

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Cape Romain

## *National Wildlife Refuge Bird List*



*Welcome to the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. Established in 1932 as a refuge for migratory birds, Cape Romain includes 37,000 acres of salt marsh and pristine barrier islands comprised of sandy beaches, maritime forests, and fresh and brackish water impoundments. The Refuge also encompasses 30,000 acres of State-owned bays, rivers and creeks that are managed under a lease agreement with the State of South Carolina. Cape Romain NWR provides these fascinating and diverse habitats for a great variety and number of birds throughout the year. The refuge fulfills its primary purpose of benefitting seabirds, waterfowl and shorebirds during migration and through the winter season, and offers forage, cover, nesting and roosting areas for birds of prey, wading birds, and neotropical and resident songbirds. Cape Romain NWR is designated as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Site of International Importance and is one of only four sites on the Atlantic Coast of the United States and Canada.*

*photo: USFWS*

*Royal Terns*

*Cape Romain  
National  
Wildlife  
Refuge*



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

Cape Romain NWR is crucial to the survival of species listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern. The threatened Wood Stork can be seen foraging for small fish and tadpoles in the impoundments and roosting in tall trees close by, while the Bald Eagle hunts for fish in the creeks and open waterways. The refuge oyster reefs provide valuable foraging ground for the American Oystercatcher, supporting the largest overwintering population of American Oystercatchers on the East Coast. The oystercatcher is a species of "high concern" under the US Shorebird Conservation Plan. For the threatened Piping Plover, the refuge provides critical beach habitat to rest and feed during the non-breeding season.



*American  
Oystercatcher*

Designated an Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy, Cape Romain Refuge furnishes important habitat for nesting seabirds, shorebirds and colorful neotropical migrants. Refuge beaches provide nesting sites for such species as the Black Skimmer, Wilson's Plover, and the threatened Least Tern. The Painted Bunting, Parula Warbler, Summer Tanager



*Painted Bunting*

and other migratory songbirds use the forested areas as breeding habitat during the summer months.



*Blue-winged Teal*

Bulls Island, at approximately 5000 acres, is the largest of the four refuge barrier islands and the most visited. With intricate tidal creeks, several shallow fresh and brackish water ponds, lower and upper level salt marshes, sandy beach, and dense wooded forest of live oak, pine and palmetto, Bulls Island has long been known as a haven for wildlife.

*photos: Danny Bales*



*Wilson's Plover*

This bird list includes 293 species of birds which have been recorded on the refuge, principally on Bulls Island, and is based on observations by refuge personnel and ornithologists. Another 26 species considered accidental, extirpated or extinct are listed separately. If you see a bird not listed, please report your sighting to the refuge manager at [caperomain@fws.gov](mailto:caperomain@fws.gov) or by calling 843/928 3264.

*Seasonal Appearance*

Spring (Sp).....March-May

Summer (S).....June-August

Fall (F).....September-November

Winter (W).....December-February

*Seasonal Abundance*

(A) Abundant common species – 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, or did so in recent years

**Listed Separately:**

Accidental – extremely rare; birds completely outside of their normal range

Extirpated – birds no longer found within the refuge and adjacent areas

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>		<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
<b>Waterfowl</b>									
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	--	--	--	R	Storks	C	C	C	C
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	--	--	--	R	Wood Stork				
Greater White-fronted Goose	--	--	--	R	Gannets, Cormorants & Darters				
Snow Goose	--	--	R	R	Northern Gannet	--	--	U	U
Brant	--	--	--	R	Double-crested Cormorant	A	C	A	A
Canada Goose	R	O	O		Great Cormorant	--	--	R	R
Tundra Swan	R	--	C	C	Anhinga	U	U	O	R
Wood Duck*	C	C	C	C	Pelicans				
Gadwall*	C	O	C	C	American White Pelican	U	--	U	U
Eurasian Wigeon	--	--	--	R	Brown Pelican*	A	A	C	C
American Wigeon	C	--	A	A	Bitterns, Herons, Ibis & Spoonbills				
American Black Duck	U	--	U	U	American Bittern	U	--	U	U
Mallard	C	--	C	C	Least Bittern*	U	C	U	R
Mottled Duck*	U	C	U	U	Great Blue Heron*	C	C	C	C
Blue-winged Teal*	C	U	C	C	Great Egret*	C	C	C	C
Cinnamon Teal	--	--	--	R	Snowy Egret*	C	C	C	C
Northern Shoveler	C	--	C	C	Little Blue Heron*	C	C	C	C
Northern Pintail	C	--	C	C	Tricolored Heron*	C	C	C	C
Green-winged Teal	C	--	C	C	Reddish Egret*	O	U	U	O
Canvasback	C	--	C	C	Cattle Egret*	C	C	R	R
Redhead	O	--	U	C	Green Heron*	C	C	U	U
Ring-necked Duck	C	--	C	C	Black-crowned Night-Heron*	C	C	C	C
Greater Scaup	O	--	U	U	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	U	C	O	U
Lesser Scaup	C	--	C	A	White Ibis	C	C	C	O
Harlequin Duck	--	--	R	R	Glossy Ibis*	U	C	O	U
Surf Scoter	O	--	U	U	Roseate Spoonbill	--	O	O	--
White-winged Scoter	U	--	--	U	Hawk, Kites, Eagles & Allies				
Black Scoter	U	--	C	C	Black Vulture*	C	C	C	C
Long-tailed Duck	--	--	U	U	Turkey Vulture*	C	C	C	C
Bufflehead	C	--	C	A	Osprey *	C	C	C	U
Common Goldeneye	--	--	U	U	Swallow-tailed Kite	O	U	R	--
Hooded Merganser	C	C	--		Mississippi Kite	U	U	R	--
Common Merganser	--	--	R	R	Bald Eagle*	U	U	C	C
Red-breasted Merganser	C	R	C	C	Northern Harrier	C	--	C	C
Ruddy Duck	O	R	C	C	Sharp-shinned Hawk	C	O	C	C
<b>New World Quail</b>					Cooper's Hawk*	O	O	O	O
Northern Bobwhite*	U	U	U	U	Red-shouldered Hawk*	U	U	U	U
<b>Turkeys</b>					Broad-winged Hawk	R	--	R	--
Wild Turkey*	U	U	U	U	Red-tailed Hawk*	U	U	C	C
<b>Loons &amp; Grebes</b>					Golden Eagle	--	--	--	R
Red-throated Loon	R	--	R	U	Falcons				
Common Loon	O	R	C	C	American Kestrel	U	R	C	C
Pied-billed Grebe*	C	C	A	A	Merlin	U	--	U	U
Horned Grebe	U	--	U	C	Peregrine Falcon	U	--	C	C
Red-necked Grebe	--	--	--	R					

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>		<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
<b>Rails &amp; Allies</b>					<b>Gulls &amp; Terns</b>				
Yellow Rail	--	--	--	R	Bonaparte's Gull	U	--	U	U
Black Rail*	--	R	--	--	Laughing Gull*	A	A	C	U
Clapper Rail*	A	A	A	A	Ring-billed Gull	C	O	C	U
King Rail*	O	U	O	O	Herring Gull	C	O	C	A
Virginia Rail	O	--	U	U	Lesser Black-backed Gull	U	--	U	U
Sora	O	--	U	U	Great Black-backed Gull	C	--	C	C
Purple Gallinule	R	R	R		Sooty Tern*	R	R	R	--
Common Moorhen*	C	A	C	C	Least Tern*	C	C	O	--
American Coot	C	U	A	A	Gull-billed Tern*	C	C	C	R
<b>Plovers</b>					Caspian Tern*	U	U	U	U
Black-bellied Plover	C	O	C	C	Black Tern	C	U	C	--
American Golden-Plover	R	--	R	--	Common Tern*	O	U	U	R
Wilson's Plover*	C	C	O	R	Forster's Tern*	C	C	C	C
Semipalmated Plover	C	C	C	C	Royal Tern*	A	A	C	U
Piping Plover	O	--	O	U	Sandwich Tern*	C	C	C	--
Killdeer*	U	U	C	C	<b>Skimmers</b>				
<b>Oystercatchers, Stilts &amp; Avocets</b>					Black Skimmer*	A	A	C	U
American Oystercatcher*	C	C	C	C	<b>Jaegers</b>				
Black-necked Stilt*	U	C	--	--	Parasitic Jaeger	--	--	R	R
American Avocet	R	--	R	--	<b>Pigeons &amp; Doves</b>				
<b>Sandpipers</b>					Rock Pigeon	O	O	O	O
Spotted Sandpiper	U	--	U	O	Mourning Dove*	C	C	C	O
Solitary Sandpiper	O	O	O	--	Common Ground-Dove*	U	C	O	O
Greater Yellowlegs	U	--	C	C	<b>Cuckoos</b>				
Willet*	A	A	C	C	Yellow-billed Cuckoo*	C	C	U	--
Lesser Yellowlegs	U	--	C	U	Black-billed Cuckoo	O	--	R	--
Upland Sandpiper	R	--	R	--	<b>Owls</b>				
Wimbrel	U	U	U	R	Barn Owl*	U	U	U	U
Long-billed Curlew	U	U	U		Eastern Screech-Owl*	C	C	C	C
Marbled Godwit	U	--	U	U	Great Horned Owl*	C	C	C	C
Ruddy Turnstone	C	U	C	C	Barred Owl*	U	U	U	U
Red Knot	U	--	U	U	Long-eared Owl	--	--	--	R
Sanderling	A	U	A	A	Short-eared Owl	--	--	--	U
Semipalmated Sandpiper	C	O	C	--	<b>Nightjars &amp; Swifts</b>				
Western Sandpiper	C	O	C	C	Common Nighthawk*	C	C	U	--
Least Sandpiper	C	U	C	C	Chuck-will's-widow*	C	C	O	--
White-rumped Sandpiper	U	--	O	--	Eastern Whip-poor-will	O	--	O	O
Pectoral Sandpiper	U	O	U	R	Chimney Swift*	C	C	A	--
Dunlin	A	O	C	A	<b>Hummingbirds</b>				
Stilt Sandpiper	R	--	R	--	Ruby-throated Hummingbird*	C	C	C	O
Ruff	R	--	--	--	<b>Kingfishers</b>				
Short-billed Dowitcher	C	C	C	C	Belted Kingfisher*	C	U	C	C
Long-billed Dowitcher	--	--	--	O					
Wilson's Snipe	U	--	C	C					
American Woodcock*	O	R	O	O					
Wilson's Phalarope	--	--	U	--					
Red-necked Phalarope	R	--	R	R					

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>		<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
<b>Woodpeckers</b>					<b>Wrens</b>				
Red-headed Woodpecker*	U	U	O	O	Carolina Wren*	C	C	C	C
Red-bellied Woodpecker*	C	C	C	C	House Wren	U	--	U	U
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	O	--	O	U	Winter Wren	O	--	O	O
Downy Woodpecker*	C	C	C	C	Sedge Wren	U	--	U	U
Hairy Woodpecker*	U	U	U	U	Marsh Wren*	C	A	C	C
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	R	R	R	R					
Northern Flicker*	C	C	C	C	<b>Gnatcatchers &amp; Kinglets</b>				
Pileated Woodpecker*	C	C	C	C	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	C	C	C	U
<b>Flycatchers</b>					Golden-crowned Kinglet	O	--	U	U
Eastern Wood-Pewee*	U	C	U	--	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	U	--	A	A
Acadian Flycatcher	C	U	U	--					
Eastern Phoebe	U	--	C	C	<b>Thrushes</b>				
Great Crested Flycatcher*	C	C	U	--	Eastern Bluebird*	U	U	U	U
Western Kingbird	--	--	--	R	Veery	U	--	U	--
Eastern Kingbird*	C	C	U	--	Gray-cheeked Thrush	U	--	U	--
Gray Kingbird	O	O	O	--	Swainson's Thrush	U	--	U	--
<b>Shrikes</b>					Hermit Thrush	U	--	U	C
Loggerhead Shrike*	C	C	O	O	Wood Thrush*	U	U	U	--
<b>Vireos</b>					American Robin	U	--	C	U
White-eyed Vireo*	U	U	U	O					
Yellow-throated Vireo*	O	O	O	--	<b>Mockingbirds &amp; Thrashers</b>				
Blue-headed Vireo	O	--	O	U	Gray Catbird*	U	O	C	C
Red-eyed Vireo*	C	A	C	--	Northern Mockingbird*	C	C	C	C
<b>Jays &amp; Crows</b>					Brown Thrasher*	C	C	C	C
Blue Jay*	C	C	C	C					
American Crow*	C	C	C	C	<b>Starlings</b>				
Fish Crow*	C	C	C	C	European Starling*	U	O	U	U
<b>Swallows</b>									
Purple Martin*	C	C	C	--	<b>Pipits</b>				
Tree Swallow	C	O	C	C	American Pipit	O	--	U	U
Northern Rough-winged Swallow*	C	C	U	--					
Bank Swallow	U	--	U	--	<b>Waxwings</b>				
Cliff Swallow*	U	R	U	--	Cedar Waxwing	C	--	C	C
Cave Swallow	--	--	--	R					
Barn Swallow*	A	A	C	R	<b>Longspurs</b>				
<b>Chickadees &amp; Titmice</b>					Lapland Longspur	--	--	--	R
Carolina Chickadee*	C	C	C	C	Snow Bunting	--	--	--	R
Tufted Titmouse	C	C	C	C					
<b>Nuthatches</b>					<b>Warblers</b>				
Red-breasted Nuthatch	R	--	--	R	Blue-winged Warbler	R	--	R	--
White-breasted Nuthatch*	U	U	U	U	Golden-winged Warbler	R	--	R	--
Brown-headed Nuthatch*	C	C	C	C	Tennessee Warbler	R	--	R	--
<b>Creepers</b>					Orange-crowned Warbler	O	--	O	O
Brown Creeper	O	--	O	O	Nashville Warbler	R	--	R	--

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
Blackburnian Warbler	O	--	O	--
Yellow-throated Warbler*	C	C	C	U
Pine Warbler*	C	C	C	C
Prairie Warbler*	U	U	U	O
Palm Warbler	U	--	C	U
Bay-breasted Warbler	R	R	--	--
Blackpoll Warbler	O	--	O	--
Black-and-white Warbler	U	--	U	U
American Redstart	C	O	C	--
Prothonotary Warbler	U	U	O	--
Worm-eating Warbler	U	--	U	--
Swainson's Warbler	O	--	O	--
Ovenbird	C	--	C	--
Northern Waterthrush	U	--	U	--
Louisiana Waterthrush	R	R	--	--
Kentucky Warbler*	--	U	O	--
Common Yellowthroat*	C	C	C	C
Hooded Warbler*	C	C	O	--
Wilson's Warbler	R	--	R	--
Canada Warbler	R	--	R	--
Yellow-breasted Chat*	U	O	O	O
<b>Sparrows</b>				
Eastern Towhee*	C	C	C	C
Bachman's Sparrow	O	R	R	O
Chipping Sparrow*	O	O	C	U
Clay-colored Sparrow	--	--	R	--
Field Sparrow*	O	O	O	U
Vesper Sparrow	O	--	U	U
Lark Sparrow	--	--	R	--
Savannah Sparrow	O	--	A	A
"Ipswich" Savanna Sparrow	--	--	--	O
Grasshopper Sparrow	--	--	--	R
LeConte's Sparrow	--	--	--	R
Nelson's Sparrow	O	--	C	C
Saltmarsh Sparrow	O	--	C	C
Seaside Sparrow*	U	U	C	C
Fox Sparrow	--	--	O	O
Song Sparrow	U	--	C	C
Lincoln's Sparrow	--	--	--	R
Swamp Sparrow	C	--	A	A
White-throated Sparrow	C	--	C	A
White-crowned Sparrow	--	--	--	R
Dark-eyed Junco	--	--	A	A
<b>Cardinals &amp; Allies</b>				
Summer Tanager*	C	C	C	--
Scarlet Tanager	R	--	R	--
Northern Cardinal*	C	C	C	C
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	R	--	R	--
Blue Grosbeak	C	U	U	--
Indigo Bunting*	C	U	U	--
Painted Bunting*	C	C	U	--

	<i>SP</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>
<b>Blackbirds</b>				
Bobolink	C	--	C	--
Red-winged Blackbird*	C	C	A	C
Eastern Meadowlark*	O	O	C	C
Common Grackle*	C	C	C	C
Boat-tailed Grackle*	A	A	A	A
Brown-headed Cowbird*	U	U	U	U
Orchard Oriole*	C	O	O	--
Baltimore Oriole	O	--	O	O
<b>Cardueline Finches</b>				
Purple Finch	O	--	--	O
House Finch	U	U	U	U
Pine Siskin	O	--	--	O
American Goldfinch	U	--	O	U
Evening Grosbeak	--	--	--	R
<b>Old World Sparrows</b>				
House Sparrow*	U	U	U	U

**This list is of accidentals, extirpated and extinct species known from the refuge.**

Mute Swan, Common Eider, Great Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Brown Booby, White-tailed Kite,

Swainson's Hawk, Purple Gallinule, Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane, Eskimo Curlew, Red Phalarope,

Glaucous Gull, Brown Noddy, Roseate Tern, Pomarine Jaeger, Razorbill, Say's Phoebe, Snowy Owl,

Fork-tailed Flycatchers, Bachman's Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, American Tree Sparrow,

Lark Bunting, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Redpoll

**Birding Ethics**

Observe birds without disturbing them. Avoid chasing or repeatedly flushing birds. Electronic call devices should be used sparingly even when they are permitted.

Keep an appropriate distance from nests and nesting colonies so as not to disturb the birds or expose them to danger.

Disturb wintering wildlife as little as possible, particularly during critical feeding and resting periods. They need all of their energy reserves to withstand the stresses of harsh weather and migration.

*photo: Danny Bales*



*Marbled Godwit*

*photo: Danny Bales*



*American Black Duck*

*photo: Steve Hillebrand*



*Black Skimmer*

Leave habitat as it was found. Many birds die when they become entangled in fishing lines, 6-pack rings and other trash, or when they mistake garbage for food.

#### **Acknowledgments**

Bird Listing revised by Dr. Dennis Forsythe with additional data from the late Robin Carter, Sarah Dawsey, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Nathan Dias, Cape Romain Bird Observatory.

Taxonomy and arrangement follow: American Ornithologists' Union. 2010. Fifty-first supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union *Check-list of North American Birds*. Auk 127:726-744.

#### **Sighting Notes**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Weather** \_\_\_\_\_

**No. of species** \_\_\_\_\_

**Route or area** \_\_\_\_\_

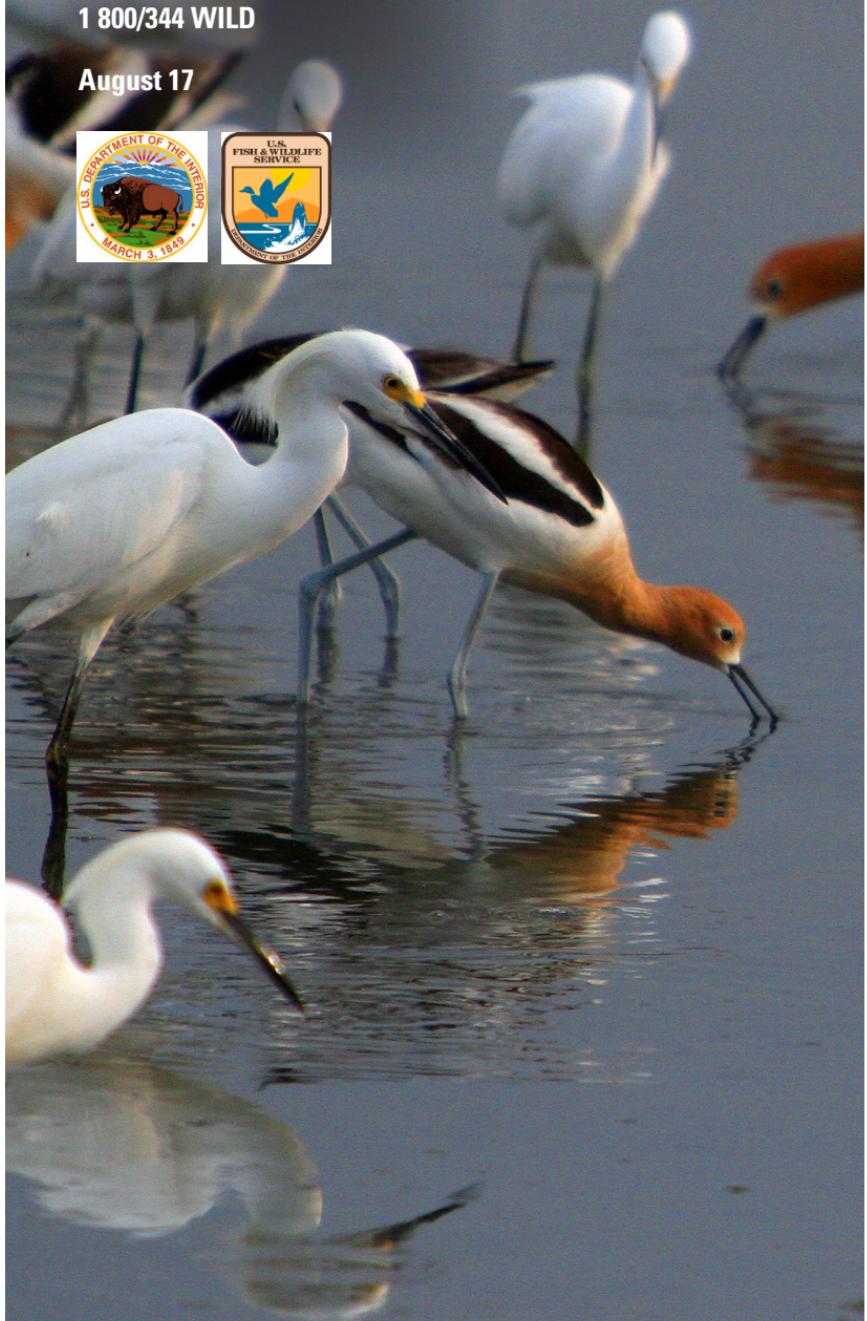
**Observers** \_\_\_\_\_

**Remarks** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cape Romain  
National Wildlife Refuge  
5801 Highway 17 North  
Awendaw, South Carolina 29429  
843/928 3264  
[https://www.fws.gov/refuge/cape\\_roman](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/cape_roman)**

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

**August 17**



*cover photo: Danny Bales, Snowy Egret*