

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Desert

National Wildlife Refuge

Birds



Welcome!

Desert National Wildlife Refuge encompasses 1.6 million acres of Mojave Desert in southern Nevada. The refuge was established in 1936 to protect desert bighorn sheep and their habitat. The valleys and mountains within Desert National Wildlife Refuge vary in elevation from 2,800 feet to 9,900 feet. Major plant communities represented include desert shrub (creosote bush, white bursage, blackbrush, Mojave yucca, and Joshua tree), desert woodland (pinyon-juniper), and coniferous forest (yellow pine-white fir). As a result of this diversity, over 300 different species of birds have been observed on the refuge.

Birdwatching: The greatest variety of birds can be found during fall and spring migrations, especially in the early morning or late evening. Calm, mild days are preferable to windy, cold days. A field guide (print or electronic), binoculars or spotting scope, and appropriate clothing are recommended. When looking at a bird, pay close attention to characteristics such as shape, wing and head markings, color, and size. Always observe first, then refer to your guide, because the bird may not remain where it can be readily seen.

Corn Creek, the main entrance to the refuge, features a spring-fed pond and many types of vegetative cover including native mesquites and cultivated fruit and nut trees. This oasis in the desert acts like a magnet to draw in migrating birds and is a good place to observe a wide variety of species.

LeConte's and **Crissal thrashers** are a particular draw for birders to this area. The dense *Atriplex* and creosote community around Corn Creek is the largest and most intact within Clark County and supports a high concentration of thrasher nests. This area was recognized as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society in 2013.

Beyond Corn Creek lies a vast backcountry area that brings its own rewards for those prepared for rugged travel. Species diversity and density are highest in the vicinity of perennial springs, but each life zone will bring different viewing opportunities. Refuge roads require 4WD high clearance vehicles. Please plan carefully before starting a trip.

Abbreviations

Sp	Spring
S	Summer
F	Fall
W	Winter
c	Common
u	Uncommon
o	Occasional
r	Rare

Habitat Codes

1	Corn Creek
2	Creosote/Saltbrush Scrub
3	Mesquite thickets
4	Mojave yucca/Joshua tree community
5	Rocky areas, cliffs
6	Pinyon/juniper woodland
7	Coniferous forest
8	Widespread

*species known to nest locally

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Ducks, Geese, and Swans					
— Canada Goose	1	o	-	o	o
— Wood Duck	1	r	-	r	-
— Blue-winged Teal	1	r	-	o	-
— Cinnamon Teal	1	u	r	u	-
— Northern Shoveler	1	o	r	o	r
— Gadwall	1	-	-	r	-
— American Wigeon	1	o	-	o	r
— Mallard	1	u	u	u	u
— Northern Pintail	1	r	-	r	-
— Green-winged Teal	1	o	-	o	r
— Canvasback	1	r	-	r	-
— Redhead	1	r	-	r	-
— Ring-necked Duck	1	r	-	o	r
— Bufflehead	1	r	-	o	o
— Hooded Merganser	1	-	-	r	o
— Common Merganser	1	r	-	r	o
— Red-breasted Merganser	1	r	-	-	-
— Ruddy Duck	1	r	-	o	o
Gallinaceous Birds					
— *Gambel's Quail	1, 3	c	u	u	u
— *Chukar	5	o	o	o	o
Grebes					
— Pied-billed Grebe	1	o	-	o	u
— Eared Grebe	1	o	-	o	-
— Western Grebe	1	-	-	r	-
Pigeons and Doves					
— Rock Pigeon	1	o	u	o	o
— *Band-tailed Pigeon	7	o	r	o	-
— Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	u	u	u	u
— Inca Dove	1	r	-	o	-
— White-winged Dove	1	u	o	o	r
— *Mourning Dove	8	c	c	c	u
Cuckoos					
— Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	o	r	r	-
— *Greater Roadrunner	1, 2, 3	o	u	u	u
Goatsuckers					
— *Lesser Nighthawk	1, 2, 4	o	c	o	-
— Common Nighthawk	1	-	r	-	-
— *Common Poorwill	2, 6	u	c	u	-
— *Mexican Whip-poor-will	7	-	r	-	-
Swifts					
— Vaux's Swift	1	o	-	o	-
— *White-throated Swift	1, 5	u	c	u	r
Hummingbirds					
— *Black-chinned Hummingbird	1	c	c	u	-
— *Anna's Hummingbird	1	c	c	c	u
— *Costa's Hummingbird	1, 3, 4	u	u	u	o
— *Broad-tailed Hummingbird	1, 6, 7	u	c	-	-
— Rufous Hummingbird	1	o	u	u	-
— Calliope Hummingbird	1, 6, 7	o	-	o	-
Rails, Gallinules, and Coots					
— Virginia Rail	1	o	-	o	o
— Sora	1	o	-	-	-
— Common Gallinule	1	o	-	o	o
— American Coot	1	u	r	u	c
Stilts and Avocets					
— American Avocet	1	r	-	-	-
Plovers					
— Killdeer	1	u	o	o	-
Sandpipers					
— Long-billed Curlew	1	r	-	-	-
— Least Sandpiper	1	r	-	r	-
— Western Sandpiper	1	r	-	r	-

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Sandpipers (Continued)					
— Wilson's Snipe	1	u	r	u	o
— Spotted Sandpiper	1	u	u	u	-
— Solitary Sandpiper	1	r	-	r	-
— Lesser Yellowlegs	1	r	-	-	-
— Willet	1	r	-	-	-
— Greater Yellowlegs	1	r	-	r	-
— Wilson's Phalarope	1	r	-	-	-
Cormorants					
— Double-Crested Cormorant	1	o	r	o	o
Wading Birds					
— American Bittern	1	r	-	-	-
— Great Blue Heron	1	o	o	o	r
— Great Egret	1	o	-	o	r
— Snowy Egret	1	o	-	o	-
— Green Heron	1	o	-	-	r
— Black-crowned Night-Heron	1	o	o	o	r
— White-faced Ibis	1	o	r	o	-
New World Vultures					
— Turkey Vulture	8	u	u	u	r
Diurnal Raptors					
— Osprey	1	o	-	o	-
— Northern Harrier	1, 2, 4	u	o	u	u
— Sharp-shinned Hawk	8	u	r	u	u
— *Cooper's Hawk	8	u	u	u	u
— *Northern Goshawk	7	r	r	r	r
— Red-shouldered Hawk	1	o	u	o	o
— Swainson's Hawk	1	o	-	o	-
— *Red-tailed Hawk	8	u	u	u	u
— Ferruginous Hawk	8	r	-	r	-
— *Golden Eagle	8	o	o	o	o
Nocturnal Raptors					
— Barn Owl	1	o	-	o	r
— *Flammulated Owl	7	r	r	r	-
— *Western Screech-Owl	8	o	o	o	o
— *Great Horned Owl	8	o	o	o	o
— *Burrowing Owl	2, 4	r	r	r	-
— *Long-eared Owl	1, 3	u	o	o	r
— *Northern Saw-whet Owl	7	r	r	r	-
Kingfishers					
— Belted Kingfisher	1	u	o	u	r
Woodpeckers					
— Lewis's Woodpecker	1	o	-	o	r
— *Williamson's Sapsucker	1, 7	o	o	o	o
— Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	-	-	o	o
— *Red-naped Sapsucker	1, 6, 7	o	-	u	u
— Red-breasted Sapsucker	1	r	-	o	-
— *Ladder-backed Woodpecker	1, 4	c	o	c	c
— *Hairy Woodpecker	7	o	o	o	o
— *Northern Flicker	8	u	o	u	u
Falcons					
— *American Kestrel	8	u	u	u	u
— Merlin	8	r	-	r	r
— *Peregrine Falcon	8	o	o	o	r
— *Prairie Falcon	7	o	o	o	o
Flycatchers					
— Olive-sided Flycatcher	1, 7	u	o	o	-
— *Western Wood-Pewee	1, 6, 7	c	o	u	-
— Willow Flycatcher	1	u	-	u	-
— Hammond's Flycatcher	1, 7	u	-	o	-
— *Gray Flycatcher	1, 6	u	o	o	-
— *Dusky Flycatcher	1, 6, 7	u	o	o	-
— Pacific-slope Flycatcher	1, 7	o	-	o	-
— *Cordilleran Flycatcher	1, 7	u	u	u	-

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Flycatchers (Continued)					
___ *Black Phoebe	1	c	u	c	o
___ *Say's Phoebe	1, 5	c	c	c	u
___ Vermilion Flycatcher	1	o	r	o	-
___ *Ash-throated Flycatcher	1, 3, 4	c	c	u	-
___ Brown-crested Flycatcher	1	o	o	-	-
___ Cassin's Kingbird	1	o	r	o	-
___ *Western Kingbird	1	c	c	c	-
___ Eastern Kingbird	1	r	-	r	-
Shrikes					
___ *Loggerhead Shrike	1, 2, 4	u	u	u	u
Vireos					
___ Bell's Vireo	1, 3	o	o	o	-
___ *Gray Vireo	6	o	o	o	-
___ Cassin's Vireo	1	u	-	o	-
___ *Plumbeous Vireo	1, 6, 7	u	u	u	-
___ *Warbling Vireo	1, 6, 7	u	o	u	-
Jays, Crows, and Ravens					
___ *Pinyon Jay	6	u	u	u	u
___ *Steller's Jay	7	u	u	u	u
___ *Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	6	u	u	u	u
___ *Clark's Nutcracker	7	u	u	u	u
___ American Crow	8	r	-	r	-
___ *Common Raven	8	c	c	c	c
Larks					
___ *Horned Lark	2	c	c	c	c
Swallows					
___ Tree Swallow	1	u	o	u	-
___ *Violet-green Swallow	1, 5, 7	u	c	u	-
___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow	1	c	u	c	-
___ Bank Swallow	1	o	-	o	-
___ Cliff Swallow	1, 5	o	u	o	-
___ Barn Swallow	1	o	o	u	-
Chickadees and Titmice					
___ *Mountain Chickadee	7	c	c	c	c
___ *Juniper Titmouse	6	u	u	u	u
Verdins					
___ *Verdin	1, 3	c	c	c	c
Bushtits					
___ *Bushtit	8	u	u	u	u
Nuthatches					
___ *Red-breasted Nuthatch	1, 7	o	o	o	o
___ *White-breasted Nuthatch	1, 7	u	u	u	u
___ *Pygmy Nuthatch	7	c	c	c	c
Creepers					
___ *Brown Creeper	1, 7	u	u	u	u
Wrens					
___ *Rock Wren	4, 5, 6	u	u	u	u
___ *Canyon Wren	5	o	o	o	o
___ *House Wren	1, 7	u	u	u	-
___ Pacific Wren	1, 7	r	-	r	r
___ Marsh Wren	1	o	-	u	u
___ *Bewick's Wren	1, 3, 4, 6	u	u	u	u
___ *Cactus Wren	4	o	o	o	o
Gnatcatchers					
___ *Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1, 3, 4, 6	c	c	c	r
___ *Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	1, 2, 3, 4	u	u	u	u
Kinglets					
___ Golden-crowned Kinglet	1, 7	-	-	r	r
___ *Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1, 7	c	u	c	c
Thrushes					
___ *Western Bluebird	1, 3, 6, 7	u	c	u	c
___ Mountain Bluebird	1, 4, 6, 7	o	o	o	o
___ *Townsend's Solitaire	1, 7	u	u	u	u

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Thrushes (Continued)					
___ Swainson's Thrush	1	o	-	o	-
___ *Hermit Thrush	1, 7	u	c	u	o
___ *American Robin	8	c	u	c	c
___ Varied Thrush	1	-	-	o	o
Thrashers					
___ *LeConte's Thrasher	2	o	o	o	o
___ *Crissal Thrasher	1, 3	u	u	u	u
___ Sage Thrasher	1, 2	u	-	o	u
___ *Northern Mockingbird	1, 3, 4	c	c	c	c
Starlings					
___ European Starling	8	c	o	c	u
Waxwings					
___ Cedar Waxwing	8	c	r	c	u
Silky-flycatchers					
___ *Phainopepla	1, 3	c	u	c	c
Old World Sparrows					
___ *House Sparrow	1	u	o	o	o
Wagtails and Pipits					
___ American Pipit	1, 2	o	-	u	u
Cardueline Finches					
___ Evening Grosbeak	1, 7	r	-	o	r
___ *House Finch	1, 2, 3, 4	c	c	c	c
___ *Cassin's Finch	1, 7	u	u	u	u
___ *Red Crossbill	1, 7	o	o	o	o
___ *Pine Siskin	1, 7	u	u	u	u
___ *Lesser Goldfinch	1, 6, 7	u	u	u	o
___ *American Goldfinch	1	o	r	o	o
Towhees and Sparrows					
___ *Green-tailed Towhee	1, 3, 6, 7	u	u	u	r
___ *Spotted Towhee	1, 3, 6, 7	c	c	c	c
___ Abert's Towhee	1, 3	o	o	o	o
___ *Chipping Sparrow	1, 6, 7	c	c	c	-
___ Brewer's Sparrow	2	c	-	c	r
___ *Black-chinned Sparrow	5, 6	o	o	-	-
___ Vesper Sparrow	1, 2	o	-	o	-
___ Lark Sparrow	1, 2	u	-	u	-
___ *Black-throated Sparrow	2, 4	u	u	u	r
___ Sagebrush Sparrow	2	u	-	u	u
___ *Bell's Sparrow	2	r	r	r	r
___ Savannah Sparrow	1, 2	o	-	u	o
___ Fox Sparrow	1	o	-	o	o
___ *Song Sparrow	1	c	o	c	c
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	1	c	-	c	u
___ Swamp Sparrow	1	r	-	r	o
___ White-throated Sparrow	1	r	-	r	r
___ Harris's Sparrow	1	-	-	-	r
___ White-crowned Sparrow	8	c	-	c	c
___ Golden-crowned Sparrow	1	r	-	r	r
___ *Dark-eyed Junco	1, 7	c	c	c	c
Yellow-breasted Chats					
___ *Yellow-breasted Chat	1	c	c	u	-
Blackbirds, Meadowlarks, and Orioles					
___ Yellow-headed Blackbird	1	o	o	o	-
___ Bobolink	1	r	-	r	-
___ Western Meadowlark	1, 2	u	r	u	o
___ Hooded Oriole	1	u	o	o	-
___ *Bullock's Oriole	1	c	c	u	-
___ *Scott's Oriole	1, 4	u	u	u	-
___ Red-winged Blackbird	1	u	r	u	o
___ *Brown-headed Cowbird	1	u	c	u	r
___ Brewer's Blackbird	1	o	o	u	r
___ Great-tailed Grackle	1	u	o	o	o

Accidentals and Rarities for Desert National Wildlife Refuge

Fulvous Whistling-Duck	Winter Wren
Ross's Goose	Veery
Greater White-fronted Goose	Wood Thrush
Brant	Gray Catbird
Cackling Goose	Brown Thrasher
Common Goldeneye	Bendire's Thrasher
Chuck-will's-widow	Purple Finch
Black Swift	Lawrence's Goldfinch
Broad-billed Hummingbird	Chestnut-collared Longspur
Sandhill Crane	American Tree Swallow
Black-necked Stilt	Clay-colored Sparrow
Mountain Plover	Lark Bunting
Upland Sandpiper	Grasshopper Sparrow
Long-billed Curlew	Orchard Oriole
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Baltimore Oriole
Long-billed Dowitcher	Bronzed Cowbird
Bonaparte's Gull	Common Grackle
Ring-billed Gull	Ovenbird
California Gull	Worm-eating Warbler
Common Loon	Louisiana Waterthrush
Cattle Egret	Golden-winged Warbler
White-tailed Kite	Prothonotary Warbler
Mississippi Kite	Tennessee Warbler
Common Black Hawk	Mourning Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	Kentucky Warbler
Rough-legged Hawk	Hooded Warbler
Short-eared Owl	Cape May Warbler
Acorn Woodpecker	Magnolia Warbler
Downy Woodpecker	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Blackpoll Warbler
Eastern Phoebe	Palm Warbler
Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher	Prairie Warbler
White-eyed Vireo	Painted Redstart
Yellow-throated Vireo	Scarlet Tanager
Blue-headed Vireo	Pyrrhuloxia
Red-eyed Vireo	Painted Bunting
Purple Martin	Dickcissel



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