

The Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge holds the distinction of having the most diverse array of bird species found on any national wildlife refuge in the west.

Introduction

Established as a national refuge in 1930 by a Presidential Proclamation, the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge is a haven for a diverse range of wildlife. Most of the refuge's 37,600 acres are now inundated due to flooding by the Salton Sea. 1785 acres of agricultural fields and freshwater marsh remains manageable.

Located 228 feet below sea level, the Salton Sea is one of the lowest places in the United States. The area was created in 1905, when a diversion structure on the Colorado River failed, and the river flowed into the Salton Sink for 16 months. Today, the waters of the Salton Sea have stabilized.

Enjoying the Refuge's Wildlife

The study of wild animals in their natural habitat has become an increasingly popular pastime for many people. Viewing of wildlife can be greatly enhanced by a pair of binoculars or a spotting scope. This equipment allows the wildlife to be viewed at a distance, thus minimizing disturbance. Also, a good wildlife/birding guide is helpful in locating and identifying the various species.

Wildlife species in this brochure have been grouped into five categories: birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish.

Enjoying the Refuge's Birdlife

Numbers and species of birds you will see here varies according to season. Heavy migrations of waterfowl, marsh and shorebirds occur during spring and fall. Throughout the mild winter and spring a wide variety of songbirds and birds of prey are present. They are attracted to the freshwater marshes and riparian habitat along the New and Alamo Rivers. The greatest number of species is present from October to May.

When looking at a bird, pay close attention to characteristics such as color, size, shape, wing, and head markings. Always observe first and then refer to your identification book because the bird may move out of sight quickly. This is especially true of perching birds.

The following list of birds contains **422** species that have been recorded on or near the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The common name and taxonomic order used in this list follows that appearing in the American Ornithologists' Union Check List of North American Birds, published in 1998, and subsequent revisions through 2008.

Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR List Key

Seasons

Sp – Spring, April through May
S – Summer, June through August
F – Fall, September through October
W – Winter, November through March

Spring – Some species migrate much earlier than others, appearing in the Salton Sea area during March, but are none the less considered spring migrants rather than winter visitors. Their status at this time of the year is indicated under Spring rather than Winter.

Summer – Status indicated under this heading indicates the relative abundance of summering birds. Observers must remember late spring migrants can be found into early June, and that early fall migrants can occur as early as late June, but these are not summering birds. Their status as migrants is indicated under Spring and Fall rather than Summer.

Fall – Since some species, particularly shorebirds, migrate quite early in the fall, their status as fall migrants in July and August is indicated under Fall rather than Summer.

Winter – As indicated above, some early spring migrants may be present during March or earlier, as with swallows. Likewise, some late fall migrants linger in November. However, these occurrences are omitted from the winter column so as to clearly indicate the status of each species as a winter visitor.

Season Abundance Codes

a – abundant, found in large numbers.
c – common to abundant, easily found in suitable habitat.
u – uncommon to fairly common, found when looked for in suitable habitat, but can be missed.
r – rare to very uncommon, more often missed than seen, even when looked for in suitable habitat.
o – occasional, normally less than five individuals per season during any given year, but to be looked for.
1-9 – number of records is less than ten records for the entire area, and not to be expected.

Habitat Codes

o – open water – restricted to the open water of the Salton Sea.
b – beach and mudflat – the shore line of Salton Sea and other areas of shallow water and mud including flooded fields.
m – marshes – cattail marshes and marshy areas along rivers and canals, and shallow lakes.

f – farmland – agricultural land found extensively throughout the Imperial Valley south of the Salton Sea; includes both planted and unplanted fields.

s – shrubland – mesquite thickets and other brushy areas. Some shrubland contains scattered trees.

r – riparian vegetation – areas of slat cedar and willows along waterways, and at some points along the shore of the Salton Sea.

a – aerial – strong flying species most often seen in the air.

h – houses and towns – immediate vicinity of ranch houses and the residential areas of towns and urban spaces. Here large trees and ornamental planting support a variety of landbirds.

Codes Listed Under Notes

Listed in the notes (N) column is information over and above the relative abundance shown for each season and it clarifies the status of some species in the area.

b – species regularly breeds in the area.

b+- species has bred in the area, and may continue to breed sporadically in the area, but is not expected to become a regularly nesting species.

l – species occurs only locally within the area.

e – an erratic species, occurring in numbers some years, but very scarce or even absent in others.

x – species formerly occurred in the area, but is now extirpated, occurring only as an accidental straggler if at all.

xb – an extirpated breeder formerly nesting in the area, but with no recent breeding records.

p – a post-breeding visitor to the area from the south, most numerous in the area between July and September.

*Indicates Endangered or Threatened Species

SPECIES	H	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi	N
Geese, Swans and Ducks						
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	m	o	o	o		
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	m	o	o			xb
Greater White-fronted Goose	fm	o	3	u	u	
Snow Goose	fom	r	o	c	a	
Ross's Goose	fom	r	o	c	a	
Cackling Goose	fom			o	o	
Canada Goose	fom	o	o	u	u	
Brant	om	r	r	o		
Tundra Swan	om				o	
Wood Duck	m	2	1		o	
Gadwall	mo	u	u	u	u	b+
Eurasian Wigeon	mo			o	o	

American Wigeon	mo	r	o	c	c	
American Black Duck					1	
Mallard	mfo	u	u	u	u	b
Blue-winged Teal	mo	r	o	u	u	
Cinnamon Teal	mfo	c	u	c	u	b
Northern Shoveler	bmo	c	r	a	a	
Northern Pintail	mo	u	o	c	c	
Baikal Teal					1	
Green-winged Teal	mo	u	o	c	c	
Canvasback	o	o	o	o	u	
Redhead	mo	u	u	u	u	b
Ring-necked Duck	mo	o	o	r	r	
Tufted Duck					1	
Greater Scaup	o	o	o		u	
Lesser Scaup	o	o	o	u	c	
Surf Scoter	o	r	o	o	o	
White-winged Scoter	o	o	o		o	
Black Scoter		2	7		o	
Long-tailed Duck	o	o	2		o	
Bufflehead	o	o	o		u	b+
Common Goldeneye	o	o	o		u	
Barrow's Goldeneye					7	
Hooded Merganser	mo	1	1		r	
Common Merganser	o	o	7		o	
Red-breasted Merganser	o	r	o	r	o	
Ruddy Duck	om	c	u	c	a	b
Pheasants						
Ring-necked Pheasant	f	u	u	u	u	b
New World Quail						
Gambel's Quail	s	c	c	c	c	b
Loons						
Red-throated Loon		4		3	4	
Pacific Loon	o	o		o	1	
Common Loon	o	r		r	4	
Grebes						
Least Grebe				1		
Pied-billed Grebe	mo	c	c	c	c	b
Horned Grebe	o	o	5	o	o	
Red-necked Grebe				1		
Eared Grebe	om	c	u	c	c	b+
Western Grebe	om	u	u	u	u	b
Clark's Grebe	om	u	u	u	u	b
Albatrosses						

Laysan Albatross		3	1			
Petrels and Shearwaters						
Cook's Petrel				3		
Wedge-tailed Shearwater				1		
Buller's Shearwater				1		
Sooty Shearwater		1	7			
Storm-Petrels						
Leach's Storm-Petrel				1	1	
Black Storm-Petrel					3	
Least Storm-Petrel			1	2		
Boobies						
Blue-footed Booby	o			o	3	ep
Brown Booby	o			o	1	ep
Pelicans						
American White Pelican	oa	a	u	a	c	xb
Brown Pelican *	o	u	u	a	c	b+
Cormorants						
Brandt's Cormorant		1				
Neotropic Cormorant		3	4	2	1	
Double-crested Cormorant	o	a	a	a	a	b
Darters						
Anhinga		1			1	
Frigatebirds						
Magnificent Frigatebird	a		o	o	1	ep
Bitterns and Herons						
American Bittern	m	r	o	r	r	
Least Bittern	m	u	u	u	u	b
Great Blue Heron	bm	c	c	c	c	b
Great Egret	bfm	a	a	a	a	b
Snowy Egret	bm	a	a	a	a	b
Little Blue Heron	m	o	o	o	o	b+
Tricolored Heron	m	o	o	o	o	
Reddish Egret	mb		o	o	o	
Cattle Egret	fm	a	a	a	a	b
Green Heron	m	u	u	u	u	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	m	c	c	c	c	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron			1			
Ibises and Spoonbills						
White Ibis			2			
Glossy Ibis	f		o	o		
White-faced Ibis	fm	c	c	a	a	b
Roseate Spoonbill	bm	o	o	o	o	ep

Storks

Wood Stork	bm		r	o		p
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New World Vultures

Turkey Vulture	af	c	u	c	c	
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Kites, Eagles and Hawks

Osprey	ao	r	r	u	u	
White-tailed Kite	afr	r	r	u	u	b+
Bald Eagle	am		1	o	o	
Northern Harrier	afm	u	o	c	c	b+
Sharp-shinned Hawk	afh	r		u	u	
Cooper's Hawk	afh	u	2	u	u	
Harris's Hawk	sf		o	o	o	xb
Red-shouldered Hawk	hrs	o		o	o	
Broad-winged Hawk		1			2	
Swainson's Hawk	af	r	1	r	o	
Zone-tailed Hawk	af		1	o	o	
Red-tailed Hawk	af	u	o	c	c	b+
Ferruginous Hawk	af			u	u	
Rough-legged Hawk	af			o	o	
Golden Eagle		2		2	1	

Caracaras and Falcons

Crested Caracara					2	
American Kestrel	afh	c	c	c	c	b
Merlin	afh	r		r	r	
Peregrine Falcon	abf	u	u	u	u	
Prairie Falcon	af			r	r	

Rails, Gallinules and Coots

Black Rail	m	o	o	o	o	b
Clapper Rail *	m	u	u	u	u	b
Virginia Rail	m	u	r	u	u	b
Sora	m	u		c	c	
Common Moorhen	m	u	u	u	u	b
American Coot	mo	a	c	a	a	b

Cranes

Sandhill Crane	fm			c	c	
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Plovers

Black-bellied Plover	bf	c	r	c	c	
American Golden-Plover	fb	o		o		
Pacific Golden-Plover	fb	o		o	o	
Snowy Plover	b	u	u	u	u	b
Wilson's Plover			1			xb
Semipalmated Plover	b	c		c	u	

Piping Plover *				1		
Killdeer	fb	c	c	c	c	b
Mountain Plover	f			u	u	
Eurasian Dotterel					1	
Oystercatchers						
American Oystercatcher			1			
Stilts and Avocets						
Black-necked Stilt	bmf	a	a	a	a	b
American Avocet	bm	a	c	a	a	b
Sandpipers and Phalaropes						
Spotted Sandpiper	b	u		u	u	
Solitary Sandpiper	m	o		r	3	
Wandering Tattler	b	o		o	o	
Spotted Redshank		1				
Greater Yellowlegs	bmf	c	o	c	c	
Willet	b	c	r	c	c	
Lesser Yellowlegs	bmf	u		c	u	
Whimbrel	fb	c	o	c	8	
Long-billed Curlew	fb	c	u	c	a	
Hudsonian Godwit		1		1		
Marbled Godwit	b	c	u	c	c	
Ruddy Turnstone	b	r	3	o	o	
Black Turnstone	b	o	2	o	3	
Surfbird	b	1		o		
Red Knot	b	u	o	r	o	
Sanderling	b	u		r	o	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	b	r		o		
Western Sandpiper	b	a		a	u	
Little Stint		1				
Red-necked/Little Stint				1		
Least Sandpiper	bf	c		c	a	
White-rumped Sandpiper		4				
Baird's Sandpiper	bf	o		r		
Pectoral Sandpiper	bf	o		r	1	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		1				
Dunlin	b	c		u	u	
Curlew Sandpiper		3		1		
Stilt Sandpiper	b	r		u	r	
Buff-breasted Sandpiper				1		
Ruff	bf			o	o	
Short-billed Dowitcher	b	c		u	1	
Long-billed Dowitcher	bm	c	o	c	c	
Wilson's Snipe	m	u		u	u	

Wilson's Phalarope	bo	c		c	o	
Red-necked Phalarope	ob	c	o	c	o	
Red Phalarope	o	o	4	o		
Gulls, Terns and Skuas						
Laughing Gull	fbo	o	c	c	o	pb+
Franklin's Gull	fb	r	o	r		
Little Gull	bo	o	o	o	o	
Black-headed Gull					1	
Bonaparte's Gull	bo	c	r	c	u	
Heermann's Gull	bo	o	o	o	o	p
Mew Gull	bo	o	o		r	
Ring-billed Gull	fbo	a	c	a	a	
California Gull	bo	c	c	c	c	b
Herring Gull	bo	u	o	c	c	
Thayer's Gull	bo	o			r	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	bo	o		o	o	
Yellow-footed Gull	bo	o	c	c	r	p
Western Gull	bo	o	o	r	r	
Glaucous-winged Gull	bo	o	o		r	
Glaucous Gull	bo				o	
Sabine's Gull	o	o	6	r		
Black-legged Kittiwake	o		3	o	o	
Ross's Gull				1		
Least Tern	bo	o	o			
Gull-billed Tern	bf	c	c	o	5	b
Caspian Tern	bo	c	c	a	u	b
Black Tern	bf	c	r	a		
Common Tern	bo	o		r		
Arctic Tern		o		o		
Forster's Tern	bo	c	c	c	u	b
Royal Tern			4			
Elegant Tern	bo	o	o			
Black Skimmer	bo	c	c	c	4	b
Pomarine Jaeger	o	3	o	2	1	
Parasitic Jaeger	o	o	o	o	1	
Long-tailed Jaeger	o	o		o		
Auks, Murrelets and Puffins						
Ancient Murrelet		1	2			
Pigeons and Doves						
Rock Dove	h	c	c	c	c	b
Band-tailed Pigeon		1		4	3	
Eurasian Collared-Dove	h	c	c	c	c	b
Spotted Dove			1		1	xb+

White-winged Dove	hsf	c	c	r	o	b
Mourning Dove	hsf	a	a	a	a	b
Inca Dove	h	c	c	c	c	b
Common Ground-Dove	hs	c	c	c	c	b
Ruddy Ground-Dove	h	o	o	o	o	lb+
Cuckoos, Roadrunners and Anis						
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	r		o			
Greater Roadrunner	fs	u	u	u	u	b
Groove-billed Ani				l		
Barn Owls						
Barn Owl	hf	u	u	u	u	b
Typical Owls						
Flamulated Owl				l		
Western Screech-Owl	h	r	r	r	r	lb
Great Horned Owl	hf	r	r	r	r	b
Elf Owl				l		
Burrowing Owl	f	c	c	c	c	b
Long-eared Owl	r			o	o	
Short-eared Owl	f	o		r	r	
Northern Saw-whet Owl				l	l	
Goatsuckers						
Lesser Nighthawk	afs	c	c	u	o	b
Common Poorwill	s	o		o		
Whip-poor-will				l		
Swifts						
Black Swift		5	1			
Chimney Swift			1			
Vaux's Swift	a	u		u		
White-throated Swift	a	r		r	u	
Hummingbirds						
Broad-billed Hummingbird		1				
Black-chinned Hummingbird	h	u	u			b
Anna's Hummingbird	hs	u	u	u	u	b
Costa's Hummingbird	hs	u	u	r	r	b
Calliope Hummingbird	hs	r				
Rufous Hummingbird	h	u		r		
Allen's Hummingbird		6		2		
Kingfishers						
Belted Kingfisher	bmr	u		c	c	
Woodpeckers						
Lewis's Woodpecker	^h	o		o	o	e
Red-headed Woodpecker			1			

Acorn Woodpecker			1	4	3	
Gila Woodpecker	h	u	u	u	u	bl
Williamson's Sapsucker					1	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				1	7	
Red-naped Sapsucker	hr	r		r	r	
Red-breasted Sapsucker	hr			o	o	
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	sh	u	u	u	u	b
Nuttall's Woodpecker				1		
Northern Flicker	hs	c		c	c	
Tyrant Flycatchers						
Olive-sided Flycatcher	hrs	r		o		
Greater Pewee				1		
Western Wood-Pewee	hrs	c		u		
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher				1		
Alder Flycatcher				1		
Willow Flycatcher	rh	c		u		
Least Flycatcher				1	1	
Hammond's Flycatcher	rh	u		r		
Gray Flycatcher	sh	r		o	o	
Dusky Flycatcher	rsh	o		o		
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	rsh	c		u	1	
Black Phoebe	hfm	c	c	c	c	b
Eastern Phoebe	rh			o	o	
Say's Phoebe	f	u	o	c	c	b
Vermilion Flycatcher	h	o	o	r	r	xb
Dusky-capped Flycatcher					6	
Ash-throated Flycatcher	hrs	c	o	u	o	
Brown-crested Flycatcher			1			
Tropical Kingbird				4	2	
Cassin's Kingbird	hf	o		o	o	
Western Kingbird	hf	a	c	c		
Eastern Kingbird	hf	o		o		
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher		1		1		
Shrikes						
Loggerhead Shrike	sf	o	o	u	u	b
Northern Shrike					2	
Vireos						
Bell's Vireo	rs			o	o	
Plumbeous Vireo	hr			o	o	
Cassin's Vireo	hr	u		r	1	
Hutton's Vireo				1		
Warbling Vireo	rsh	c		u	2	
Red-eyed Vireo				2		

Jays and Crows

Western Scrub-Jay	hrs			o	o	e
Pinyon Jay					2	
American Crow	hf			o	o	e
Common Raven	fa	r	o	u	u	b

Larks

Horned Lark	f	u	u	c	c	b
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Swallows

Purple Martin	a	o		o		
Tree Swallow	a	c	o	c	c	
Violet-green Swallow	a	r		o		
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	a	c	c	c	u	b
Bank Swallow	a	u		r	r	
Cliff Swallow	a	c	c	c		b
Cave Swallow		2		1		
Barn Swallow	a	c	r	a	u	b+

Chickadees and Titmice

Mountain Chickadee				1	1	
Oak Titmouse					1	

Verdins

Verdin	s	c	c	c	c	b
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Nuthatches

Red-breasted Nuthatch	h			r	r	e
White-breasted Nuthatch				7	1	

Creepers

Brown Creeper	hr			o	o	
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Wrens

Cactus Wren	sh	u	u	u	u	b
Rock Wren	s			r	r	
Canyon Wren				1		
Bewick's Wren	rsh			r	r	
House Wren	rsh	r		u	u	
Winter Wren	r			o	o	
Marsh Wren	m	c	c	c	c	b

Kinglets

Golden-crowned Kinglet	r			o	o	e
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	rh	u		c	c	

Gnatcatchers

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	rs	u		u	u	
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	s	u	u	u	u	b

Thrushes

Western Bluebird	sh			r	r	e
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Mountain Bluebird	f			u	u	e
Townsend's Solitaire	rh	1		o	o	
Swainson's Thrush	rh	u	1	o		
Hermit Thrush	rh	r		r	r	
Rufous-backed Robin				1	1	
American Robin	h	u		u	u	e
Varied Thrush	1			4	2	
Mockingbirds and Thrashers						
Gray Catbird		1		1		
Northern Mockingbird	hs	c	c	c	c	b
Sage Thrasher	sf	r		o	o	
Brown Thrasher					3	
Bendire's Thrasher				1	3	
Curve-billed Thrasher					4	
Crissal Thrasher	s	r	r	r	r	b
Le Conte's Thrasher						xb
Starlings						
European Starling	hf	c	c	c	c	b
Wagtails and Pipits						
American Pipit	f	r		c	a	
Sprague's Pipit	f	o		o	o	
Waxwings						
Cedar Waxwing	h	r		r	r	e
Silky-Flycatchers						
Phainopepla	s	u	o	u	c	
Wood-Warblers						
Blue-winged Warbler				1		
Tennessee Warbler		3		1	1	
Orange-crowned Warbler	rsh	c		c	c	
Nashville Warbler	rh	c		r	o	
Virginia's Warbler		1		4	2	
Lucy's Warbler	r	o	o	o		b+
Northern Parula	rh	o		o	o	
Yellow Warbler	rsh	c		c	o	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	rh			o	o	
Magnolia Warbler				5		
Cape May Warbler				2	2	
Black-throated Blue Warbler				4		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	rsh	c		a	a	
Black-throated Gray Warbler	rh	c		u	o	
Townsend's Warbler	rh	u		r	o	
Hermit Warbler	rh	r		o		

Blackburnian Warbler				2		
Yellow-throated Warbler					1	
Pine Warbler				1		
Prairie Warbler				2		
Palm Warbler	r	o		o	o	
Bay-breasted Warbler		1				
Blackpoll Warbler		1				
Cerulean Warbler				1		
Black-and-white Warbler	rh	o		o	o	
American Redstart	r	o		r	r	
Prothonotary Warbler				1		1
Ovenbird		2		3	2	
Northern Waterthrush	r			o	o	
MacGillivray's Warbler	rsh	u		r		
Common Yellowthroat	rm	c	c	c	c	b
Hooded Warbler		1				
Wilson's Warbler	rsh	c		c	o	
Painted Redstart				2	2	
Yellow-breasted Chat	rs	r	r	r		b
Tanagers						
Summer Tanager	h	o		o	o	
Western Tanager	hrs	c		u		
Emberizids						
Green-tailed Towhee	s	r		r	o	
Spotted Towhee	sh	o		r	r	
Abert's Towhee	srh	c	c	c	c	b
American Tree Sparrow					5	
Chipping Sparrow	sh	u		u	r	
Clay-colored Sparrow		4		2	1	
Brewer's Sparrow	s	c		c	c	
Black-chinned Sparrow		3		3		
Vesper Sparrow	sf	u		u	u	
Lark Sparrow	hf	u	u	u	u	b
Black-throated Sparrow	s			o		
Sage Sparrow	s	r		r	r	
Lark Bunting	s	o			o	
Savannah Sparrow						
Savannah Sparrow	f	c		a	a	
"Large-billed Sparrow"	b		r	u	u	
Grasshopper Sparrow	f	o		o	o	
Le Conte's Sparrow					1	
Fox Sparrow	rh	o		o	o	
Song Sparrow	rm	c	c	c	c	b

Lincoln's Sparrow	rs	u		u	u	
Swamp Sparrow	m	o		o	o	
White-throated Sparrow	hrs	o		o	o	
Harris's Sparrow	hrs	o		o	o	
White-crowned Sparrow	hrs	c		c	c	
Golden-crowned Sparrow	hrs	o		o	o	
Dark-eyed Junco	hrs	r		r	r	
McCown's Longspur	f				o	
Lapland Longspur	f				r	
Smith's Longspur					2	
Chestnut-collared Longspur	f				r	
Grosbeaks and Buntings						
Pyrrhuloxia		1	1		2	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	h	o		o		
Black-headed Grosbeak	hr	c	o	u		
Blue Grosbeak	rs	u	u	u	1	b
Lazuli Bunting	rs	c		u		
Indigo Bunting	rs	o		o	1	
Painted Bunting				4	1	
Dickcissel				1		
Blackbirds and Orioles						
Bobolink		1	1	2		
Red-winged Blackbird	fm	a	a	a	a	b
Tricolored Blackbird	f	o		o	o	
Western Meadowlark	f	c	c	c	c	b
Yellow-headed Blackbird	mf	u	u	u	u	b
Brewer's Blackbird	hf	u	u	c	c	b
Common Grackle		1			1	
Great-tailed Grackle	hfm	a	a	a	a	b
Bronzed Cowbird	h	r	r	o		b
Brown-headed Cowbird	^fhr	c	c	c	c	b
Orchard Oriole				3	4	
Hooded Oriole	h	r	r	r		b
Baltimore Oriole	h	o		o		
Bullock's Oriole	hr	c	u	u	o	b
Scott's Oriole	h			o	o	
Finches						
Purple Finch	hr			o	o	e
Cassin's Finch	hr			o	o	e
House Finch	hs	c	c	c	c	b
Red Crossbill	h			o	o	e
Pine Siskin	rsh	o		r	r	e
Lesser Goldfinch	hs	r	r	u	u	b+

Lawrence's Goldfinch	s	r		o	o	e
American Goldfinch	hs	o		r	r	e
Evening Grosbeak				2	1	
Old World Sparrows						
House Sparrow	h	c	c	c	c	b

Mammals of the Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR

All mammals listed are considered resident species with the exception of the bats, which migrate on a seasonal basis like many of the birds.

Shrews

(family *Soricidae*)

Desert Shrew

(*Notiosorex crawfordi*)

This tiny, long-snouted mammal hunts for insects in woodrat nests and piles of debris at the base of desert plants.

Leaf-nosed Bats

(family *Phyllostomatidae*)

Mostly a typical group, leaf nosed bats are distinguished by their large eyes, and leaf shaped flap on their noses. They are the only bats seen here that hover when feeding.

California Leaf-nosed Bat

(*Macrotus californicus*)

An insect eater, this bat will hover above the ground and then swoop down to seize its prey.

Mexican Long-tongued Bat

(*Choeronycteris mexicana*)

This bat uses its long tongue, tipped with a brush of fleshy projections, to feed on pollen and nectar.

Evening Bats

(family *Vespertilionidae*)

Most North American bats are members of this family, distinguished by small eyes, short tail and a fleshy projection, or tragus, inside the ear. They typically emerge from their roosts in the evening to feed on flying insects. Most have an erratic flight pattern with many sudden turns.

California Myotis

(*Myotis californicus*)

This small, agile bat can veer suddenly sideways, up and down.

Western Pipistrel

(*Pipistrellus hesperus*)

Smallest bat in the U.S. with an 8-inch wingspan. Its flight is weak. Erratic, like that of a moth.

Big Brown Bat

(*Eptesicus fuscus*)

Recognizable by its large size wingspan of 12-13 inches. It has relatively slow wingbeats and an audible chatter.

Hoary bat

(*Lasiurus cinereus*)

This large rare bat has a wingspan up to 16 inches and is a strong, fast flier. It is the only bat with white-tipped hairs and it is a winter migrant to this area.

Western yellow Bat

(*Lasiurus ega*)

A large, rare, yellowish-buff bat that roosts in trees.

Spotted Bat

(*Euderma maculatum*)

This rare species is the only U.S. bat with white spots. When resting it curls up its long ears.

Pallid Bat

(*Antrozous pallidus*)

The only large, big eared bat with pale fur. Unique among evening bats, it takes scorpions and large insects from the ground.

Free-tailed Bats

(family *Molossidae*)

These bats have long, narrow wings and have a fast, direct flight. They also have long tail which extend well beyond the membrane connecting the hind legs. The species are difficult to tell apart, but the Brazillian free-tailed Bat is the most common in this area.

Mexican free-tailed Bat

(Tadarida brasiliensis)

Pocketed Free-tailed Bat
(Nyctinomops femorosacca)

Big Free-tailed Bat
(Nyctinomops macrotis)

Rabbits and Hares
(family Leporidae)

Desert Cottontail
(Sylvilagus audubonii)

Desert cottontails generally stay close to cover, but will use burrows other animals in areas of sparse vegetation.

Squirrels
(family Sciuridae)

Round-tailed ground Squirrel
(Spermophilus tereticaudus)

Active in mornings and evenings. It holds its thin tail over its back when running.

Pocket Gophers
(family Geomyidae)

Botta's Pocket Gopher
(Thomomys bottae)

These burrowing rodents have large yellow incisors that are always exposed because the lips close behind them. They feed on roots, and also cut off stems below ground and pull the plant into the burrow from below.

Pocket Mice and Kangaroo Rats
(family Heteromyidae)

These rodents have large, fur lined cheek pouches and derive all the moisture they require from seeds. Kangaroo rats have long hind legs and a tuft of white hair on the ends of their long tails. Compared to other mice, pocket mice have relatively smaller ears, shorter snouts, and longer hind feet and tails. Both pocket mice and kangaroo rats are strictly nocturnal, and are often seen on roads at night.

Little Pocket Mouse
(Perognathus longimembris)

Long-tailed Pocket Mouse
(Chaetodipus formosus)

Desert Pocket Mouse
(*Chaetodipus penicillatus*)

Spiny Pocket Mouse
(*Chaetodipus spinatus*)

Desert Kangaroo Rat
(*Dipodomys deserti*)

Merriam's kangaroo Rat
(*Dipodomys merriami*)

New World Rats and Mice (family *Cricetidae*)

Cactus Mouse
(*Peromyscus eremicus*)
Pale gray with large ears; nests in clumps of cactus, rock piles, and abandoned burrows.

Deer Mouse
(*Peromyscus maniculatus*)
Grayish-brown above, white below, with large ears and eyes.

Hispid Cotton Rat
(*Sigmodon hispidus*)
Common in agricultural fields and moist habitats. They have coarse, long fur that nearly hides their ears.

White-throated Woodrat
(*Neotoma albigula*)
With their large ears and eyes and silky fur, woodrats resemble overgrown deer mice. Nicknamed "packrats", they carry various objects into their burrows, which are hidden under large piles of sticks, cactus parts, and other debris.

Desert Woodrat
(*Neotoma lepida*)
The two species are similar, but the Desert Woodrat is paler in color.

Muskrat
(*Ondatra zibethicus*)
Muskrats build lodges of mud and marsh plants in freshwater wetlands. Webbed hind feet and flattened tails make them excellent swimmers

Old World Rats and Mice (family *Muridae*)

Black Rat

(Rattus rattus)

Omnivorous, but partial to grain, this rat is an excellent climber. Nests are sometimes made in tangled vines and trees.

Norway Rat

(Rattus norvegicus)

Larger and more aggressive than the Black Rat. Females may bear up to 12 litters per year of 2 to 22 young.

House Mouse

(Mus musculus)

It makes its own nest but lives in groups, sharing escape holes and eating areas.

Wolves, Foxes and the Coyote

(family Canidae)

Coyote

(Canis latrans)

Distinctive howls helps coyotes track each others' location and reunite members of the band. Doglike droppings full of hair are clues to their presence.

Desert Kit Fox

(Vulpes macrotis)

This pale, large-eared fox is a solitary nocturnal predator.

Raccoon, Ringtail and Coati

(family Procyonidae)

Raccoon

(Procyon lotor)

The raccoon is a solitary, nocturnal opportunist, common in wetland areas and near human habitation.

Weasels, Skunks, Badgers, Otters and Allies

(family Mustelidae)

Badger

(Taxidea taxus)

A powerful digger, this animal feasts mainly on small animals.

Western Spotted Skunk

(Spilogale gracilis)

Faster and more agile than the larger skunks, it also is a good climber.

Striped Skunk

(Mephitis mephitis)

The only serious predator of this skunk is the Great Horned owl.

Amphibians

The name amphibian means “double life” and refers to the fact that most amphibians spend part of the year on land but return to water to breed. It also reflects the change of an aquatic tadpole to a terrestrial adult frog or toad. In the spring and early summer, look for them gathering in shallow ponds where they mate and lay eggs.

Frogs and Toads

Woodhouse Toad

Red-spotted Toad

Bullfrog

Reptiles

Reptiles are egg laying animals that are protected by scales or horny plates. Most are found in brushy areas on the refuge and surrounding desert habitats. The exception to this is the Spiny Softshell turtle, which is found near water.

Turtles

Spiny Softshell

Lizards

Long-nosed Leopard Lizard

Desert Spiny Lizard

Side-blothed Lizard

Long-tailed Lizard

Flat-tailed Lizard

Western Whiptail

Snakes

Western Blind Snake

Coachwhip

Western Patch-nosed Snake

Glossy Snake

Gopher Snake

Common Kingsnake

Long-nosed Snake

Checkered Garter Snake

Western Diamondback Rattlesnake

Fish

Very few fish can tolerate the high salinity of the Salton Sea. In 1950, attempts were made to introduce several marine fish. These attempts resulted in the largest inland

fishery in California. Today, due to the increased salinity, only Tilapia exist in the Salton Sea. Freshwater species are found in rivers, canals and some marsh areas.

Freshwater Fish

Threadfin Shad

Carp

Red Shiner

Channel Catfish

White Catfish

Largemouth Bass

Mosquitofish

Sailfin Molly

Desert Pupfish

Saltwater Fish

Tilapia