

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.

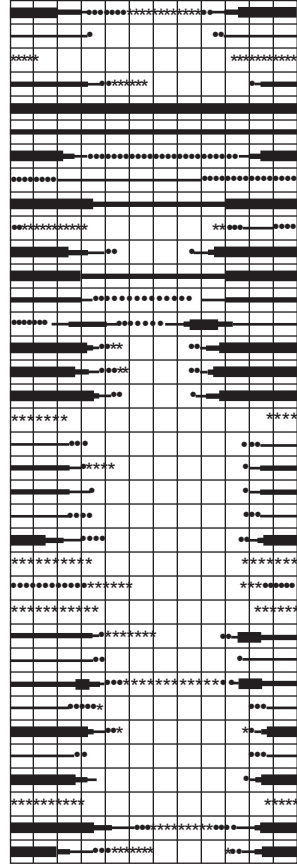
ABUNDANCE DESIGNATIONS

- 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

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

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GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

- Northern Bobwhite
- Red-throated Loon
- Common Loon

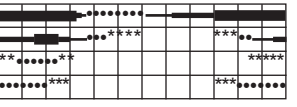


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GREBES

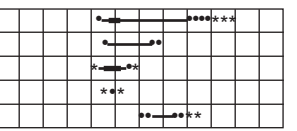
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Horned Grebe
- Red-necked Grebe
- Eared Grebe

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SHEARWATERS

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



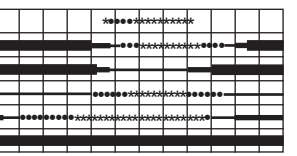
STORM-PETRELS

- Wilson's Storm-Petrel
- Leach's Storm-Petrel



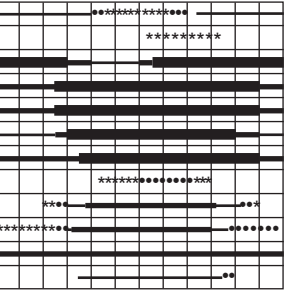
PELICANS & ALLIES

- 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



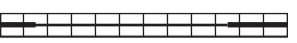
IBISES

- White Ibis
- Glossy Ibis



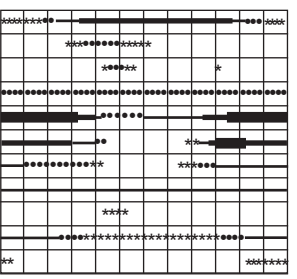
VULTURES

- 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

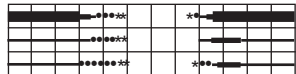


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FALCONS

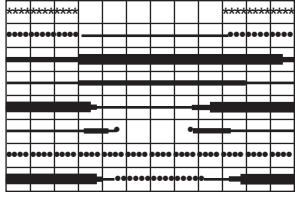
- American Kestrel
- Merlin
- Peregrine Falcon

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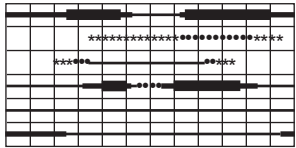
RAILS & ALLIES

- Yellow Rail
- Black Rail
- Clapper Rail
- King Rail
- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Common Moorhen
- American Coot



PLOVERS

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



OYSTERCATCHERS

- American Oystercatcher



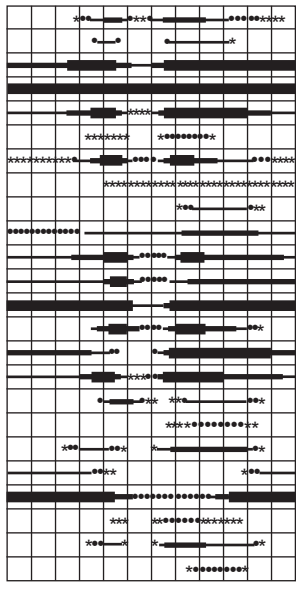
AVOCETS & STILTS

- Black-necked Stilt
- American Avocet



SANDPIPERS

- Spotted Sandpiper
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Willet
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Upland Sandpiper
- Whimbrel
- Long-billed Curlew
- Hudsonian Godwit
- Marbled Godwit
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Red Knot
- Sanderling
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Western Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- White-rumped Sandpiper
- Baird's Sandpiper
- Pectoral Sandpiper
- Purple Sandpiper
- Dunlin
- Curlew Sandpiper
- Stilt Sandpiper
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper

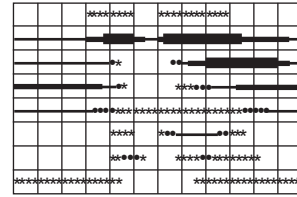


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SANDPIPERS (cont'd.)

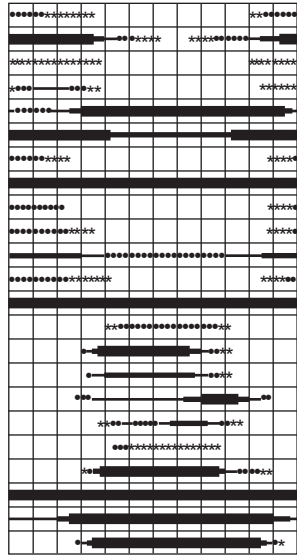
- Ruff
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Long-billed Dowitcher
- Wilson's Snipe
- American Woodcock
- Wilson's Phalarope
- Red-necked Phalarope
- Red Phalarope

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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



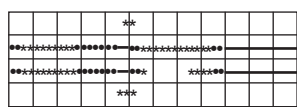
SKIMMERS

- Black Skimmer



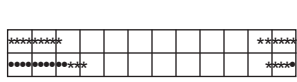
JAEGERS

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



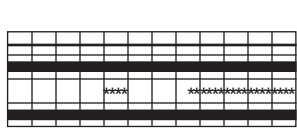
ALCIDS

- Dovekie
- Razorbill



DOVES

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



CUCKOOS

- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Black-billed Cuckoo

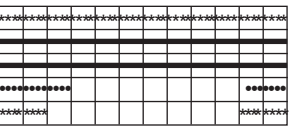


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OWLS

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

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NIGHTJARS

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



SWIFTS

- Chimney Swift



HUMMINGBIRDS

- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Rufous Hummingbird



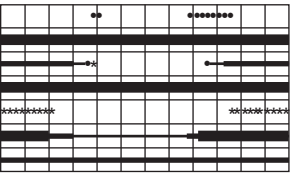
KINGFISHER

- Belted Kingfisher



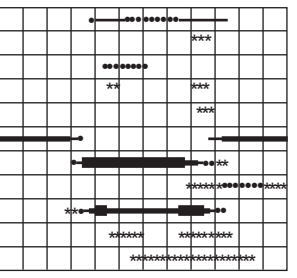
WOODPECKERS

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



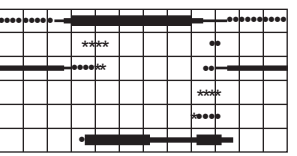
FLYCATCHERS

- 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



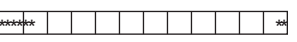
JAYS & CROWS

- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Fish Crow



LARKS

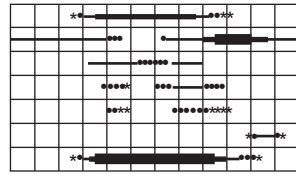
- Horned Lark



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SWALLOWS

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



TITMICE

- ___ Carolina Chickadee
- ___ Tufted Titmouse



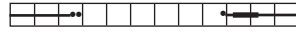
NUTHATCHES

- ___ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- ___ Brown-headed Nuthatch



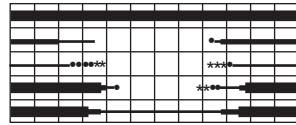
CREEPERS

- ___ Brown Creeper



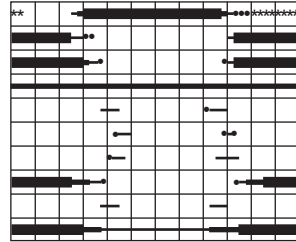
WRENS

- ___ Carolina Wren
- ___ House Wren
- ___ Winter Wren
- ___ Sedge Wren
- ___ Marsh 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
- ___ Northern Mockingbird
- ___ Brown Thrasher



STARLINGS

- ___ European Starling



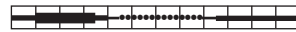
PIPITS

- ___ American Pipit



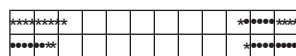
WAXWINGS

- ___ Cedar Waxwing



LONGSPUR & SNOW BUNTING

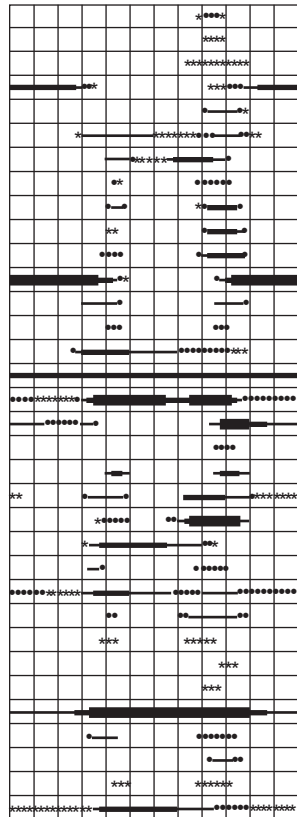
- ___ Lapland Longspur
- ___ Snow Bunting



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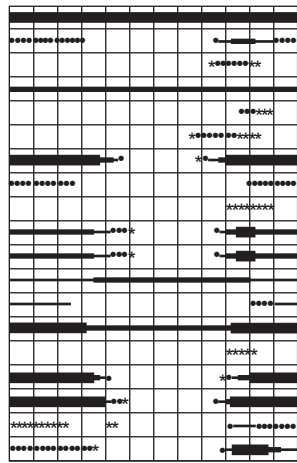
WARBLERS

- ___ Blue-winged Warbler
- ___ Golden-winged Warbler
- ___ Tennessee Warbler
- ___ Orange-crowned Warbler
- ___ Nashville Warbler
- ___ Northern Parula
- ___ Yellow Warbler
- ___ Chestnut-sided Warbler
- ___ Magnolia Warbler
- ___ Cape May Warbler
- ___ Black-throated Blue Warbler
- ___ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- ___ Black-throated Green Warbler
- ___ Blackburnian Warbler
- ___ Yellow-throated Warbler
- ___ Pine Warbler
- ___ Prairie Warbler
- ___ Palm Warbler
- ___ Bay-breasted Warbler
- ___ Blackpoll Warbler
- ___ Black-and-white Warbler
- ___ American Redstart
- ___ Prothonotary Warbler
- ___ Worm-eating Warbler
- ___ Ovenbird
- ___ Northern Waterthrush
- ___ Kentucky Warbler
- ___ Connecticut Warbler
- ___ Mourning Warbler
- ___ Common Yellowthroat
- ___ Hooded Warbler
- ___ Wilson's Warbler
- ___ Canada Warbler
- ___ Yellow-breasted Chat



SPARROWS & ALLIES

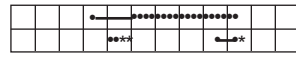
- ___ Eastern Towhee
- ___ Chipping Sparrow
- ___ Clay-colored Sparrow
- ___ Field Sparrow
- ___ Vesper Sparrow
- ___ Lark Sparrow
- ___ Savannah Sparrow
- ___ "Ipswich Sparrow"
- ___ Grasshopper Sparrow
- ___ Nelson's Sparrow
- ___ Saltmarsh Sparrow
- ___ Seaside Sparrow
- ___ Fox Sparrow
- ___ Song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



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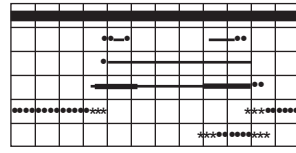
TANAGERS

- ___ Summer Tanager
- ___ Scarlet Tanager



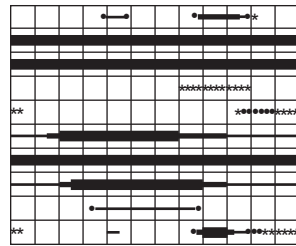
CARDINALS & ALLIES

- ___ Northern Cardinal
- ___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- ___ Blue Grosbeak
- ___ Indigo Bunting
- ___ Painted Bunting
- ___ Dickcissel



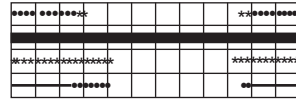
BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES

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



FINCHES

- ___ Purple Finch
- ___ House Finch
- ___ Pine Siskin
- ___ American Goldfinch



OLD WORLD SPARROWS

- ___ House Sparrow



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FIELD NOTES

VERY RARE / ACCIDENTAL SPECIES

- Fulvous Whistling-Duck
- Greater White-fronted Goose
- Cackling Goose
- Cinnamon Teal
- Garganey
- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Pacific Loon
- Western Grebe
- Clark's Grebe
- Yellow-nosed Albatross
- Northern Fulmar
- Black-capped Petrel
- White-faced Storm-Petrel
- Band-rumped Storm-Petrel
- White-tailed Tropicbird
- Red-billed Tropicbird
- Wood Stork
- Masked Booby
- Brown Booby
- Anhinga
- "Great White Heron"
- White-faced Ibis
- Roseate Spoonbill
- Black Vulture
- Northern Goshawk
- Swainson's Hawk
- Golden Eagle
- Purple Gallinule
- Sandhill Crane
- Snowy Plover
- Spotted Redshank
- "Eurasian Whimbrel"
- Black-tailed Godwit
- Bar-tailed Godwit
- Little Stint
- Sabine's Gull
- Franklin's Gull
- Common (Mew) Gull
- Yellow-legged Gull
- Bridled Tern
- White-winged Tern
- Arctic Tern
- "Cayenne Tern"
- Great Skua
- Common Murre
- Thick-billed Murre
- Common Ground-Dove
- Snowy Owl
- Burrowing Owl
- Antillean Nighthawk
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Say's Phoebe
- Vermilion Flycatcher
- Ash-throated Flycatcher
- Tropical Kingbird
- Fork-tailed Flycatcher
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Northern Shrike
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Bewick's Wren
- Northern Wheatear
- Sage Thrasher
- Sprague's Pipit
- Black-throated Gray Warbler
- Townsend's Warbler
- Cerulean Warbler
- Swainson's Warbler
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- American Tree Sparrow
- Lark Bunting
- Leconte's Sparrow
- Harris's Sparrow
- Western Tanager
- Western Meadowlark
- Brewer's Blackbird
- Shiny Cowbird
- Red Crossbill
- White-winged Crossbill
- Common Redpoll
- 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:
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2002

Revised By:
Ricky Davis
October 2010

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Please Visit Our Websites At:
Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge
<http://peaisland.fws.gov>

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

