

# BIRDS of the Outer Banks



NORTH CAROLINA



## **BIRDS *of the* OUTER BANKS**

Nearly 400 species of birds have been sighted within Cape Hatteras National Seashore. This impressive number is due to several factors, which include: the rich diversity of habitats; the fact that the ocean off the Banks is biologically rich, in part because of the mixing of subtropical waters from the south with the temperate waters from the mid-Atlantic; and the limited extent of land, which tends to concentrate vagrants. In spite of its rich potential, the Banks is actually underbirded. In fact, sometimes a visiting birder discovers a species that has never been recorded in this area before.

The area covered by this list includes all of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, from Nags Head south to Ocracoke village, to include Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. Also included is the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site on Roanoke Island. Note that the bar-graph statuses provided in this list are based on the sites where species are easiest to find. For instance, the statuses given for most waterfowl species are based on their abundances at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. Some resident landbird species that are easy to find at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site are much harder to find further south on the Banks, e.g. Brown-headed Nuthatch.

## **WHEN *and* WHERE**

Birding is always exciting on the Outer Banks though the greatest variety of species occurs during spring and fall migrations. For those seeking out migratory shorebirds, the various inlet tidal flats, the ponds at Pea Island and Bodie Island, and the salt pond at Cape Hatteras Point offer the greatest concentrations. However, the ponds at Pea Island and Bodie Island offer the greatest variety, and typically the best chance of seeing one of the rarer species.

Landbird migration in fall can be excellent, but typically only after strong cold fronts. The best areas to look for these migrants is along the dikes at Pea Island; the northern tip of Pea Island, near the Oregon Inlet bridge; and at Fort Raleigh, especially in and around the Elizabethan Gardens and along the section of the hiking trail that ends at Croatan Sound.

In winter, ocean-watching is generally best from Cape Hatteras northward. Occasionally in winter, especially in severe weather, Cape Hatteras Point may be almost blanketed with gulls, providing the opportunity to see several of the rarer species. Often in late May, impressive numbers of pelagic birds—storm-petrels, shearwaters, jaegers—may be seen in northward migration passing just off the tip of Cape Hatteras Point.

***Even if you visit the Outer Banks during a slower period, don't forget that exciting birds can turn up any time.***

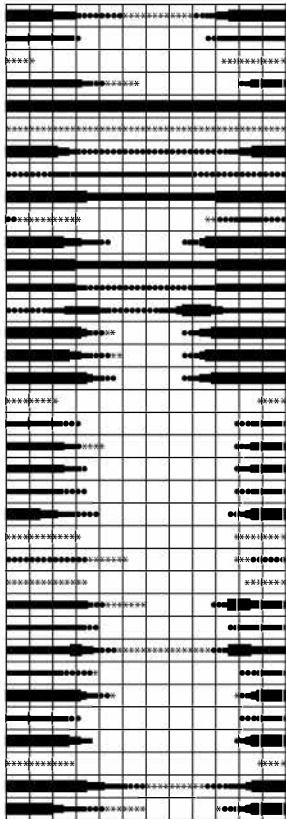
# ABUNDANCE DESIGNATIONS

- **COMMON:** Certain to be found in proper habitat
- **FAIRLY COMMON:** Will usually be found
- **UNCOMMON:** Present, but will often be missed
- .....** **OCCASIONAL:** May require several visits to find
- \*** **RARE:** Not recorded every year
- **VERY RARE TO ACCIDENTAL:**  
Found less often than five times a decade.  
See separate list at end of checklist

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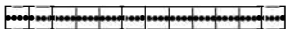
## GEESE & DUCKS

- \_\_\_ Snow Goose (light morph)
- \_\_\_ "Blue Goose"
- \_\_\_ Ross's Goose
- \_\_\_ Brant
- \_\_\_ Canada Goose
- \_\_\_ Mute Swan
- \_\_\_ Tundra Swan
- \_\_\_ Wood Duck
- \_\_\_ Gadwall
- \_\_\_ Eurasian Wigeon
- \_\_\_ American Wigeon
- \_\_\_ American Black Duck
- \_\_\_ Mallard
- \_\_\_ Blue-winged Teal
- \_\_\_ Northern Shoveler
- \_\_\_ Northern Pintail
- \_\_\_ Green-winged Teal
- \_\_\_ "Common Teal"
- \_\_\_ Canvasback
- \_\_\_ Redhead
- \_\_\_ Ring-necked Duck
- \_\_\_ Greater Scaup
- \_\_\_ Lesser Scaup
- \_\_\_ King Eider
- \_\_\_ Common Eider
- \_\_\_ Harlequin Duck
- \_\_\_ Surf Scoter
- \_\_\_ White-winged Scoter
- \_\_\_ Black Scoter
- \_\_\_ Long-tailed Duck
- \_\_\_ Bufflehead
- \_\_\_ Common Goldeneye
- \_\_\_ Hooded Merganser
- \_\_\_ Common Merganser
- \_\_\_ Red-breasted Merganser
- \_\_\_ Ruddy Duck



## GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

- \_\_\_ Northern Bobwhite



## LOONS

- \_\_\_ Red-throated Loon
- \_\_\_ Common Loon

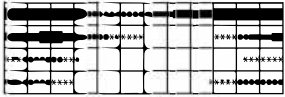


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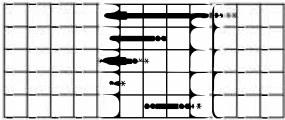
**GREBES**

- \_\_\_ Pied-billed Grebe
- \_\_\_ Horned Grebe
- \_\_\_ Red-necked Grebe
- \_\_\_ Eared Grebe



**SHEARWATERS**

- \_\_\_ Cory's Shearwater
- \_\_\_ Great Shearwater
- \_\_\_ Sooty Shearwater
- \_\_\_ Manx Shearwater
- \_\_\_ Audubon's Shearwater



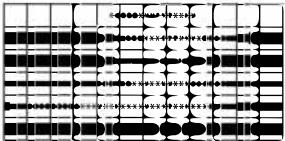
**STORM-PETRELS**

- \_\_\_ Wilson's Storm-Petrel
- \_\_\_ Leach's Storm-Petrel



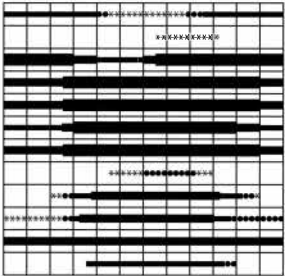
**PELICANS & ALLIES**

- \_\_\_ Magnificent Frigatebird
- \_\_\_ Northern Gannet
- \_\_\_ Double-crested Cormorant
- \_\_\_ Great Cormorant
- \_\_\_ American White Pelican
- \_\_\_ Brown Pelican



**BITTERNS & HERONS**

- \_\_\_ American Bittern
- \_\_\_ Least Bittern
- \_\_\_ Great Blue Heron
- \_\_\_ Great Egret
- \_\_\_ Snowy Egret
- \_\_\_ Little Blue Heron
- \_\_\_ Tricolored Heron
- \_\_\_ Reddish Egret
- \_\_\_ Cattle Egret
- \_\_\_ Green Heron
- \_\_\_ Black-crowned Night-Heron
- \_\_\_ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron



**IBISES**

- \_\_\_ White Ibis
- \_\_\_ Glossy Ibis



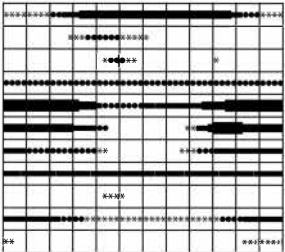
**VULTURES**

- \_\_\_ Turkey Vulture



**HAWKS & EAGLES**

- \_\_\_ Osprey
- \_\_\_ Swallow-tailed Kite
- \_\_\_ Mississippi Kite
- \_\_\_ Bald Eagle
- \_\_\_ Northern Harrier
- \_\_\_ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- \_\_\_ Cooper's Hawk
- \_\_\_ Red-shouldered Hawk
- \_\_\_ Broad-winged Hawk
- \_\_\_ Red-tailed Hawk
- \_\_\_ Rough-legged Hawk

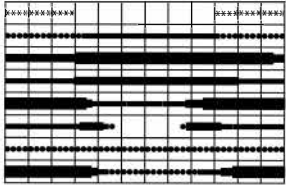


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**RAILS & ALLIES**

- \_\_\_ Yellow Rail
- \_\_\_ Black Rail
- \_\_\_ Clapper Rail
- \_\_\_ King Rail
- \_\_\_ Virginia Rail
- \_\_\_ Sora
- \_\_\_ Common Gallinule
- \_\_\_ American Coot



**AVOCETS & STILTS**

- \_\_\_ Black-necked Stilt
- \_\_\_ American Avocet



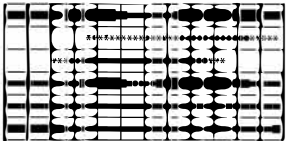
**OYSTERCATCHERS**

- \_\_\_ American Oystercatcher



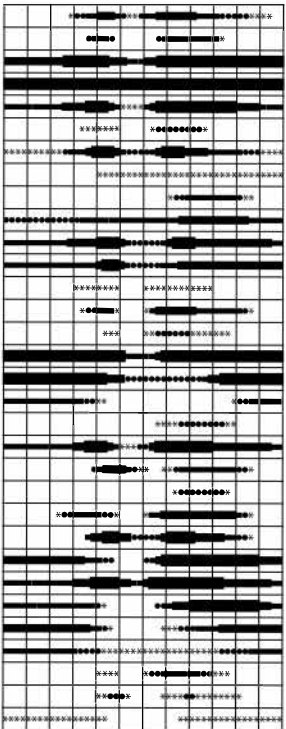
**PLOVERS**

- \_\_\_ Black-bellied Plover
- \_\_\_ American Golden-Plover
- \_\_\_ Wilson's Plover
- \_\_\_ Semipalmated Plover
- \_\_\_ Piping Plover
- \_\_\_ Killdeer



**SANDPIPERS**

- \_\_\_ Spotted Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Solitary Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Greater Yellowlegs
- \_\_\_ Willet
- \_\_\_ Lesser Yellowlegs
- \_\_\_ Upland Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Whimbrel
- \_\_\_ Long-billed Curlew
- \_\_\_ Hudsonian Godwit
- \_\_\_ Marbled Godwit
- \_\_\_ Ruddy Turnstone
- \_\_\_ Red Knot
- \_\_\_ Ruff
- \_\_\_ Stilt Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Curlew Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Sanderling
- \_\_\_ Dunlin
- \_\_\_ Purple Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Baird's Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Least Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ White-rumped Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Buff-breasted Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Pectoral Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Semipalmated Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Western Sandpiper
- \_\_\_ Short-billed Dowitcher
- \_\_\_ Long-billed Dowitcher
- \_\_\_ Wilson's Snipe
- \_\_\_ American Woodcock
- \_\_\_ Wilson's Phalarope
- \_\_\_ Red-necked Phalarope
- \_\_\_ Red Phalarope

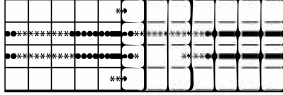


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**JAEGERS**

- \_\_\_ South Polar Skua
- \_\_\_ Pomarine Jaeger
- \_\_\_ Parasitic Jaeger
- \_\_\_ Long-tailed Jaeger



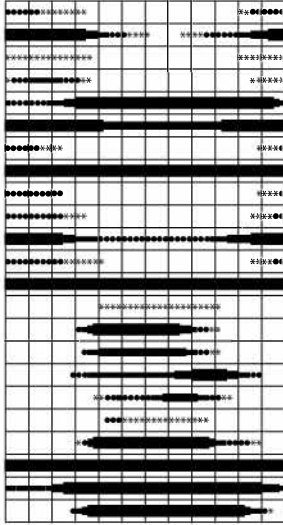
**ALCIDS**

- \_\_\_ Dovekie
- \_\_\_ Razorbill



**GULLS & TERNS**

- \_\_\_ Black-legged Kittiwake
- \_\_\_ Bonaparte's Gull
- \_\_\_ Black-headed Gull
- \_\_\_ Little Gull
- \_\_\_ Laughing Gull
- \_\_\_ Ring-billed Gull
- \_\_\_ California Gull
- \_\_\_ Herring Gull
- \_\_\_ Thayer's Gull
- \_\_\_ Iceland Gull
- \_\_\_ Lesser Black-backed Gull
- \_\_\_ Glaucous Gull
- \_\_\_ Great Black-backed Gull
- \_\_\_ Sooty Tern
- \_\_\_ Least Tern
- \_\_\_ Gull-billed Tern
- \_\_\_ Caspian Tern
- \_\_\_ Black Tern
- \_\_\_ Roseate Tern
- \_\_\_ Common Tern
- \_\_\_ Forster's Tern
- \_\_\_ Royal Tern
- \_\_\_ Sandwich Tern



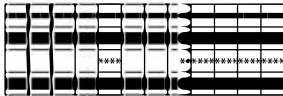
**SKIMMERS**

- \_\_\_ Black Skimmer



**DOVES**

- \_\_\_ Rock Pigeon
- \_\_\_ Eurasian Collared-Dove
- \_\_\_ White-winged Dove
- \_\_\_ Mourning Dove



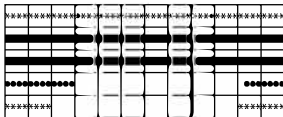
**CUCKOOS**

- \_\_\_ Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- \_\_\_ Black-billed Cuckoo



**OWLS**

- \_\_\_ Barn Owl
- \_\_\_ Eastern Screech-Owl
- \_\_\_ Great Horned Owl
- \_\_\_ Short-eared Owl
- \_\_\_ Northern Saw-whet Owl



**NIGHTJARS**

- \_\_\_ Common Nighthawk
- \_\_\_ Chuck-will's-widow
- \_\_\_ Eastern Whip-poor-will

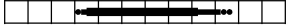


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**SWIFTS**

\_\_\_ Chimney Swift



**HUMMINGBIRDS**

\_\_\_ Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
\_\_\_ Rufous Hummingbird



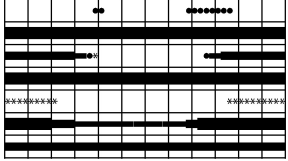
**KINGFISHERS**

\_\_\_ Belted Kingfisher



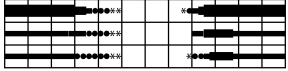
**WOODPECKERS**

\_\_\_ Red-headed Woodpecker  
\_\_\_ Red-bellied Woodpecker  
\_\_\_ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
\_\_\_ Downy Woodpecker  
\_\_\_ Hairy Woodpecker  
\_\_\_ Northern Flicker  
\_\_\_ Pileated Woodpecker



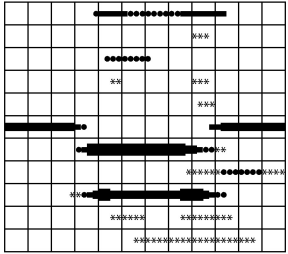
**FALCONS**

\_\_\_ American Kestrel  
\_\_\_ Merlin  
\_\_\_ Peregrine Falcon



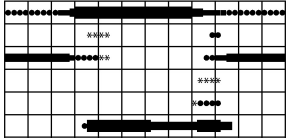
**FLYCATCHERS**

\_\_\_ Eastern Wood-Pewee  
\_\_\_ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher  
\_\_\_ Acadian Flycatcher  
\_\_\_ Alder/Willow Flycatcher  
\_\_\_ Least Flycatcher  
\_\_\_ Eastern Phoebe  
\_\_\_ Great Crested Flycatcher  
\_\_\_ Western Kingbird  
\_\_\_ Eastern Kingbird  
\_\_\_ Gray Kingbird  
\_\_\_ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher



**VIREOS**

\_\_\_ White-eyed Vireo  
\_\_\_ Yellow-throated Vireo  
\_\_\_ Blue-headed Vireo  
\_\_\_ Warbling Vireo  
\_\_\_ Philadelphia Vireo  
\_\_\_ Red-eyed Vireo



**JAYS & CROWS**

\_\_\_ Blue Jay  
\_\_\_ American Crow  
\_\_\_ Fish Crow



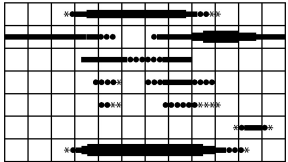
**LARKS**

\_\_\_ Horned Lark



**SWALLOWS**

\_\_\_ Purple Martin  
\_\_\_ Tree Swallow  
\_\_\_ N. Rough-winged Swallow  
\_\_\_ Bank Swallow  
\_\_\_ Cliff Swallow  
\_\_\_ Cave Swallow  
\_\_\_ Barn Swallow



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**TITMICE**

- \_\_\_ Carolina Chickadee
- \_\_\_ Tufted Titmouse



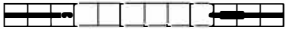
**NUTHATCHES**

- \_\_\_ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- \_\_\_ Brown-headed Nuthatch



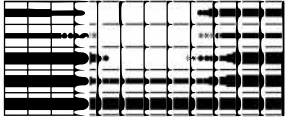
**CREEPERS**

- \_\_\_ Brown Creeper



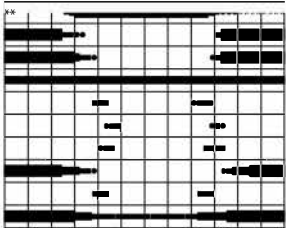
**WRENS**

- \_\_\_ House Wren
- \_\_\_ Winter Wren
- \_\_\_ Sedge Wren
- \_\_\_ Marsh Wren
- \_\_\_ Carolina Wren



**THRUSHES & ALLIES**

- \_\_\_ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- \_\_\_ Golden-crowned Kinglet
- \_\_\_ Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- \_\_\_ Eastern Bluebird
- \_\_\_ Veery
- \_\_\_ Gray-cheeked Thrush
- \_\_\_ Swainson's Thrush
- \_\_\_ Hermit Thrush
- \_\_\_ Wood Thrush
- \_\_\_ American Robin



**MIMICS**

- \_\_\_ Gray Catbird
- \_\_\_ Brown Thrasher
- \_\_\_ Northern Mockingbird



**STARLINGS**

- \_\_\_ European Starling



**PIPITS**

- \_\_\_ American Pipit



**WAXWINGS**

- \_\_\_ Cedar Waxwing



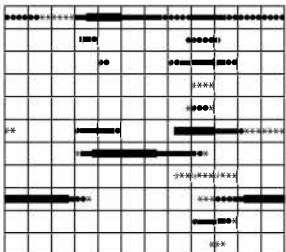
**LONGSPURS & SNOW BUNTING**

- \_\_\_ Lapland Longspur
- \_\_\_ Snow Bunting



**WARBLERS**

- \_\_\_ Ovenbird
- \_\_\_ Worm-eating Warbler
- \_\_\_ Northern Waterthrush
- \_\_\_ Golden-winged Warbler
- \_\_\_ Blue-winged Warbler
- \_\_\_ Black-and-white Warbler
- \_\_\_ Prothonotary Warbler
- \_\_\_ Tennessee Warbler
- \_\_\_ Orange-crowned Warbler
- \_\_\_ Nashville Warbler
- \_\_\_ Connecticut Warbler



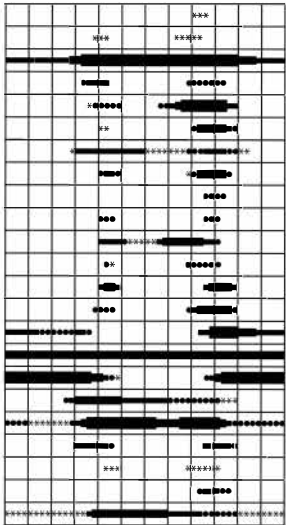
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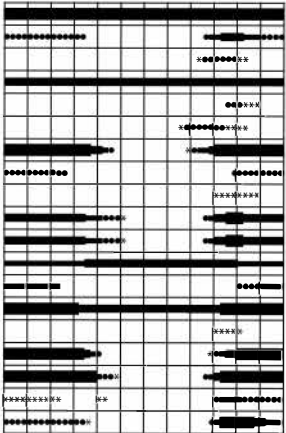
**WARBLERS (con't)**

- \_\_\_ Mourning Warbler
- \_\_\_ Kentucky Warbler
- \_\_\_ Common Yellowthroat
- \_\_\_ Hooded Warbler
- \_\_\_ American Redstart
- \_\_\_ Cape May Warbler
- \_\_\_ Northern Parula
- \_\_\_ Magnolia Warbler
- \_\_\_ Bay-breasted Warbler
- \_\_\_ Blackburnian Warbler
- \_\_\_ Yellow Warbler
- \_\_\_ Chestnut-sided Warbler
- \_\_\_ Blackpoll Warbler
- \_\_\_ Black-throated Blue Warbler
- \_\_\_ Palm Warbler
- \_\_\_ Pine Warbler
- \_\_\_ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- \_\_\_ Yellow-throated Warbler
- \_\_\_ Prairie Warbler
- \_\_\_ Black-throated Green Warbler
- \_\_\_ Canada Warbler
- \_\_\_ Wilson's Warbler
- \_\_\_ Yellow-breasted Chat



**SPARROWS & ALLIES**

- \_\_\_ Eastern Towhee
- \_\_\_ Chipping Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Clay-colored Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Field Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Vesper Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Lark Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Savannah Sparrow
- \_\_\_ "Ipswich Sparrow"
- \_\_\_ Grasshopper Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Nelson's Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Saltmarsh Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Seaside Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Fox Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Song Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Lincoln's Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Swamp Sparrow
- \_\_\_ White-throated Sparrow
- \_\_\_ White-crowned Sparrow
- \_\_\_ Dark-eyed Junco



**TANAGERS**

- \_\_\_ Summer Tanager
- \_\_\_ Scarlet Tanager



**CARDINALS & ALLIES**

- \_\_\_ Northern Cardinal
- \_\_\_ Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- \_\_\_ Blue Grosbeak
- \_\_\_ Indigo Bunting
- \_\_\_ Painted Bunting
- \_\_\_ Dickcissel

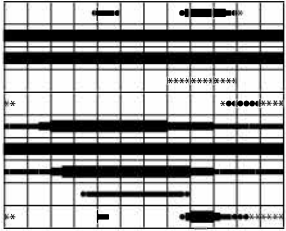


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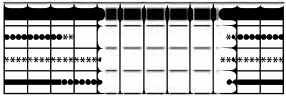
**BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES**

- \_\_\_ Bobolink
- \_\_\_ Red-winged Blackbird
- \_\_\_ Eastern Meadowlark
- \_\_\_ Yellow-headed Blackbird
- \_\_\_ Rusty Blackbird
- \_\_\_ Common Grackle
- \_\_\_ Boat-tailed Grackle
- \_\_\_ Brown-headed Cowbird
- \_\_\_ Orchard Oriole
- \_\_\_ Baltimore Oriole



**FINCHES**

- \_\_\_ House Finch
- \_\_\_ Purple Finch
- \_\_\_ Pine Siskin
- \_\_\_ American Goldfinch



**OLD WORLD SPARROWS**

- \_\_\_ House Sparrow



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**FIELD NOTES**

## VERY RARE / ACCIDENTAL SPECIES

Fulvous Whistling-Duck	Arctic Tern
Greater White-fronted Goose	"Cayenne Tern"
Cackling Goose	Great Skua
Cinnamon Teal	Common Murre
Garganey	Thick-billed Murre
Ring-necked Pheasant	Common Ground-Dove
Pacific Loon	Snowy Owl
Western Grebe	Burrowing Owl
Clark's Grebe	Long-eared Owl
Yellow-nosed Albatross	Antillean Nighthawk
Northern Fulmar	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Black-capped Petrel	Say's Phoebe
White-faced Storm-Petrel	Vermilion Flycatcher
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel	Ash-throated Flycatcher
White-tailed Tropicbird	Tropical Kingbird
Red-billed Tropicbird	Fork-tailed Flycatcher
Wood Stork	Loggerhead Shrike
Masked Booby	Northern Shrike
Brown Booby	White-breasted Nuthatch
Anhinga	Bewick's Wren
"Great White Heron"	Northern Wheatear
White-faced Ibis	Sage Thrasher
Roseate Spoonbill	Sprague's Pipit
Black Vulture	Louisiana Waterthrush
Northern Goshawk	Swainson's Warbler
Swainson's Hawk	Cerulean Warbler
Golden Eagle	Black-throated Gray Warbler
Purple Gallinule	Townsend's Warbler
Sandhill Crane	American Tree Sparrow
Snowy Plover	Lark Bunting
Spotted Redshank	LeConte's Sparrow
"Eurasian Whimbrel"	Harris's Sparrow
Black-tailed Godwit	Western Tanager
Bar-tailed Godwit	Western Meadowlark
Little Stint	Brewer's Blackbird
Sabine's Gull	Shiny Cowbird
Franklin's Gull	Red Crossbill
Common (Mew) Gull	White-winged Crossbill
Bridled Tern	Common Redpoll
White-winged Tern	Evening Grosbeak

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observers:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please report unusual sightings at the  
Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center  
or at the Hatteras Island Ranger Station.

***Compiled By:***

John Fussell, III  
2002

***Revised By:***

Ricky Davis  
March 2016

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Patricia J. Moore

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Eastern National &  
Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society

***Please Visit Our Websites At:***

**Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge**  
[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/pea\\_island/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/pea_island/)

**Cape Hatteras National Seashore**  
<http://www.nps.gov/caha>

