

Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge

Bird list



This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

photo: Bill Lang



**Big Branch Marsh
National Wildlife Refuge**
61389 Hwy 434
Lacombe, LA 70445
985/882 2000

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD

August 2013



Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge was established in October 1994 and is one of over 560 National Wildlife Refuges. The refuge is located along the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, approximately 35 miles from New Orleans in Saint Tammany Parish, Louisiana. The purpose of the refuge is to protect a stretch of remaining natural shoreline of Lake Pontchartrain and to provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife species, with special emphases on migratory birds and endangered species.

The refuge is comprised of over 18,000 acres of coastal marsh, pine flatwoods, cypress brakes and hardwood forests.

Many woodland birds are year-round residents of the pine flat woods, including the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Many Red-cockaded Woodpeckers can be observed on or near the Boy Scout Road trail and overlook marked on the map. Spring and fall migrations bring many species of neotropical migrants through the refuge. A neotropical migrant is a bird that spends the summer in its breeding range in North America but migrates to Central or South America, or the Caribbean for its nonbreeding range in winter. More than 200 species are considered neotropical migrants. Many warblers, hummingbirds, shorebirds, songbirds and some hawks are neotropical migratory birds.

The refuge supports over 5,000 wintering waterfowl, including Mallards, Gadwall and Northern Pintails. At any time of year a wide variety of birds including shorebirds, wading birds, raptors, waterfowl, and songbirds can be sighted here. Brown pelicans and bald eagles are year-round residents of southeast Louisiana and are commonly seen at Big Branch Marsh.

Opportunities for bird watching on the refuge are plentiful, with over five miles of walking trails at Boy Scout Road, the Lemieux Road Educational Site, and almost four miles of more primitive trails near Paquet Road, Sapsucker Road, and at the end of Lucille Road. Big Branch Marsh maintains two public boat launches (one motorized, one non-motorized) at Lake Road and at the end of Sapsucker Road.

Birders interested in visiting the refuge should consult The American Birding Association's Code of Birding Ethics.

The following bird list contains 261 species, representing observations on and adjacent to Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. Sightings of unlisted species should be reported to: Refuge Manager, Big Branch Marsh NWR, 61389 HWY. 434, Lacombe, LA 70445

This list conforms to the nomenclature and arrangement established by the American Ornithologists' Union (1998). Symbols used in this brochure represent the following:

- Sp** Spring (March-May)
- S** Summer (June-August)
- F** Fall (September-November)
- W** Winter (December-February)
- 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)

Four primary habitats common where birds are expected to be found on the refuge are identified as follows:

- F** Forest
- A** Aerial Flyover
- W** Open Water
- M** Marsh
- Species of special concern*
- Non-native/exotic species ^



	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Su</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>Habitat</i>		<i>Sp</i>	<i>Su</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>Habitat</i>
Ducks Geese and Swans (Anatidae)						Ibises and Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)					
Black-bellied						___ White Ibis	U	U	U	U	M
___ Whistling-Duck	O	O			W	___ Glossy Ibis*	O	O	O	O	M
___ Greater White-fronted						___ White-faced Ibis	R	R	R	R	M
___ Goose			O	O	W	___ Roseate Spoonbill*		R	R		M
___ Snow Goose			U	U	W						
___ Canada Goose	R			R	M	New World Vultures (Cathartidae)					
___ Wood Duck	C	C	C	C	F	___ Black Vulture	C	C	C	C	A
___ Gadwall	U		U	C	W	___ Turkey Vulture	C	C	C	C	A
___ American Wigeon	U		U	C	W						
___ Mallard	U		U	U	W	Osprey (Family Pandionidae)					
___ Mottled Duck	C	C	C	C	W	___ Osprey*	U	U	U	U	M
___ Blue-winged Teal	C	R	C	C	W						
___ Northern Shoveler	R		O	U	W	Hawks, Kites, Eagles, and Allies (Accipitridae)					
___ Northern Pintail	U		U	C	W	___ Swallow-tailed Kite*	U	U			A
___ Green-winged Teal	O		U	U	W	___ Mississippi Kite	C	C	U		A
___ Canvasback	R		R	R	W	___ Bald Eagle*	U	R	U	U	A
___ Redhead				O	W	___ Northern Harrier	C		C	C	F
___ Ring-necked Duck			R	R	W	___ Sharp-shinned Hawk	U		U	U	F
___ Greater Scaup				R	W	___ Cooper's Hawk*	U	U	U	U	F
___ Lesser Scaup	U		R	C	W	___ Red-shouldered Hawk	C	C	C	C	F
___ Bufflehead	U		R	C	W	___ Broad-winged Hawk	U	U	U		F
___ Common Goldeneye				O	W	___ Red-tailed Hawk	C	C	C	C	F
___ Hooded Merganser*	R		R	O	F						
___ Red-breasted Merganser	R		R	U	W	Rails, Gallinules, and Coots (Rallidae)					
___ Ruddy Duck	R		R	R	W	___ Clapper Rail	U	U	U	U	M
New World Quail (Odontophoridae)						___ King Rail	U	U	U	U	M
___ Northern Bobwhite	U	U	U	U	F	___ Virginia Rail	U		U	U	M
___ Turkeys (Phasianidae)						___ Sora	O		U	U	M
___ Wild Turkey	R	R	R	R	F	___ Purple Gallinule	R	R			M
Loons (Gaviidae)						___ Common Gallinule	C	C	C	C	M
___ Common Loon	O		R	U	W	___ American Coot	C	C	C	C	M
Grebes (Podicipedae)											
___ Pied-billed Grebe	C	R	C	C	W	Plovers (Charadriidae)					
___ Horned Grebe	O		R	O	W	___ Black-bellied Plover				O	M
						___ Killdeer	C	C	C	C	F
Frigatebirds (Fregatidae)											
___ Magnificent Frigatebird		R			A	Stilts (Recurvirostridae)					
						___ Black-necked Stilt	C	C	C	U	M
Cormorants (Phalacrocoracidae)											
___ Double-crested Cormorant	C	C	C	C	W	Sandpipers, Phalaropes, and Allies (Scolopacidae)					
Darters (Anhinga)						___ Spotted Sandpiper	U		U	U	M
___ Anhinga	O	O	O	O	W	___ Solitary Sandpiper*	O		O		M
						___ Greater Yellowlegs	C		U	U	M
Pelicans (Pelicanidae)						___ Willet	R		R		M
___ American White Pelican	C		C	C	W	___ Lesser Yellowlegs	U		U	U	M
___ Brown Pelican*	C	C	C	C	W	___ Ruddy Turnstone			U		M
						___ Sanderling			R		M
Bitterns, Herons, and allies (Ardeidae)						___ Semipalmated Sandpiper*	O		O		M
___ American Bittern*	R		R	R	M	___ Western Sandpiper	U		U	U	M
___ Least Bittern*	U	U	O		M	___ Least Sandpiper	U		U	U	M
___ Great Blue Heron	C	C	C	C	M	___ Pectoral Sandpiper	O		O		M
___ Great Egret	C	C	C	C	M	___ Dunlin	U		U	U	M
___ Snowy Egret	C	C	C	C	M	___ Stilt Sandpiper	R		R		M
___ Little Blue Heron	U	C	U	U	M	___ Short-billed Dowitcher	R		R		M
___ Tricolored Heron	U	C	U	U	M	___ Long-billed Dowitcher	O		O	R	M
___ Cattle Egret ^	U	U	U	U	F	___ Wilson's Snipe	U		U	C	M
___ Green Heron	R	C	R	R	M	___ American Woodcock*	O		O	O	F
___ Yellow-crowned											
___ Night-Heron	O	U	O		M	Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers (Laridae)					
___ Black-crowned						___ Bonaparte's Gull	U			U	A
___ Night-Heron	O	U	R	R	M	___ Laughing Gull	C	C	C	C	A
						___ Herring Gull	U	R	U	U	A
						___ Ring-billed Gull	U	R	U	C	A
						___ Lesser Black-backed Gull				O	A
						___ Least Tern*	O	C	O		A

	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Su</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>Habitat</i>		<i>Sp</i>	<i>Su</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>Habitat</i>
___ Gull-billed Tern*		R	R		A	Jays and Crows (Corvidae)					
___ Caspian Tern*	U	U	U	U	A	___ Blue Jay	C	C	C	C	F
___ Black Tern			R		A	___ American Crow	C	C	C	C	F
___ Forster's Tern	C	C	C	C	A	___ Fish Crow	C	C	C	C	W
___ Royal Tern	U	C	C	C	A	Swallows (Hirundinidae)					
Pigeons and Doves						___ Purple Martin	C	C	U		A
(Columbidae)						___ Tree Swallow	C		C	C	A
___ Rock Pigeon ^			U	U	F	___ Northern Rough-winged					
___ Eurasian Collared-Dove ^	U	C	U	U	F	___ Swallow	U	U	U		A
___ White-winged Dove			O	O	F	___ Bank Swallow	U		U		A
___ Mourning Dove	C	C	C	C	F	___ Cliff Swallow	O		O		A
Cuckoos (Cuculidae)						___ Barn Swallow	C	C	C		A
___ Yellow-billed Cuckoo	R	U	U		F	Chickadees and Titmice					
Barn Owls (Tytonidae)						(Paridae)					
___ Barn Owl	U	U	U	U	F	___ Carolina Chickadee	C	C	C	C	F
Typical Owls (Strigidae)						___ Tufted Titmouse	C	C	C	C	F
___ Eastern Screech-Owl	R	U	U	U	F	Nuthatches (Sittidae)					
___ Great Horned Owl	C	C	C	C	F	___ Red-breasted Nuthatch			R	R	F
___ Barred Owl	C	C	C	C	F	___ Brown-headed Nuthatch*	C	C	C	C	F
Goatsuckers (Caprimulgidae)						Creepers (Certhiidae)					
___ Common Nighthawk	O	U	O		F	___ Brown Creeper	U			U	F
___ Chuck-will's-widow*	U	U	U		F	Wrens (Troglodytidae)					
Swifts (Apodidae)						___ House Wren	U			C	F
___ Chimney Swift	C	C	C		A	___ Winter Wren	O		O	R	F
Hummingbirds (Trochilidae)						___ Sedge Wren*	U		U	O	M
___ Ruby-throated	C	C	C		F	___ Marsh Wren	C		C	C	M
___ Hummingbird						___ Carolina Wren	C	C	C	C	F
___ Rufous Hummingbird				R	R	F	Gnatchatchers (Sylviidae)				
Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)						___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	C	C	C	C	F
___ Belted Kingfisher	C	C	C	C	W	Kinglets (Regulidae)					
Woodpeckers (Picidae)						___ Golden-crowned Kinglet	O		O	U	F
___ Red-headed Woodpecker*	U	U	U	U	F	___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	C		C	C	F
___ Red-bellied Woodpecker	C	C	C	C	F	Thrushes (Turdidae)					
___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	U		C	C	F	___ Eastern Bluebird	C	C	C	C	F
___ Downy Woodpecker	C	C	C	C	F	___ Hermit Thrush	O			O	F
___ Hairy Woodpecker	U	R	U	U	F	___ Wood Thrush*		O			F
___ Red-cockaded						___ American Robin	C		U	U	F
___ Woodpecker*	U	U	U	U	F	Mockingbirds and					
___ Northern Flicker	C	C	C	C	F	Thrashers (Mimidae)					
___ Pileated Woodpecker	C	C	C	C	F	___ Gray Catbird	U		C	C	S
Falcons (Falconidae)						___ Northern Mockingbird	C	C	C	C	F
___ American Kestrel*	C		C	C	F	___ Brown Thrasher	C	C	C	C	S
___ Merlin	U		U	U	F	Starlings (Sturnidae)					
___ Peregrine Falcon*			R	R	F	___ European Starling ^	C	C	C	C	F
Tyrant Flycatchers (Tyrannidae)						Pipits (Motacillidae)					
___ Eastern Wood-Pewee	C	C	C		F	___ American Pipit	R		R	U	F
___ Acadian Flycatcher	U	U	U		F	Waxwings (Bombycillidae)					
___ Alder Flycatcher			O		F	___ Cedar Waxwing	C		R	C	F
___ Least Flycatcher			R		F	Warblers (Parulidae)					
___ Eastern Phoebe	C		U	C	F	___ Worm-eating Warbler*	O	R	R		F
___ Great Crested Flycatcher	U	C	U		F	___ Northern Waterthrush	O		U		F
___ Eastern Kingbird	C	C	C		F	___ Blue-winged Warbler*	U		U		F
Shrikes (Laniidae)						___ Black-and-white Warbler	O		O		F
___ Loggerhead Shrike*	C	C	C	C	F	___ Prothonotary Warbler*	C	C	U		F
Vireos (Vireonidae)						___ Swainson's Warbler*	O		O		F
___ White-eyed Vireo	C	C	C	U	F	___ Tennessee Warbler	U		U		F
___ Yellow-throated Vireo	C	C	C		F	___ Orange-crowned Warbler	U		U	C	F
___ Blue-headed Vireo	U		U	C	F	___ Kentucky Warbler*	U		U		F
___ Red-eyed Vireo	C				F	___ Common Yellowthroat	C	C	C	C	F
						___ Hooded Warbler	U	U			F
						___ American Redstart*	R	U	U		F

	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Su</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>Habitat</i>
___ Northern Parula	C	C	C		F
___ Magnolia Warbler	R		R		F
___ Bay-breasted Warbler	R		R		F
___ Yellow Warbler	O		U		F
___ Palm Warbler	U		U	C	F
___ Pine Warbler	C	C	C	C	F
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	C		U	C	F
___ Yellow-throated Warbler	O	O	O	R	F
___ Prairie Warbler*	R		R		F
___ Black-throated Green Warbler				R	F
___ Canada Warbler*			R		F
___ Wilson's Warbler	R		O	R	F
___ Yellow-breasted Chat	U		U		F

Emberizids (Emberizidae)

___ Eastern Towhee	C	C	C	C	F
___ Bachman's Sparrow*	U	R	R	R	F
___ Chipping Sparrow	U			U	F
___ Field Sparrow	R		R	U	F
___ Vesper Sparrow	R		R	R	F
___ Lark Sparrow*	R		R		F
___ Savannah Sparrow	C		O	C	M
___ Henslow's Sparrow*	O		R	R	F
___ Le Conte's Sparrow*	O		R	R	F
___ Nelson's Sparrow*	R		R	U	M
___ Seaside Sparrow*	U	U	U	U	M
___ Song Sparrow	U		R	C	M
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	U			R	F
___ Swamp Sparrow	C		C	C	M
___ White-throated Sparrow	C		U	U	F
___ White-crowned Sparrow	O		R	U	F
___ Dark-eyed Junco	R		R	U	F

Tanagers, Cardinals, Saltators, and Allies (Cardinalidae)

___ Summer Tanager	U	U	U		F
___ Scarlet Tanager	R		R		F
___ Northern Cardinal	C	C	C	C	F
___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak	U		U		F
___ Blue Grosbeak	U		U		F
___ Indigo Bunting	U	U	U		F
___ Painted Bunting*		U			F
___ Dickcissel*			R		F

Blackbirds (Icteridae)

___ Red-winged Blackbird	C	C	C	C	M
___ Eastern Meadowlark	U	U	U	U	F
___ Rusty Blackbird*	O		O	U	M
___ Brewer's Blackbird				R	F
___ Common Grackle	C	C	C	C	F
___ Boat-tailed Grackle	C	C	C	C	M
___ Bronzed Cowbird	U	U			F
___ Brown-headed Cowbird	C	C	C	C	F
___ Orchard Oriole*	U	U	O		F
___ Baltimore Oriole			R		F

Frigilline and Cardueline Finches and Allies (Fringillidae)

___ House Finch ^	U	U	U	U	F
___ Pine Siskin				R	F
___ American Goldfinch	U		R	C	F

Old World Sparrows (Passeridae)

___ House Sparrow ^	U	U	U	U	F
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Reporting Your Sightings On eBird

This online checklist program provides birders and U.S. Fish and Wildlife staff with updated birding reports. The database maximizes the utility and accessibility of bird observations made each year by both recreational and professional bird watchers. The program is one of the largest and fastest growing biodiversity data resources in existence. The reports on eBird serve as a vital foundation for better understanding bird distribution. The program resources are free to access and are used by a global community of educators, land managers, ornithologists, and conservation biologists.



Responsible birders should abide by the American Birding Association's Code of Birding Ethics. More information can be found at <http://www.aba.org>

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.
2. Respect the law, and the rights of others.
3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.
4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

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