

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

St. Catherine Creek

National Wildlife Refuge
Bird List



photo: Bill Alexander



photos: Charman Cupit



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

St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge Introduction

Bounded by the Mississippi River and loess bluffs, the 25,000-acre St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge (SCC NWR) is uniquely located and provides essential habitats that support a wide variety and large number of birds. It lies within a National Audubon Society designated "Important Bird Area." Birds are drawn to the refuge as they follow the river and bluffs during migration or in search of desirable habitat. This provides special opportunities to bird watching enthusiasts.

Location

The refuge is in southwest Mississippi, located just south of Natchez. The Sibley Unit, which is the most developed and accessible refuge unit, is located off of U.S. Highway 61 about 12 miles south of Natchez. To get there, turn right onto York Road for 2 miles to the refuge entrance on Pintail Lane.

The Refuge

SCC NWR was established in 1990 to provide habitat for waterfowl and protect the dynamic floodplain ecosystem of the Mississippi River. The refuge is bordered for about 18 miles by the Mississippi River to



photos: Charman Cupit



the west and the loess bluffs to the east. Important bird habitats found on the refuge include bottomland hardwoods, upland pine-hardwoods, early successional wetlands, cypress-tupelo swamps, lakes and ponds, willow-cottonwood forests, and agriculture fields.

Annual flooding from the Mississippi River backwater creates unique and desirable habitat for large numbers of birds, especially waterbirds. These same high-water events often limit access to portions of the refuge, mostly during late winter and spring.

Regional Significance

The refuge is in the Lower Mississippi River Valley and the Mississippi Flyway. The predominant feature of these geographic designations is the Mississippi River, which is the dominant watershed in North America, draining 41% of the continental United States. It is the third largest and longest watershed in the world. The Mississippi River and its tributaries are used as a bird migration corridor, or flyway, by 60% of all bird species in the United States.

SCC NWR is uniquely located in the lower third of this funnel-shaped flyway. The river and loess bluffs

that border the refuge are thought to serve as navigational aids during migration. This coupled with a diversity of desirable habitats and annual backwater flooding, make SCC NWR an important area for waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and neo-tropical songbirds.

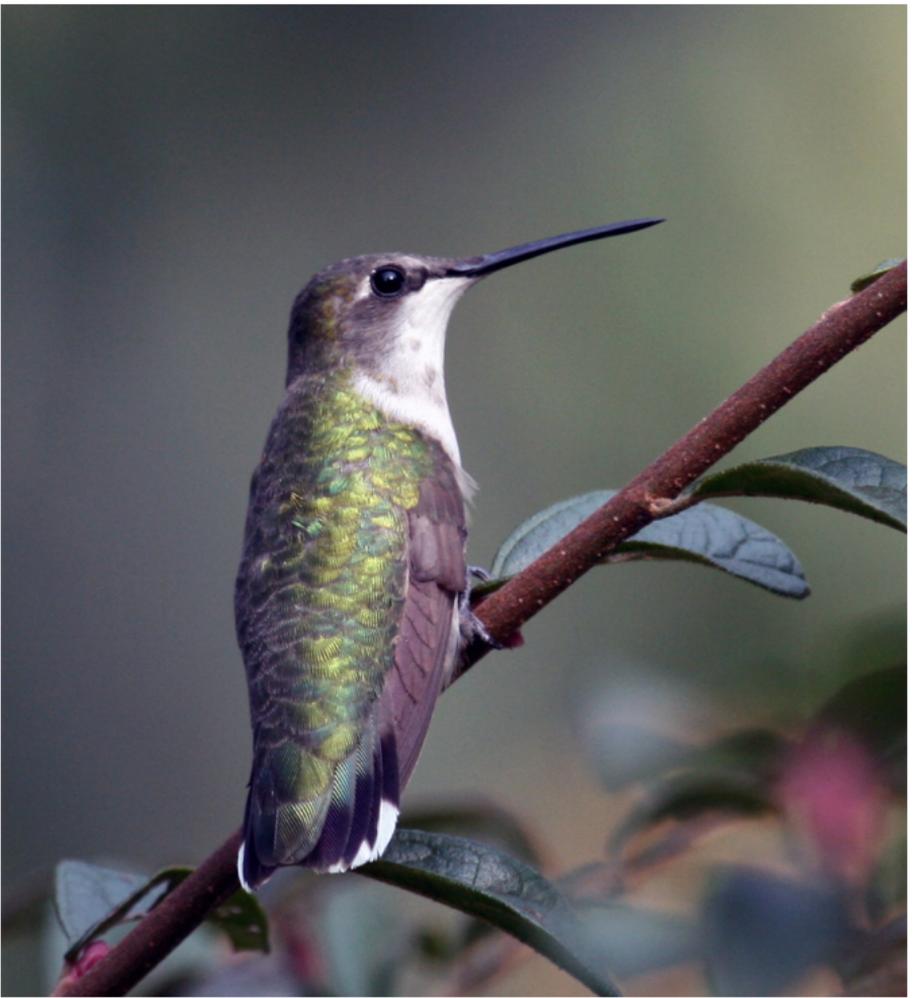
Birding “Hotspots”

Each suite of birds has adapted to use a particular habitat where they are most abundant. Popular birding locations are:

Magnolia National Recreation Trail is a 4.5-mile trail that winds through a variety of habitats on the refuge and is frequently used to watch forest-breeding birds and wetland-dependent birds throughout the year. A short, well-marked section of trail is closed during hunting season. Marked trailheads are located at the north and south end of the trail, off of Pintail Lane.

Sibley Impoundments provide easily accessible, excellent viewing opportunities for waterbirds including waterfowl, shorebirds, and long-legged waders. There are two elevated observation points from which to observe birds. The area is walk-in only, except for November 15 through March 31, when visitors are restricted to the edges of these impoundments to minimize disturbance to waterfowl. This area is closed to hunting. Access to the Sibley Impoundments can be restricted by high water from the Mississippi River during winter and spring.

The Swamp is a cypress-dominated, forested area adjacent to Swamp Road on the northeast end of the Sibley Impoundments. It is easily accessible and provides year around habitat for a variety of birds. It serves as a roost for wading birds in the



warmer months and for waterfowl in fall and winter. It is not uncommon to see a Bald Eagle perched in one of the cypress trees or an alligator sunning on one of the mud banks. The area is closed to hunting. Access can be restricted by high water from the Mississippi River during winter and spring.

Cabin Road Trail skirts the base of the loess bluffs, providing bird watchers the opportunity to view resident and migrating forest-breeding birds. The area is **open** to hunting. Access can be restricted by high water from the Mississippi River during winter and spring.

Gilliard Lake is dominated by centuries-old cypress and supports a large rookery for wading birds and a Bald Eagle nest. Visitors are warned not to disturb either site. The lake is accessible primarily by boat and is

open to hunting. Access from Pintail Lane can be restricted by high water from the Mississippi River during winter and spring.

Butler Lake is a large open lake ringed by cypress and shrub habitat. During winter, large numbers of ducks will raft in the middle, and wading birds frequent the edges throughout the rest of the year. The lake is accessible primarily by boat and is **open** to hunting. Access from Butler Lake Road can be restricted by high water from the Mississippi River during winter and spring.

The List

St. Catherine Creek NWR “Bird List” is a comprehensive list of (247) bird species that have been observed on the refuge by experienced birders, as well as, information taken from electronic databases and historical records. This list is in accordance with the order and recommendations of the current American Ornithological Union (AOU) Checklist and is designed to be informative and simple to use.

Seasons

The seasons bring about marked changes in both species and abundance of birdlife. Best opportunities for observing the greatest diversity and abundance of birds are during the fall and spring migration. Waterfowl are most common on the refuge from mid-November through February. Neotropical songbirds are most frequently observed during spring and summer. Shorebirds can be observed in the spring, depending on waterlevels from the Mississippi River, but are most common during late summer and early fall.

Sp Spring (March-May)

S Summer (June-August)

F Fall (September-November)

W Winter (December-February)

Abundance

(5) **Abundant**- a common species found in large numbers

(4) **Common**- almost certain to be seen or heard in appropriate habitat

(3) **Uncommon**- present, but not certain to be seen

(2) **Occasional**- seen only a few times during a season

(1) **Rare**- not seen annually, but may occur in some years

(x) **Accidental**- Not expected and out of normal range.

(*) Indicates that a species is known or suspected to nest on the refuge

Some species of birds such as the secretive marsh birds, like the bitterns and rails, can be difficult to observe due to their color, habitat, or secretive nature. Abundance, in this checklist, reflects the number of individuals in an area, increasing the likelihood of observing a species. It does not take into consideration the difficulty in observing a particular species.

Ethics for Birdwatching

In order to minimize disturbance to birds and their habitats please adhere to the following:

Birders must always act in ways that do not endanger the welfare of birds and other wildlife.

The use of any type of electronic equipment to call or attract rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife is not allowed.

Take care not to disturb nesting birds. Birds may abandon their nests if disturbed.

It is also important not to disturb wintering waterbirds as this time is a critical feeding and resting period for long-distance migrations.

In close proximity, limit the use of artificial light during photography.

Use existing roads, trails, and paths whenever possible.

Inform only refuge staff of nesting locations of rare species.

Practice “Leave No Trace” principles.

Please assist the refuge in updating the list by reporting sightings of new species and birding information to saintcatherinecreek@fws.gov or by calling 601/442 6696.

Enjoy your visit!



Species (Common Name)	Sp	S	F	W
Grebes				
___ Pied-billed Grebe*	4	3	3	3
___ Horned Grebe	1	-	-	1
___ Eared Grebe	1	-	-	1
Storks				
___ Wood Stork	-	5	4	-
Pelicans and Allies				
___ American White Pelican	2	1	2	3
___ Neotropic Cormorant*	-	4	2	-
___ Double-crested Cormorant*	5	3	5	5
___ Anhinga*	4	4	4	3
Bitterns and Herons				
___ American Bittern	1	1	2	-
___ Least Bittern	1	1	1	-
___ Great Blue Heron*	4	4	4	4
___ Great Egret*	5	5	5	4
___ Snowy Egret*	3	5	5	1
___ Little Blue Heron*	4	4	4	1
___ Tricolored Heron	-	3	3	-
___ Cattle Egret*	3	4	4	1
___ Green Heron*	3	3	3	1
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron*	2	4	3	-
___ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron*	4	4	3	-
Ibises				
___ White Ibis*	5	5	5	3
___ Glossy Ibis	-	4	3	-
___ White-faced Ibis	-	3	3	-
Spoonbill				
___ Roseate Spoonbill	-	5	3	-
Vultures				
___ Black Vulture*	5	5	5	5
___ Turkey Vulture*	5	5	5	5
Waterfowl				
___ Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	3	3	3	-
___ Greater White-fronted Goose	2	-	-	2
___ Snow Goose	2	-	-	2
___ Ross' Goose	-	-	-	2
___ Canada Goose	3	5	4	3
___ Wood Duck*	5	4	5	5
___ Gadwall	4	-	4	5
___ American Wigeon	3	-	4	4
___ American Black Duck	-	-	-	1
___ Mallard	4	2	5	5
___ Blue-winged Teal	5	-	5	2
___ Northern Shoveler	4	-	5	5

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Northern Pintail	3	-	4	5
___ Green-winged Teal	4	-	5	5
___ Canvasback	3	-	-	3
___ Redhead	-	-	-	1
___ Mottled Duck	-	2	2	-
___ Ring-necked Duck	4	-	4	4
___ Greater Scaup	-	-	-	x
___ Lesser Scaup	1	-	-	3
___ Bufflehead	2	-	-	3
___ Common Goldeneye	1	-	-	2
___ Hooded Merganser*	4	2	4	4
___ Common Merganser	-	-	-	x
___ Ruddy Duck	3	-	-	3
Hawks, Kites, and Allies				
___ Osprey	3	2	2	3
___ Mississippi Kite	3	4	-	-
___ Swallow-tail Kite	-	1	1	-
___ Bald Eagle*	3	2	3	4
___ Northern Harrier	3	-	3	4
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	-	3	2
___ Cooper's Hawk*	3	3	3	3
___ Red-shouldered Hawk*	4	4	4	4
___ Broad-winged Hawk*	2	1	3	1
___ Red-tailed Hawk*	3	3	3	4
___ Golden Eagle	x	-	-	1
___ American Kestrel	4	2	4	4
___ Merlin	2	-	2	1
___ Peregrine Falcon	1		2	1
Turkey and Quail				
___ Wild Turkey*	4	3	3	3
___ Northern Bobwhite*	2	1	1	2
Rails and Coots				
___ King Rail	1	1	1	1
___ Virginia Rail	1	-	2	-
___ Sora	1	-	2	-
___ Purple Gallinule	-	2	-	-
___ Common Moorhen	4	4	3	3
___ American Coot	5	2	4	5
Plovers				
___ Black-bellied Plover	2	-	2	-
___ American Golden Plover	-	-	2	-
___ Snowy Plover	1	-	1	-
___ Semipalmated Plover	2	1	3	-
___ Piping Plover	-	-	1	-
___ Killdeer*	4	4	4	4
Stilts and Avocets				
___ Black-necked Stilt	2	5	4	-
___ American Avocet	1	-	2	-

	Sp	S	F	W
Sandpipers and Allies				
___ Greater Yellowlegs	2	2	4	4
___ Lesser Yellowlegs	2	5	5	4
___ Solitary Sandpiper	2	1	3	-
___ Willet	1	-	2	-
___ Spotted Sandpiper	3	1	4	1
___ Semipalmated Sandpiper	3	1	5	-
___ Western Sandpiper	2	1	3	-
___ Least Sandpiper	2	-	5	1
___ Baird's Sandpiper	1	-	2	-
___ Pectoral Sandpiper	2	-	3	-
___ Dunlin	1	-	3	1
___ Stilt Sandpiper	2	-	3	-
___ Buff-breasted Sandpiper	-	-	1	-
___ Short-billed Dowitcher	2	-	3	-
___ Long-billed Dowitcher	2	-	4	1
___ Wilson's Snipe	2	-	3	4
___ American Woodcock*	2		1	3
___ Wilson's Phalarope	-	-	2	-
Gulls and Terns				
___ Bonaparte's Gull	3	-	-	2
___ Ring-billed Gull	3	1	2	3
___ Herring Gull	3	-	2	-
___ Caspian Tern	3	1	1	2
___ Forster's Tern	3	2	2	3
___ Least Tern*	-	2	2	-
___ Black Tern	-	3	2	-
Pigeons and Doves				
___ Rock Pigeon*	3	3	3	3
___ Eurasian Collared-Dove*	3	3	3	3
___ Mourning Dove*	4	3	4	3
___ Inca Dove	-	-	1	1
___ Common Ground Dove	1	-	1	1
Cuckoos				
___ Black-billed Cuckoo	1	-	1	-
___ Yellow-billed Cuckoo*	4	4	3	-
Owls				
___ Barn Owl	2	2	2	2
___ Eastern Screech-Owl*	3	3	3	3
___ Great Horned Owl*	3	3	3	3
___ Barred Owl*	4	4	4	4
Nightjars				
___ Common Nighthawk*	2	2	-	-
___ Chuck-will's-widow*	1	3	3	-
___ Whip-poor-will	1	-	1	-
Swifts				
___ Chimney Swift*	3	3	3	-

	Sp	S	F	W
Hummingbirds				
___ Ruby-throated Hummingbird*	4	4	3	-
___ Rufous Hummingbird	-	-	-	x
Kingfishers				
___ Belted Kingfisher	3	3	3	3
Woodpeckers				
___ Red-headed Woodpecker*	3	3	3	3
___ Red-bellied Woodpecker*	3	2	2	3
___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3	-	4	4
___ Downy Woodpecker*	4	4	4	4
___ Hairy Woodpecker*	2	2	2	2
___ Northern Flicker*	3	2	3	4
___ Pileated Woodpecker*	3	3	3	3
Flycatchers				
___ Eastern Wood-Pewee*	4	4	4	-
___ Acadian Flycatcher*	4	4	4	-
___ Alder Flycatcher	-	-	1	-
___ Eastern Phoebe	3	-	4	4
___ Great Crested Flycatcher*	4	4	2	-
___ Eastern Kingbird*	3	4	4	-
___ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	x	-	x	-
Shrikes				
___ Loggerhead Shrike*	2	3	2	3
Vireos				
___ White-eyed Vireo*	4	4	4	1
___ Blue-headed Vireo	2	-	2	2
___ Yellow-throated Vireo*	3	3	3	-
___ Warbling Vireo	1	1	1	-
___ Red-eyed Vireo*	4	4	4	-
Jays and Crows				
___ Blue Jay*	4	4	4	4
___ American Crow*	5	5	5	5
___ Fish Crow*	4	4	4	4
Larks				
___ Horned Lark	2	-	-	2
Swallows				
___ Purple Martin*	3	3	2	-
___ Tree Swallow	3	1	5	2
___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow*	3	3	5	-
___ Bank Swallow	3	1	2	-
___ Cliff Swallow*	3	3	3	-
___ Barn Swallow*	5	5	5	4

	Sp	S	F	W
Chickadees and Titmice				
___ Carolina Chickadee*	4	4	4	4
___ Tufted Titmouse*	4	4	4	4
Nuthatches and Creepers				
___ White-breasted Nuthatch	1	1	1	2
___ Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	1	-	1
___ Brown Creeper	1	-	1	3
Wrens				
___ Carolina Wren*	4	4	4	4
___ Bewick's Wren	-	-	-	1
___ House Wren	3	-	4	4
___ Winter Wren	2	-	2	3
___ Sedge Wren	-	-	-	2
___ Marsh Wren	2	-	-	2
Kinglets and Gnatcatchers				
___ Golden-crowned Kinglet	3	-	-	3
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4	-	4	4
___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*	4	4	3	1
Thrushes				
___ Eastern Bluebird*	3	4	3	3
___ Veery	2	-	1	-
___ Gray-cheeked Thrush	3	-	1	-
___ Swainson's Thrush	3	-	3	-
___ Hermit Thrush	2	-	1	3
___ Wood Thrush*	4	4	3	-
___ American Robin*	4	1	1	5
Mimic Thrashers				
___ Gray Catbird*	3	1	4	1
___ Northern Mockingbird*	4	4	4	4
___ Brown Thrasher*	2	2	4	4
Starlings				
___ European Starling*	3	3	3	3
Pipits				
___ American Pipit	1	-	1	2
___ Sprague's Pipit	-	-	-	1
Waxwings				
___ Cedar Waxwing	4	-	3	4
Warblers				
___ Blue-winged Warbler	2	-	1	-
___ Tennessee Warbler*	4	4	3	-
___ Orange-crowned Warbler	3	-	2	3
___ Nashville Warbler	1	-	1	-
___ Northern Parula*	4	4	3	-
___ Yellow Warbler	3	-	4	-

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Chestnut-sided Warbler	2	-	2	-
___ Magnolia Warbler	2	-	2	-
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	4	-	4	5
___ Black-throated Green Warbler	1	-	1	-
___ Blackburnian Warbler	2	-	1	-
___ Yellow-throated Warbler*	2	3	2	-
___ Pine Warbler*	3	2	4	4
___ Prairie Warbler	2	1	2	-
___ Palm Warbler	1	-	1	2
___ Bay-breasted Warbler	2	-	-	-
___ Cerulean Warbler	1	-	1	-
___ Black-and-white Warbler*	2	2	2	-
___ American Redstart*	2	2	4	-
___ Prothonotary Warbler*	4	4	4	-
___ Worm-eating Warbler*	3	2	1	-
___ Swainson's Warbler*	2	2	1	-
___ Ovenbird	2	-	1	-
___ Northern Waterthrush	1	-	2	-
___ Louisiana Waterthrush*	1	1	1	-
___ Kentucky Warbler*	3	4	2	-
___ Common Yellowthroat*	4	4	4	1
___ Hooded Warbler*	4	4	4	-
___ Yellow-breasted Chat*	4	4	4	-

Tanagers

___ Summer Tanager*	4	4	3	-
___ Scarlet Tanager	1	-	1	-

Sparrows and Allies

___ Eastern Towhee*	4	4	4	4
___ Chipping Sparrow*	3	2	3	4
___ Field Sparrow*	2	2	2	2
___ Vesper Sparrow	2	-	-	1
___ Savannah Sparrow	3	-	2	5
___ Grasshopper Sparrow	-	-	-	x
___ Henslow's Sparrow	-	-	-	x
___ Fox Sparrow	2	-	2	2
___ Song Sparrow	4	-	3	4
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	-	1
___ Swamp Sparrow	4	-	4	4
___ White-throated Sparrow	4	-	4	5
___ White-crowned Sparrow	3	-	3	3
___ Lapland Longspur	-	-	-	x
___ Dark-eyed Junco	2	-	1	4

Cardinals and Grosbeaks

___ Northern Cardinal*	4	4	4	4
___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2	-	2	-
___ Blue Grosbeak*	3	3	2	-
___ Indigo Bunting*	3	4	4	-
___ Painted Bunting*	1	3	2	-
___ Dickcissel*	1	4	1	-



Blackbirds and Allies

___ Bobolink	2	-	1	-
___ Red-winged Blackbird*	5	5	5	5
___ Eastern Meadowlark*	3	2	3	4
___ Western Meadowlark	1	-	-	2
___ Rusty Blackbird	1	-	1	2
___ Brewer's Blackbird	1	-	-	1
___ Common Grackle*	4	4	4	4
___ Brown-headed Cowbird*	4	4	4	4
___ Orchard Oriole*	4	4	3	-
___ Baltimore Oriole*	3	2	3	-

Finches and Allies

___ Purple Finch	1	-	-	2
___ House Finch*	2	1	1	2
___ Pine Siskin	1	-	1	2
___ American Goldfinch	2	-	2	4
___ House Sparrow*	2	2	2	2

Sighting Notes

Date _____

Time _____

Weather _____

No. of Species _____

Route or Area _____

Observers _____

Remarks _____

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here.

map goes

**St. Catherine Creek
National Wildlife Refuge
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www.fws.gov/saintcatherinecreek**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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