

Reelfoot

National Wildlife Refuge Bird List



*Birds of
Reelfoot
National
Wildlife
Refuge*



Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge is located on and around the upper portion of historic Reelfoot Lake in the extreme northwest corner of Tennessee. The refuge was established in 1941 on lands leased from the State of Tennessee. Subsequent land purchased extended the refuge into Kentucky, and it now consists of 10,428 acres. The Reelfoot area is a major stopover point and wintering area for waterfowl of the Mississippi Flyway.

A smaller area, Lake Isom National Wildlife Refuge, comprising 1,850 acres and lying five miles south of Reelfoot was established by Presidential proclamation in 1938. The primary objective is habitat for migratory birds.



Reelfoot and Lake Isom National Wildlife Refuges are administered from refuge headquarters, 4343 Highway 157, Union City, Tennessee 38261. The 20,000 acre Reelfoot Lake was formed by a series of severe earthquakes during the winter of 1811-12. It is situated on the Mississippi River floodplain, midway between the river to the west and the towering Chickasaw Bluff to the east.



Most privately owned wetlands and woodlands, which formerly surrounded the lake, have been drained and cleared for conversion to valuable farmland. However, the wooded bluff remains, and stands of majestic bald cypress are still present in and around the lake. The swamp forest bordering the lake is almost impenetrable, giving way to thick mats of aquatic vegetation on the lake's surface and vast stretches of head-high grasses extending into much of the shallow water. This varied habitat provides home and sanctuary for large numbers of birds-as well as numerous other wildlife species.



The refuge and adjacent areas are of year-round interest to birders, from the casual observer to the serious ornithologist. Spring, especially during April and May, is the best period for observing transient species, with special emphasis on shorebirds and warblers. Summer is a time for viewing marsh and wading birds, and serious birders will find it rewarding to work the lake by paddle boat in the early morning and late evening hours.

With the arrival of fall and winter also comes the multitude of waterfowl which use Reelfoot each year; mallards, gadwall, America wigeon, and Canada geese predominate. However, large concentrations of ruddy ducks and coots are also present, and virtually all species common to the Mississippi Flyway may be seen at Reelfoot during the course of the winter.

The refuges normally have peak waterfowl populations of approximately 30,000 Canada geese and 350,000 ducks. While parts of the refuges are closed to public entry during the peak waterfowl use period, excellent birding opportunities are still available.

In recent years Reelfoot Lake has attained much prominence from its wintering bald eagle. The best period for seeing these stately birds is from mid-December through mid-March.

How to use your checklist. The bird checklist was designed to be informative and simple to use. The list is arranged in the order established by the American Ornithological 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 (a common species which is very numerous)

c- common (certain to be seen in suitable habitat)

u- uncommon (present but not certain to be seen)

o- occasional (seen only a few times during a season)

r- rare (seen at intervals of 2 to 5 years)

* Nest on the refuge

This checklist includes 238 species of birds and is based on observations by refuge personnel and visiting ornithologists. If you should find an unlisted species, please let us know at Refuge Headquarters. We will appreciate your help in updating our records.

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Loons				
Common Loon	o		o	o
Grebes				
Pied-billed Grebe*	c	u	c	c
Horned Grebe	u		u	u
Pelicans and their allies				
American White Pelican	u		o	r
Double-crested Cormorant	u	u	u	o
Anhinga	r	r	r	
Hérons, Egrets and Allies				
American Bittern	u	u	u	r
Least Bittern*	c	c	c	
Great Blue Heron*	a	a	a	a
Great Egret*	u	c	u	o
Snowy Egret*	o	o	o	
Little Blue Heron*	c	c	c	
Cattle Egret*	u	u	o	
Green-backed Heron*	c	c	c	
Black-crowned Night-Heron*	u	u	u	r
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron*	u	u	u	r
Ibises, Spoonbill, Stork				
Wood Stork		r	r	
Waterfowl				
White-fronted Goose		r	r	c
Snow Goose	o		u	u

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Canada Goose	c	o	a	a
Wood Duck*	c	a	a	u
Green-winged Teal	c		c	c
American Black Duck	c		c	c
Mallard*	a	c	a	a
Northern Pintail	c		c	c
Blue-winged Teal	c	o	c	o
Northern Shoveler	c		c	u
Gadwall	c		c	c
American Wigeon	c		a	
Canvasback	u		u	u
Redhead	u		u	c
Ring-necked Duck	a		c	c
Whistling Swan			r	r
Lesser Scaup	c		c	c
Harlequin Duck Oldsquaw	r		r	r
White-winged Scoter	r		r	r
Common Goldeneye	u		u	c
Bufflehead	o		u	c
Hooded Merganser*	c	o	c	c
Common Merganser	u		u	u
Red-breasted Merganser	o		o	r
Ruddy Duck	c		c	c
Vultures, Hawks and Allies				
Black Vulture*	c	c	c	u
Turkey Vulture	c	c	c	u
Osprey*	o	c	o	r
Mississippi Kite*	o	c		
Bald Eagle	u		u	a
Sharp-shinned Hawk	o		o	o
Marsh Hawk	c		c	c
Cooper's Hawk	u	u	u	u
Red-shouldered Hawk	u	u	u	u
Broad-winged Hawk	u	u	u	
Red-tailed Hawk*	c	c	c	c
Rough-legged Hawk				r
Golden Eagle	o		o	u
American Kestrel	c	u	c	c
Peregrine Falcon	r		r	r
Gallinaceous Birds (Quail, Turkey and Allies)				
Wild Turkey*	c	u	o	u
Northern Bobwhite*	c	c	c	c
Rails, Gallinules, Coots and Cranes				
King Rail	u	u	u	
Virginia Rail	u		u	
Sora	u	c	u	
Purple Gallinule*	u	u	u	
Common Gallinule*	u	u	u	
American Coot*	c	u	a	a

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Shorebirds				
Black-bellied Plover	o		o	
Lesser Golden-Plover	o		o	
Semipalmated Plover	c		c	
Killdeer*	c	c	c	c
Greater Yellowlegs	c	u	c	
Lesser Yellowlegs	c	o	c	r
Solitary Sandpiper	c	o	c	
Willet	r			
Spotted Sandpiper	c	o	c	
Upland Sandpiper	o		o	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	c	o	c	
Least Sandpiper	c	u	c	o
Pectoral Sandpiper	c	o	c	
Stilt Sandpiper	u		u	
Short-billed Dowitcher	o		o	
Common Snipe	c		u	u
American Woodcock*	u	r	u	r
Franklin's Gull	o		o	r
Bonaparte's Gull	o		u	c
Ring-billed Gull	c		c	a
Herring Gull	u		u	c
Caspian Tern	o		o	
Common Tern	r	o	o	
Forster's Tern	o		o	
Least Tern	u	c	u	
Black Tern	u	u	u	
Pigeons, Doves				
Rock Dove*	c	c	c	c
Mourning Dove*	c	a	a	c
Cuckoos				
Black-billed Cuckoo	o	u	o	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	c	c	c	
Owls				
Barn Owl*	o	o	o	o
Eastern Screech-Owl*	u	u	u	u
Great Horned Owl	u	u	u	u
Barred Owl*	c	c	c	c
Short-eared Owl				r
Goatsuckers				
Common Nighthawk*	c	c	c	
Chuck-will's-widow*	u	c	c	
Whip-poor-will*	u	r	u	
Swifts, Hummingbirds				
Chimney Swift*	c	c	c	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird*	c	c	c	

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Kingfishers				
Belted Kingfisher	c	c	c	c
Woodpeckers				
Red-headed Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
Red-bellied Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	c		c	c
Downy Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
Hairy Woodpecker*	u	u	u	u
Northern Flicker*	c	c	c	c
Pileated Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
Flycatchers				
Olive-sided Flycatcher	r		r	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	c	c	c	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	r		r	
Acadian Flycatcher*	c	c	c	
Least Flycatcher	r		r	
Eastern Phoebe*	c	c	c	
Great Crested Flycatcher	c	c	c	
Eastern Kingbird*	c	c	c	
Larks				
Horned Lark*	c	c	c	c
Martins and Swallows				
Purple Martin*	c	c	c	
Tree Swallow	c	c	a	r
Northern Rough-winged Swallow*	c	c	c	
Bank Swallow*	c	c	c	
American Crow*	c	c	c	c
Fish Crow*	u	c	u	u
Chickadees and Titmice				
Carolina Chickadee*	c	c	c	c
Tufted Titmouse*	c	c	c	c
Nuthatches				
Red-breasted Nuthatch				o
White-breasted Nuthatch*	u	u	u	u
Creepers				
Brown Creeper	u		u	u
Wrens				
Carolina Wren*	c	c	c	c
Bewick's Wren*	u	u	u	u
Long-billed Marsh Wren	u		u	r

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
House Wren	u		u	o
Short-billed Marsh Wren	u		u	
Winter Wren	u		u	c
Kinglets and Gnatcatchers				
Golden-crowned Kinglet	c		c	c
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	c		c	c
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*	c	c	c	
Bluebirds, Thrushes and Robin				
Eastern Bluebird*	c	c	c	c
Veery	u		u	
Gray-cheeked Thrush	c		c	
Swainson's Thrush	c		c	
Hermit Thrush	u		u	u
Wood Thrush*	c	c	c	
American Robin*	c	c	c	c
Thrashers				
Gray Catbird*	c	c	c	
Northern Mockingbird*	c	c	c	c
Brown Thrasher*	c	c	c	u
Pipits				
American Pipit	u		u	u
Waxwings				
Cedar Waxwing	u		u	u
Starling				
European Starling*	c	c	c	a
Shrike				
Loggerhead Shrike*	c	c	c	c
Vireos				
White-eyed Vireo*	c	c	c	
Solitary Vireo	r		r	
Yellow-throated Vireo*	c	c	c	
Warbling Vireo*	c	u	c	
Philadelphia Vireo	r		r	
Red-eyed Vireo*	c	c	c	
Warblers				
Blue-winged Warbler	u		u	
Golden-winged Warbler	u		u	
Tennessee Warbler	c		c	
Orange-crowned Warbler	r		r	
Nashville Warbler	u		u	
Northern Parula*	c	u	c	

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Yellow Warbler	u	u	u	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	c		c	
Magnolia Warbler	c		c	
Cape May Warbler	o		o	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	c		c	c
Black-throated Green Warbler	c		c	
Blackburnian Warbler	u		u	
Yellow-throated Warbler*	c	c	c	
Pine Warbler	u		u	
Prairie Warbler*	u	o	u	
Palm Warbler	c		c	
Bay-breasted Warbler	c		c	
Blackpoll Warbler	c		c	
Cerulean Warbler*	c	u	c	
Black-and-white Warbler*	c	o	c	
American Redstart*	c	u	c	
Prothonotary Warbler*	c	c	c	
Worm-eating Warbler	o		o	
Swainson's Warbler*	u	o	u	
Ovenbird	u		u	
Northern Waterthrush	u		o	
Louisiana Waterthrush*	u	u	u	
Kentucky Warbler*	c	u	c	
Connecticut Warbler	r		r	
Common Yellowthroat*	c	c	c	
Hooded Warbler*	c	u	c	
Wilson's Warbler	u		u	
Canada Warbler	u		u	
Yellow-breasted Chat*	c	c	c	
Tanagers				
Summer Tanager*	c	c	c	
Scarlet Tanager	u	o	u	
New World Finches				
Northern Cardinal*	c	c	c	c
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	u		u	
Blue Grosbeak	o			
Indigo Bunting*	c	c	c	
Dickcissel	c	c	c	
Sparrows				
Rufous-sided Towhee	c	u	c	c
American Tree Sparrow	u		u	u
Chipping Sparrow*	u	u	u	r
Field Sparrow*	c	c	c	c
Vesper Sparrow	u		u	r
Lark Sparrow	r		r	
Savannah Sparrow	c		c	c
Grasshopper Sparrow	u		u	r
Le Conte's Sparrow	u		u	r

	SP	S	F	W
Fox Sparrow	u		u	u
Song Sparrow	c	o	c	c
Lincoln's Sparrow	u		u	o
Swamp Sparrow	c		c	c
White-throated Sparrow	c		c	c
White-crowned Sparrow	u		c	c
Harris' Sparrow				r
Dark-eyed Junco	c		c	c
Lapland Longspur				r

Blackbirds, Grackles, Cowbirds and Orioles

Bobolink	u		r	
Red-winged Blackbird*	a	a	a	a
Eastern Meadowlark*	c	c	c	c
Rusty Blackbird	u		u	u
Brewer's Blackbird			o	o
Common Grackle*	c	c	a	a
Brown-headed Cowbird*	c	c	a	a
Orchard Oriole*	c	c	c	
Northern Oriole*	u	u	u	

Old World Finches

Purple Finch	o		o	u
Pine Siskin	o			r
American Goldfinch*	c	c	c	c
Weaver Finch				
House Sparrow*	a	a	a	a

These additional species are of such accidental or rare occurrence on the refuge that they have been recorded only one or two times



Western Grebe
 Western Kingbird
 Eared Grebe
 Scissor-tailed
 Flycatcher
 European Wigeon
 Vermillion Flycatcher
 Cinnamon Teal
 Western Meadowlark
 Greater Scaup
 Laughing Gull
 Black Scoter
 Surf Scoter
 Glossy Ibis
 Black Rail
 Ruddy Turnstone
 Merlin
 Long-eared Owl

Sighting Notes

Date

Time

Weather

No. of species

Route or area

Observers

Remarks

Reelfoot
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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