



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 | c |
| 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 | o |
| ___ Inca Dove | | o | o | o |
| ___ Common Ground-Dove | o | 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 |
| 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 | | 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 |
| 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 | |
| Frigatebirds | | | | |
| ___ Magnificent Frigatebird | | x | x | |
| Cormorants | | | | |
| ___ Double-cr. Cormorant | x | | | |
| 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 | | | |
| Ibises | | | | | ___ 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 | u | 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 | | |
| 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 |
| ___ Long-eared Owl | r | | o | u | ___ 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 |
| ___ 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 | 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 |
| ___ 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 | | | | o | ___ 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* | u | o | | o |
| ___ Brown-cre. 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 | Please reuse or return to the Visitor Center Desk | | | | |
| 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 | | | | | |