

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

San Luis

National Wildlife Refuge Complex

*San Luis, Merced,
San Joaquin River*

Birds





The San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex includes three refuges totaling approximately 44,000 acres. The Complex encompasses the major habitats found in California's San Joaquin Valley –

freshwater wetlands, native grasslands, riparian forests, and croplands – attracting a tremendous diversity and abundance of birds and other wildlife.

Introduction

Each of the Complex's three refuges plays a unique and critical role in providing seasonal homes for migratory birds and other native wildlife. These three Central Valley refuges include the San Luis NWR and Merced NWR located in Merced County, and the San Joaquin River NWR situated in Stanislaus County. Almost three hundred species of birds, representative of the bird life of the Central Valley, have been documented at the Complex.

San Luis NWR

The San Luis National Wildlife Refuge is home to large concentrations of wintering ducks, geese, and swans. Neotropical migrants and grassland songbirds are also abundant – all are easily viewed from the Refuge's three auto tour routes which are open year-round. The San Luis NWR is also home to a herd of Tule Elk.

Merced NWR

The largest wintering concentrations of Lesser Sandhill Cranes and Ross' Geese along the Pacific Flyway occur at the Merced National Wildlife Refuge.

The Refuge often has nesting colonies of Tri-Colored Blackbirds – a bird unique to California's Central Valley. The open wetland and grassland habitats along the auto tour route provide good viewing for waterfowl, cranes, and shorebirds.



Song sparrow.
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San Joaquin River NWR

The San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge was established to provide wintering habitat for the Aleutian Cackling Goose. Successful management on the Refuge aided in the removal of this species from the Endangered Species List in 2001. The largest riparian woodland restoration project to occur in California's San Joaquin Valley is underway on this Refuge, which features a variety of woodland-dependent birds. Least Bell's Vireos – a songbird absent from the San Joaquin Valley for more than 60 years – have nested in the restored habitats.

This brochure lists the species of birds known to use each Refuge in the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

Seasons

Most birds are migratory; therefore, their seasonal occurrences are coded as follows:

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

Relative Abundance

Relative abundance indicates how frequently you might see a bird in its favored habitat.

- a** abundant: a species that is very numerous
- c** common: likely to be seen or heard in suitable habitat
- u** uncommon: present, but not certain to be seen
- o** occasional: seen only a few times during a season
- r** rare: may be present, but not every year
- *** Birds known to nest locally

Birds of San Luis NWR					
Common Name	Nesting	Sp	S	F	W
Canada Goose					
- Western Canada Goose	*	o		o	o
- Lesser Canada Goose					
Tundra Swan		r		u	u
Wood Duck	*	c	c	c	c
Gadwall	*	c	c	a	a
Eurasian Wigeon				r	r
American Wigeon		u	r	a	a
Mallard	*	a	c	a	a
Blue-winged Teal	*	u	r	o	u
Cinnamon Teal	*	c	u	a	a
Northern Shoveler	*	c	r	a	a
Northern Pintail	*	u	r	a	a
Green-winged Teal	*	c	r	a	a
Canvasback	*	o	r	u	u
Redhead	*	u	r	u	u
Ring-necked Duck	*	u	r	c	c
Greater Scaup				o	r
Lesser Scaup		o		o	o
Bufflehead		o		o	o
Common Goldeneye		r		o	o
Hooded Merganser	*	o		o	o
Common Merganser					r
Ruddy Duck	*	c	u	c	c
Osprey, Kites, Hawks and Eagles					
Osprey		r			r
White-tailed Kite	*	c	c	c	c
Bald Eagle		o			o
Northern Harrier	*	a	a	a	a
Sharp-shinned Hawk		u	r	u	r
Cooper's Hawk		u	o	u	u
Red-shouldered Hawk	*	u	u	u	u
Swainson's Hawk	*	c	c	u	r
Red-tailed Hawk	*	c	c	a	a
Ferruginous Hawk		r		r	r
Rough-legged Hawk				o	o
Golden Eagle		r	r	r	r

Merced NWR						San Joaquin River NWR					
Nesting	Sp	S	F	W		Nesting	Sp	S	F	W	
*	o		o	o		*	u	u	u	u	
										o	o
				r	r		r		o	o	
*	u	u	u	u		*	c	c	c	c	
*	c	u	a	a		*	c	o	a	a	
	r			r						r	
	c	r	a	c			c	r	c	c	
*	a	c	a	a		*	a	c	a	a	
*	u	r	o	u		*	r		r	r	
*	a	u	c	u		*	c	c	c	c	
*	c	u	c	a		*	c	r	a	a	
*	c	r	a	a		*	c	r	a	a	
*	o	r	o	u		*	r	r	o	o	
*	r	r	o	o		*	o	r	u	u	
*	u	r	u	u		*	o		u	u	
				r	r				r	r	
	r		r	r			r		o	u	
*	o		r	o		*	o	r	o	o	
	o		r	o			o		o	o	
*	u	r	u	u		*	c	r	c	a	
	r		r	r			o	r	o	r	
*	u	u	c	c		*	u	u	u	u	
	o			o					o	o	
*	c	c	c	a		*	c	c	c	c	
	u		o	u			u	r	u	r	
	r		o	u			u	o	u	o	
*	u	u	u	u		*	u	u	u	u	
*	u	c	u	r		*	c	c	u	r	
*	c	c	a	a		*	c	c	c	c	
	o		o	o						r	
	o		o	o			r			r	
	r	r	r	r					r	r	

Birds of San Luis NWR						Merced NWR					San Joaquin River NWR				
Common Name	Nesting	Sp	S	F	W	Nesting	Sp	S	F	W	Nesting	Sp	S	F	W
Nightjars <i>continued</i>															
Common Nighthawk				r				r	r						
Common Poorwill														r	
Swifts															
Black Swift		r					r					r			
Vaux's Swift		o	o				o	o				o	o		
White-throated Swift		r					r					r			
Hummingbirds															
Black-chinned Hummingbird	*	u	u			*	u	u			*	u	u	u	
Anna's Hummingbird	*	u	u	u	u	*	u	u	o	o	*	u	u	u	r
Rufous Hummingbird							o	o				o			
Allen's Hummingbird												r			
Kingfishers															
Belted Kingfisher	*	u	u	u	u	*	u	u	u	u	*	u	u	u	u
Woodpeckers															
Lewis's Woodpecker		r		r			r		r	r		r		r	
Acorn Woodpecker	*	r				*	r		r		*	c	c	c	c
Red-breasted Sapsucker														r	r
Nuttall's Woodpecker	*	u	o	u	u	*	u	o	u	u	*	u	u	u	u
Downy Woodpecker	*	r	r	r	r	*	o	r	o	o	*	o	r	o	o
Hairy Woodpecker										r		r		r	r
Northern Flicker	*	c	c	c	c	*	c	c	c	c	*	c	c	c	c
Tyrant Flycatchers															
Olive-sided Flycatcher		r		r								r		r	
Western Wood-Pewee	*	o	o	r		*	o	o	r		*	u	u	r	
Willow Flycatcher		o		o			o		o			o	o	r	
Dusky Flycatcher		o		o			o		r			o			
Western Flycatcher		o	o	r			r	o				o	o	r	
Black Phoebe	*	c	c	c	c	*	c	c	c	c	*	c	c	c	c
Say's Phoebe		o		o	o		o		o	u				o	o
Vermillion Flycatcher										r					
Ash-throated Flycatcher	*	u	u	o		*	u	c	o		*	u	u	r	
Cassin's Kingbird												r	r		
Western Kingbird	*	c	c	u	r	*	c	c	u		*	c	c	u	
Shrikes															
Loggerhead Shrike	*	c	c	u	u	*	c	c	c	c	*	c	c	u	u

Birds of San Luis NWR					
Common Name	Nesting	Sp	S	F	W
Vireos					
Least Bell's Vireo					
Cassin's Vireo					
Warbling Vireo		u	o	r	
Crows, Jays and Magpies					
California Scrub-Jay	*	u	u	u	u
Yellow-Billed Magpie	*	c	c	u	u
American Crow	*	u	u	u	u
Common Raven		r	r	r	r
Larks					
Horned Lark	*	u	u	u	u
Swallows					
Tree Swallow	*	c	c	u	r
Violet-green Swallow		o	o	r	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	*	u	u	u	
Bank Swallow	*	r	r	r	
Cliff Swallow	*	a	a	c	
Barn Swallow	*	c	c	c	
Titmice and Chickadees					
Oak Titmouse	*	u	u	o	o
Bushtits					
Bushtit	*	c	c	u	u
Nuthatches					
Red-breasted Nuthatch					
White-breasted Nuthatch	*	o	o	r	r
Creepers					
Brown Creeper				r	r
Wrens					
Rock Wren					
Bewick's Wren	*	c	c	u	u
Northern House Wren	*	c	c	u	u
Winter Wren		r			r
Marsh Wren	*	c	c	c	c
Kinglets					
Golden-crowned Kinglet		o		o	o

Merced NWR						San Joaquin River NWR					
Nesting	Sp	S	F	W		Nesting	Sp	S	F	W	
						*	r	r			
	r										
	o	o					o	o	r		
*	u	u	u	u		*	c	c	c	c	
*	c	c	u	u		*	c	c	c	c	
*	u	u	u	u		*	c	c	c	c	
	r	r	r	r			r	r	r	r	
*	u	u	u	u		*	u	u	u	u	
*	c	c	o	o		*	c	c	o	r	
	o		o				o	o	r		
*	o	o	o			*	u	u	o		
*	r	r	r			*	o	o	o		
*	a	a	u			*	a	a	o		
*	c	c	c			*	c	c	o		
*	r	r	r	r		*	u	u	o	o	
*	u	u	u	u		*	c	c	u	u	
*	u	c	u	u		*	c	c	u	u	
	r		r	r			r		r	o	
*	c	c	c	c		*	c	c	c	c	
			r	o					r	r	

Birds of San Luis NWR

Common Name	Nesting	Sp	S	F	W
Kinglets <i>continued</i>					
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		u		u	u
Gnatcatcherss					
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		r		r	
Thrushes					
Western Bluebird	*	r	r	r	o
Mountain Bluebird					r
Swainson's Thrush		u	r	r	r
Hermit Thrush		r		r	
American Robin	*	u	o	u	u
Varied Thrush					r
Babblers					
Wrentit	*	u	u	r	r
Mimic Thrushes					
Northern Mockingbird	*	u	u	u	u
California Thrasher		r			
Starlings					
European Starling	*	c	c	c	c
Wagtails and Pipits					
American Pipit		c		c	c
Waxwings					
Cedar Waxwing	*	o	r	o	o
Wood Warblers					
Orange-crowned Warbler		o	r	o	o
Nashville Warbler		r	r		
Yellow Warbler	*	o	r	o	
Yellow-rumped Warbler		c		c	c
Black-throated Gray Warbler		r			
Townsend's Warbler		o	r		
Hermit Warbler		o			
MacGillivray's Warbler		o	r		
Common Yellowthroat	*	c	c	o	o
Wilson's Warbler		r		r	
Yellow-breasted Chat	*	r			
Tanagers					
Western Tanager		o		o	

Merced NWR

San Joaquin River NWR

Nesting	Sp	S	F	W	Nesting	Sp	S	F	W
	u	r	u	u		u	r	u	u
	r		r			r		r	r
*	r	r	r	r	*	u	u	u	r
			r	r					r
	u	r	r			u	r		
	u		o	u		o		o	
*	c	u	u	u	*	u	o	c	c
	r			r				r	r
*	r	r	r	r	*	u	u	o	o
*	c	c	c	c	*	c	c	c	c
	r			r		r	r	r	r
*	c	c	c	c	*	c	c	c	c
	c		c	a		u		u	u
*	o	r	o	o	*	o	r	o	o
	u	r	o	o		u	r	u	u
	o	r				r	r		
*	u	r	o		*	u	u	o	
	c		c	c		u		c	c
	r		r			r			
	o	r				o	o	r	
	o					o			
	o					o	r		
*	c	c	o	o	*	c	c	c	o
	o		o			u		r	
*	r				*	o	r	o	
	u		o			o		o	

Birds of San Luis NWR					
Common Name	Nesting	Sp	S	F	W
Sparrows and Towhees					
Spotted Towhee	*	c	c	c	u
California Towhee	*	u	u	u	u
Chipping Sparrow		o		o	
Vesper Sparrow				r	r
Lark Sparrow	*	o	o	o	o
Sage Sparrow		r		r	
Savannah Sparrow	*	c	u	c	c
Grasshopper Sparrow	*	r	r	r	
Fox Sparrow		r		o	u
Song Sparrow	*	c	c	u	o
Lincoln's Sparrow		u		c	c
White-throated Sparrow				r	r
White-crowned Sparrow		c		c	c
Golden-crowned Sparrow		u		u	u
Dark-eyed Junco		u		u	u

Cardinals, Grosbeaks and Allies					
Black-headed Grosbeak	*	u	u	u	
Blue Grosbeak	*	u	u	o	
Lazuli Bunting	*	o	o		

Blackbirds and Orioles					
Red-winged Blackbird	*	a	a	a	a
Tricolored Blackbird	*	c	c	a	a
Western Meadowlark	*	c	c	c	c
Yellow-headed Blackbird	*	u	u	u	r
Brewer's Blackbird	*	c	c	c	c
Great-tailed Grackle	*	r	r	r	r
Brown-headed Cowbird	*	c	c	u	o
Hooded Oriole		r			
Bullock's Oriole	*	u	u	o	

Finches					
Purple Finch					r
House Finch	*	c	c	c	c
Pine Siskin					r
Lesser Goldfinch	*	c	c	o	o
Lawrence's Goldfinch		o	o	r	r
American Goldfinch	*	c	c	u	u

Old World Sparrows					
House Sparrow	*	u	u	u	u

Merced NWR						San Joaquin River NWR					
Nesting	Sp	S	F	W		Nesting	Sp	S	F	W	
*	c	c	u	u		*	c	c	c	c	
*	u	u	u	u		*	u	u	u	o	
	o		o				o	r	o	o	
				r	r						
*	o	o	o	o		*	u	u	o	o	
	r		r	r							
*	c	o	a	a		*	c	u	c	c	
*	r	r				*	o	r			
	o		o	u			o		u	u	
*	c	c	u	u		*	c	c	o	r	
	u		c	c			o	r	c	c	
					r		r		r	r	
	c		c	c			c		c	c	
	u		u	u			o		u	u	
	u		o	u			o		u	u	

*	o	o	o	r		*	u	u	u		
*	r	r	r			*	u	u	r		
*	r					*	o	o			

*	a	a	a	a		*	c	c	c	c	
*	c	c	a	a		*	o	o	o	u	
*	c	c	c	c		*	c	c	c	c	
*	u	u	u	o		*	o	o	r	r	
*	c	c	c	a		*	u	o	u	u	
*	r	r	r	r		*	r	r	r	r	
*	c	c	u	o		*	c	c	o	r	
							r	r			
*	u	u	o			*	u	u	r		

					r		r			r	
*	c	c	c	c		*	c	c	c	c	
					r					r	
*	c	c	o	o		*	c	c	o	o	
	o	o	r	r			u	u	r	r	
*	c	c	u	u		*	c	c	u	u	

*	c	c	c	c		*	c	c	c	c	

Accidental Bird Sightings

Unexpected birds that have been sighted 1 – 3 times.

Fulvous Whistling Duck	Roseate Spoonbill
Red-Breasted Goose	Northern Saw-whet Owl
Barnacle Goose	Flammulated Owl
Harlequin Duck	Spotted Owl
Surf Scoter	Barred Owl
Barrow's Goldeneye	Calliope Hummingbird
Red-Breasted Merganser	Hammond's Flycatcher
Mandarin Duck	Eastern Phoebe
Pacific Loon	American Redstart
Trumpeter Swan	Northern Shrike
Wood Stork	Hutton's Vireo
Broad-Winged Hawk	Red-Eyed Vireo
Hudsonian Godwit	Purple Martin
Ruddy Turnstone	Sprague's Pipit
Red Knot	Bohemian Waxwing
Sanderling	Phainopepla
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Black-and-White Warbler
Ruff	Worm-Eating Warbler
Red Phalarope	Lark Bunting
Thayer's Gull	Green-Tailed Towhee
Band-Tailed Pigeon	Swamp Sparrow
Yellow-Billed Cuckoo	Baltimore Oriole
Greater Roadrunner	



White-Tailed Kite/©Lee Eastman

Field Notes



Top: Burrowing owl/©Richard Albers

Above: Ruddy duck male/©Richard Albers

San Luis NWR Complex (mailing address)
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Los Banos, CA 93635
(209)826-3508

<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/san-luis>
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/merced>
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/san-joaquin-river>

San Luis NWR Visitor Center
7376 S. Wolfsen Rd **Physical address only.*
Los Banos, CA 93635 *Do not use for mailing.*
(209)826-3508

Federal Relay Service
for the hearing impaired
(800)877-8339

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
(800)344-WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

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NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGE SYSTEM