowbird*	o		o	
Brown-cres. Flycatcher*	u	u	o		American Pipit			o	o	Hooded Oriole *	o	r	r	
Tropical Kingbird	x				Sprague's Pipit			x		Bullock's Oriole	o	o	r	
Cassin's Kingbird	r				Finches					Scott's Oriole *	u	u		
Western Kingbird *	o	o	r		House Finch *	c	c	c	c					
Shrikes					Purple Finch			x						
Loggerhead Shrike *	c	c	c	c	Cassin's Finch			x						
Northern Shrike *			x		Pine Siskin	r		o	o					
Vireos					Lesser Goldfinch *	u	r	u	u					
Bell's Vireo *	u	o	r		Lawrence's Goldfinch	r		r	r					
Gray Vireo	o		o	o	American Goldfinch			r						

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