

Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Refuge Headquarters Road
Decatur, AL 35603
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Visitor Center: 256/350 6639
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov/>

June 2025



Wheeler

National Wildlife Refuge

Bird List



Birds of Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge

Wheeler NWR, located along the Tennessee River in Alabama, is one of 588 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. It was established in 1938 as a wintering area for migratory birds and continues that role today. It's 35,000 acres provides a great diversity of habitats including forested wetlands, upland hardwoods, tributaries, swamps, impoundments, embayments, pine uplands, and agricultural fields. This diversity provides for an amazing variety of birdlife and makes the refuge fertile grounds for enjoying the great activity of bird watching.

How to use your checklist

The checklist is designed to be informative and simple to use. It is arranged in the order established by the American Ornithologists' Union. Symbols which appear in this checklist represent the following:

Seasonal Appearance

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

Seasonal Abundance

a - ABUNDANT: Present in moderate to large numbers and easily found in suitable habitat at the right time of year.

c - COMMON: Present in small to moderate numbers and usually found in suitable habitat at the right time of year.

u - UNCOMMON: Present in small numbers and sometimes but not always found with some effort in suitable habitat at the right time of year.

o - OCCASIONAL: Occurs annually in very small numbers. Not to be expected on any given day, but might be found with extended effort over the course of the appropriate season(s).

r - RARE: Occurs less than annually, but there tends to be a pattern over time at the right time of year in suitable habitat; 4 or more records in last 10 years.

x - ACCIDENTAL: An exceptional occurrence that might not be repeated for years; 3 or fewer records in last 10 years.

***** - nests on the refuge

I - Introduced species

This checklist includes 312 species of birds and is based on observations by refuge personnel, visiting ornithologists, and birders. If you should find a species not on this list, please notify refuge personnel at either Refuge Headquarters or Visitor Center. We appreciate your help in updating our records.



To report unusual sightings or for further information, contact:

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2700 Refuge Headquarters Road
Decatur, Alabama 35603
Telephone: 256-353-7243

Wheeler NWR Visitor Center
Telephone: 256-350-6639

Email: wheeler@fws.gov
Website: <http://wheeler.fws.gov>

Common Name	Sp	S	F	W
WATERFOWL				
___Black-bellied Whistling-Duck*	r	r	r	r
___Fulvous Whistling-Duck	-	-	-	x
___Snow Goose	u	-	c	c
___Ross's Goose	o	-	o	u
___Greater White-fronted Goose	c	-	c	c
___Brant	-	-	x	x
___Barnacle Goose	-	-	x	x
___Cackling Goose	-	-	-	r
___Canada Goose*	c	u	c	c
___Mute Swan (I)	-	x	x	-
___Tundra Swan	r	-	r	r
___Wood Duck*	a	c	a	a
___Blue-winged Teal*	c	o	c	o
___Cinnamon Teal	x	-	-	-
___Northern Shoveler	c	o	c	a
___Gadwall	c	o	c	a
___Eurasian Wigeon	-	-	x	r
___American Wigeon	c	-	a	a
___Mallard*	c	c	a	a
___American Black Duck*	c	o	c	c
___Northern Pintail	u	o	c	a
___Green-winged Teal	c	-	c	a
___Canvasback	u	-	u	c
___Redhead	u	-	u	u
___Ring-necked Duck	c	-	c	a
___Greater Scaup	o	-	o	u
___Lesser Scaup	c	-	c	a
___Harlequin Duck	-	-	-	x
___Surf Scoter	-	-	x	x
___White-winged Scoter	r	-	r	r
___Black Scoter	-	-	-	r
___Long-tailed Duck	r	-	r	r
___Bufflehead	c	-	c	a
___Common Goldeneye	u	-	u	c
___Hooded Merganser*	c	u	c	a
___Common Merganser	r	-	r	r
___Red-breasted Merganser	o	-	o	u
___Ruddy Duck	u	-	u	c
GALLINACEOUS BIRDS				
___Northern Bobwhite*	u	u	u	u
___Wild Turkey*	o	o	o	o
___Ring-necked Pheasant (I)	-	-	r	r
PIGEONS AND DOVES				
___Rock Pigeon*(I)	a	a	a	a
___Eurasian Collared-Dove*(I)	c	c	c	c
___Common Ground Dove	x	x	x	x
___Mourning Dove*	a	a	a	a

Common Name	Sp	S	F	W
CUCKOOS				
___Yellow-billed Cuckoo*	c	c	c	-
___Black-billed Cuckoo	u	-	u	-
NIGHTJARS				
___Common Nighthawk*	c	c	c	-
___Chuck-will's-widow*	c	c	u	-
___Eastern Whip-poor-will	u	-	u	-
SWIFTS				
___Chimney Swift*	c	c	a	-
HUMMINGBIRDS				
___Ruby-throated Hummingbird*	c	c	a	-
RAILS, GALLINULES AND ALLIES				
___King Rail	r	x	r	x
___Virginia Rail	u	-	u	r
___Sora	c	-	c	r
___Common Gallinule*	c	c	c	-
___American Coot*	a	u	a	a
___Purple Gallinule	x	x	-	-
___Yellow Rail	x	-	x	-
LIMPKIN				
___Limpkin	-	-	x	x
CRANES				
___Sandhill Crane	c	-	a	a
___Whooping Crane	u	-	u	c
SHOREBIRDS				
___Black-necked Stilt	x	-	x	-
___American Avocet	r	r	o	r
___Black-bellied Plover	u	o	u	-
___American Golden-Plover	u	o	u	-
___Killdeer*	a	c	a	a
___Semipalmated Plover	u	u	c	-
___Piping Plover	x	-	r	-
___Upland Sandpiper	o	-	o	-
___Whimbrel	x	-	o	-
___Hudsonian Godwit	x	-	x	-
___Marbled Godwit	o	-	o	-
___Ruddy Turnstone	o	r	o	-
___Red Knot	-	-	x	-
___Ruff	-	-	x	-
___Stilt Sandpiper	u	u	u	-
___Sanderling	r	r	u	-
___Dunlin	c	o	c	u
___Baird's Sandpiper	r	r	r	-
___Least Sandpiper	c	u	c	c
___White-rumped Sandpiper	u	r	o	-

Common Name	Sp	S	F	W
___Buff-breasted Sandpiper	r	o	u	-
___Pectoral Sandpiper	c	r	c	x
___Semipalmated Sandpiper	c	u	c	-
___Western Sandpiper	c	u	c	r
___Short-billed Dowitcher	u	o	c	x
___Long-billed Dowitcher	u	o	u	r
___American Woodcock*	u	u	u	u
___Wilson's Snipe	c	r	c	c
___Spotted Sandpiper*	c	o	c	o
___Solitary Sandpiper	c	r	c	-
___Lesser Yellowlegs	c	u	c	u
___Willet	r	-	r	-
___Greater Yellowlegs	c	u	c	u
___Wilson's Phalarope	r	r	u	-
___Red-necked Phalarope	x	-	x	-
___Red Phalarope	x	-	x	-
JAEGERS				
___Pomarine Jaeger	-	-	-	x
GULLS AND TERNS				
___Sabine's Gull	-	-	x	-
___Bonaparte's Gull	c	-	u	c
___Laughing Gull	r	r	r	r
___Franklin's Gull	r	r	r	x
___Ring-billed Gull	c	u	c	a
___American Herring Gull	u	r	u	c
___Lesser Black-backed Gull	-	-	-	x
___Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	x
___Great Black-backed Gull	-	-	x	x
___Least Tern	o	r	r	-
___Caspian Tern	u	r	u	r
___Black Tern	u	o	u	-
___Common Tern	u	-	u	-
___Forster's Tern	c	r	c	c
GREBES				
___Pied-billed Grebe*	c	u	c	c
___Horned Grebe	u	-	u	c
___Red-necked Grebe	x	-	-	x
___Eared Grebe	x	-	-	x
___Western Grebe	-	-	-	x
LOONS				
___Red-throated Loon	x	-	-	x
___Pacific Loon	-	-	-	x
___Common Loon	u	x	u	c
STORKS				
___Wood Stork	x	r	x	-
ANHINGA				
___Anhinga	r	r	r	r

Common Name	Sp	S	F	W
CORMORANTS				
___Double-crested Cormorant	c	u	c	c
HERONS AND EGRETS				
___Least Bittern*	o	r	o	-
___American Bittern	u	-	u	x
___Little Blue Heron	o	u	u	x
___Tricolored Heron	r	r	r	-
___Snowy Egret	r	r	r	x
___Yellow-crowned Night-Heron*	u	c	u	-
___Black-crowned Night-Heron	u	u	u	u
___Green Heron*	c	c	c	x
___Great Egret*	c	c	a	a
___Western Cattle Egret	c	c	u	u
___Great Blue Heron*	c	c	a	a
IBISES AND SPOONBILLS				
___White Ibis	r	u	u	-
___Glossy Ibis	r	-	r	x
___White-faced Ibis	r	-	-	-
___Roseate Spoonbill	-	x	x	-
PELICANS				
___American White Pelican	c	r	c	c
___Brown Pelican	-	-	-	x
VULTURES, HAWKS AND ALLIES				
___Black Vulture*	u	u	u	u
___Turkey Vulture*	c	u	c	c
___Osprey*	c	c	u	o
___Swallow-tailed Kite	-	-	-	x
___Golden Eagle	-	-	r	r
___Northern Harrier	u	-	c	c
___Sharp-shinned Hawk*	u	o	c	u
___Cooper's Hawk*	u	u	c	u
___Bald Eagle*	u	u	u	c
___Mississippi Kite	r	r	r	-
___Red-shouldered Hawk*	c	u	c	c
___Broad-winged Hawk*	c	u	c	-
___Swainson's Hawk	-	-	-	x
___Red-tailed Hawk*	c	u	c	a
___Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	r	r
OWLS				
___American Barn Owl*	r	r	r	r
___Eastern Screech-Owl*	c	c	c	c
___Great Horned Owl*	c	u	c	c
___Barred Owl*	c	u	u	c
___Short-eared Owl	r	-	r	r
___Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	-	x	x

Common Name	Sp	S	F	W
KINGFISHERS				
___Belted Kingfisher*	c	u	c	c
WOODPECKERS				
___Red-headed Woodpecker*	c	u	c	u
___Red-bellied Woodpecker*	c	c	a	a
___Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	u	-	c	c
___Downy Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
___Hairy Woodpecker*	u	u	u	c
___Northern Flicker*	c	c	c	c
___Pileated Woodpecker*	c	u	c	c
FALCONS				
___American Kestrel*	c	u	c	c
___Merlin	o	-	u	o
___Peregrine Falcon	o	-	u	o
FLYCATCHERS				
___Great Crested Flycatcher*	c	c	u	-
___Eastern Kingbird*	c	c	c	-
___Scissor-tailed Flycatcher*	u	o	u	-
___Olive-sided Flycatcher	r	-	u	-
___Eastern Wood-Pewee*	c	c	c	-
___Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	o	-	u	-
___Acadian Flycatcher*	c	c	c	-
___Alder Flycatcher	o	-	o	-
___Willow Flycatcher*	o	r	o	-
___Least Flycatcher	o	-	o	-
___Eastern Phoebe*	c	c	c	c
___Vermilion Flycatcher	x	-	-	x
VIREOS				
___White-eyed Vireo*	c	c	c	x
___Yellow-throated Vireo*	c	u	c	-
___Blue-headed Vireo	u	-	u	u
___Philadelphia Vireo	u	-	u	-
___Warbling Vireo	r	-	r	-
___Red-eyed Vireo*	c	c	c	-
SHRIKES				
___Loggerhead Shrike*	u	u	u	u
JAYS AND CROWS				
___Blue Jay*	c	c	c	c
___American Crow*	c	c	c	c
___Fish Crow*	o	o	o	u
CHICKADEES AND TITMICE				
___Carolina Chickadee*	c	c	c	c
___Tufted Titmouse*	c	c	c	c
LARKS				
___Horned Lark*	c	c	c	a

Common Name	Sp	S	F	W
SWALLOWS				
___Bank Swallow	c	o	c	-
___Tree Swallow*	c	u	c	o
___Northern Rough-winged Swallow*	c	c	c	r
___Purple Martin*	c	c	u	-
___Barn Swallow*	c	c	c	r
___Cliff Swallow*	c	c	c	-
KINGLETS				
___Ruby-crowned Kinglet	c	-	c	c
___Golden-crowned Kinglet	u	-	c	c
WAXWINGS				
___Cedar Waxwing*	c	o	c	a
NUTHATCHES				
___Red-breasted Nuthatch	u	-	u	o
___White-breasted Nuthatch*	c	c	c	c
___Brown-headed Nuthatch*	u	u	u	u
TREECREEPERS				
___Brown Creeper	u	-	u	c
GNATCATCHERS				
___Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*	c	c	c	o
WRENS				
___Carolina Wren*	c	c	a	c
___Bewick's Wren	x	x	x	x
___Northern House Wren	u	o	u	o
___Winter Wren	u	-	u	c
___Sedge Wren	u	-	u	r
___Marsh Wren	u	-	u	o
STARLING				
___European Starling*(I)	a	a	a	a
MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS				
___Gray Catbird*	c	c	c	o
___Brown Thrasher*	c	c	c	c
___Northern Mockingbird*	c	c	a	c
THRUSHES				
___Eastern Bluebird*	c	c	c	c
___Veery	u	-	u	-
___Gray-cheeked Thrush	u	-	u	-
___Swainson's Thrush	c	-	c	-
___Hermit Thrush	u	-	u	c
___Wood Thrush*	c	c	c	-
___American Robin*	a	c	c	a
OLD WORLD SPARROWS				
___House Sparrow*(I)	c	c	c	c

Common Name	Sp	S	F	W
PIPITS				
___American Pipit	u	-	c	c
FINCHES				
___Evening Grosbeak	r	-	r	r
___House Finch*(I)	a	a	a	a
___Purple Finch	u	-	u	u
___Red Crossbill	-	-	-	x
___Pine Siskin	u	-	u	u
___American Goldfinch*	c	u	c	c
LONGSPURS				
___Lapland Longspur	u	-	u	c
SPARROWS				
___Bachman's Sparrow	r	r	-	-
___Grasshopper Sparrow*	u	u	u	x
___Lark Sparrow*	u	u	u	x
___Chipping Sparrow*	c	u	c	c
___Field Sparrow*	c	c	c	a
___Fox Sparrow	u	-	u	c
___American Tree Sparrow	-	-	-	x
___Dark-eyed Junco	c	-	c	c
___White-crowned Sparrow	u	-	c	c
___White-throated Sparrow	a	-	a	a
___Vesper Sparrow	u	-	u	u
___LeConte's Sparrow	-	-	r	r
___Nelson's Sparrow	x	-	-	-
___Henslow's Sparrow	r	-	r	x
___Savannah Sparrow	c	-	c	c
___Song Sparrow*	c	u	c	a
___Lincoln's Sparrow	u	-	u	o
___Swamp Sparrow	c	-	c	a
___Eastern Towhee*	c	c	c	c
CHATS				
___Yellow-breasted Chat*	c	c	c	-
BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES AND ALLIES				
___Yellow-headed Blackbird	x	-	x	x
___Bobolink	c	-	u	-
___Eastern Meadowlark	c	c	c	c
___Western Meadowlark	-	-	x	x
___Orchard Oriole	c	c	u	-
___Baltimore Oriole	u	u	u	x
___Red-winged Blackbird	c	c	a	a
___Brown-headed Cowbird	c	c	a	a
___Rusty Blackbird	u	-	u	c
___Brewer's Blackbird	u	-	u	u
___Common Grackle	c	c	a	a

Common Name	Sp	S	F	W
WARBLERS				
___Ovenbird*	c	u	c	-
___Worm-eating Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___Louisiana Waterthrush*	u	o	u	-
___Northern Waterthrush	c	-	c	x
___Golden-winged Warbler	u	-	u	-
___Blue-winged Warbler	u	r	c	-
___Brewster's Warbler (Hybrid)	-	-	x	-
___Lawrence's Warbler (Hybrid)	-	-	x	-
___Black-and-white Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___Prothonotary Warbler*	c	c	c	-
___Swainson's Warbler*	u	u	r	-
___Tennessee Warbler	c	-	a	-
___Orange-crowned Warbler	c	-	c	u
___Nashville Warbler	u	-	u	-
___Connecticut Warbler	r	-	r	-
___Mourning Warbler	r	-	r	-
___Kentucky Warbler*	c	c	c	-
___Common Yellowthroat*	a	c	c	u
___Hooded Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___American Redstart*	c	u	c	-
___Cape May Warbler	u	-	u	-
___Cerulean Warbler	u	o	u	-
___Northern Parula*	c	u	c	-
___Magnolia Warbler	c	-	a	-
___Bay-breasted Warbler	u	-	u	-
___Blackburnian Warbler	u	-	u	-
___Yellow Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___Chestnut-sided Warbler	u	-	c	-
___Blackpoll Warbler	c	-	x	-
___Black-throated Blue Warbler	r	-	r	-
___Palm Warbler	c	-	c	u
___Pine Warbler*	c	c	c	c
___Yellow-rumped Warbler	a	-	a	a
___Yellow-throated Warbler*	c	u	c	-
___Prairie Warbler*	u	c	-	-
___Black-throated Green Warbler	c	-	c	-
___Canada Warbler	u	-	u	-
___Wilson's Warbler	o	-	u	-
TANAGERS				
___Summer Tanager*	c	c	c	-
___Scarlet Tanager*	c	u	c	-
GROSBEAKS				
___Northern Cardinal*	a	a	a	a
___Rose-breasted Grosbeak	c	-	c	-
___Blue Grosbeak*	c	c	c	-
___Indigo Bunting*	a	c	a	x
___Dickcissel*	c	c	c	x