**Birding Sandy Mush**

Sandy Mush Game Land is a state owned 2679 acre tract that is actively managed with prescribed fire to provide quality early successional habitat through native habitat restoration. This area is home to several of North Carolina’s Priority Bird Species

The Bear Creek Road Access enters a clear-cut habitat offering the birder an opportunity to see Prairie and Blue-winged Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Northern Bobwhite and Yellow-billed Cuckoos and White-eyed Vireo. Walk the main dirt road towards Sandy Mush Creek and enter a deciduous forest of singing Wood Thrush, Acadian Flycatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Scarlet Tanagers.

The Cedar Hill Road Access allows for easy ridge top walking through forest and fields where Indigo Bunting, Field Sparrow and Northern Parula may be observed. In the kiosk parking lot located across from the Cedar Hill Baptist Church, Orchard Oriole may be seen in the nearby trees. The brushy habitat with mixed food plots below the kiosk is a good area to view wintering Sparrows such as White-crowned, White-throated, Fox, Song, Field, and Swamp. Listen for Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Kingbird and Eastern Meadowlark in the big hayfields near the fork of Cedar Hill Rd and Old SR 20.

The Martin Candler Access has numerous planted fields and good scrub-shrub habitat. Yellow-breasted Chats, Blue Grosbeaks, American Kestrels, Eastern Bluebird, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and numerous wintering Sparrows and Finches can be seen here.

The Old SR 20 Access has many of the same birds seen elsewhere. However, the Wild Turkey and Ruffed Grouse can be heard in spring, while an encounter with the Wood Duck along Turkey Creek is a good possibility.

The following list contains 153 species of birds observed by NCWRC biologists and Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society members since 2005. Some species were observed on land adjacent to the game land. Bird data for the game land is incomplete, and the checklist may not contain all credible sightings. We encourage birders to report anysightings of birds, butterflies, dragonflies or any other wildlife on the Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society’s web page @ [www.emasnc.org](http://www.emasnc.org) Under “Local Wildlife Sightings” submit to [emas@freelists.org](mailto:emas@freelists.org)

Put Sandy Mush Game Land in the Subject heading.

**Seasonal Occurrences & Relative Abundance**

**(in suitable habitat)**

**S -Spring** March-May

**s –Summer** June-August

**F –Fall** Sept-November

**W-Winter** December-February

**C-Common**: Seen regularly in suitable habitat

**F-Fairly Common:** Likely to be seen in suitable habitat

**U-Uncommon**: Present, but may not be seen

**O-Occasional:** Seen only a few times during a season

**R-Rare**: Not seen every year

A- Accidental: Seen only once.

**Ducks, Geese and Swans S s F W**

Canada Goose F F F F

Wood Duck F F F F

Mallard O O O O

\_\_\_\_\_Blue-winged Teal R

Hooded Merganser R

**Game Birds**

\_\_\_\_\_Northern Bobwhite C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Ruffed Grouse C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Wild Turkey C C C C

**Loons**

\_\_\_\_\_Common loon R

**Cormorants**

\_\_\_\_\_Double-crested cormorant R R

**Bitterns, Herons and Allies**

\_\_\_\_\_Great Blue Heron F F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Great Egret R

\_\_\_\_\_Green Heron U

**Vultures, Hawks, Eagles and Allies**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Black Vulture C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Turkey Vulture C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Swallow-tailed Kite A

\_\_\_\_\_Osprey U O O

\_\_\_\_\_Bald Eagle R R

\_\_\_\_\_Northern Harrier U U U

\_\_\_\_\_Sharp-shinned Hawk F F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Cooper’s Hawk F F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Red-shouldered Hawk F F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Broad-winged Hawk F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Red-tailed Hawk C C C C

**\_\_\_\_\_**American Kestrel C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Peregrine Falcon R

**S s F W**

**Cranes and Rails**

\_\_\_\_\_Sandhill crane R R

**Sandpipers, Phalaropes and Allies**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Spotted Sandpiper O O

\_\_\_\_\_Solitary Sandpiper R R

\_\_\_\_\_Upland Sandpiper R

\_\_\_\_\_Wilson’s Snipe U

\_\_\_\_\_American Woodcock U U U U

**Pigeons and Doves**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Rock Pigeon R R

**\_\_\_\_\_**Mourning Dove C C C C

**Cuckoos**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Yellow-Billed Cuckoo C C C

**Barn Owls and Typical Owls**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Barn Owl U U U U

\_\_\_\_\_Eastern Screech Owl C C F U

\_\_\_\_\_Great Horned Owl F F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Barred Owl F F F F

**Goatsuckers**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Eastern Whip-poor-will F U

**Swifts and Hummingbirds**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Chimney Swift C C C

**\_\_\_\_\_**Ruby-throated Hummingbird C C C

**Kingfishers and Woodpeckers**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Belted Kingfisher C C C

**\_\_\_\_\_**Red-headed Woodpecker R R

\_\_\_\_\_Red-bellied Woodpecker C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Yellow-bellied Sapsucker C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Downy Woodpecker C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Hairy Woodpecker F F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Northern Flicker C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Pileated Woodpecker C C C C

**Tyrant Flycatchers**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Eastern Wood-pewee F F

\_\_\_\_\_Acadian Flycatcher C C

\_\_\_\_\_Willow Flycatcher R

\_\_\_\_\_Eastern Phoebe C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Great Crested Flycatcher F F

\_\_\_\_\_Eastern Kingbird F F

**Vireos**

**\_\_\_\_\_**White-eyed Vireo C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Yellow-throated Vireo U U

**S s F W**

\_\_\_\_\_Blue-headed Vireo F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Red-eyed Vireo C C C

**Jays and Crows**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Blue Jay C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_American Crow C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Common Raven O O O

**Swallows**

**\_\_\_\_\_**Purple Martin R O

**\_\_\_\_\_**Tree Swallow F F

\_\_\_\_\_Northern Rough-winged SwallowF F

**\_\_\_\_\_**Bank Swallow R

\_\_\_\_\_Cliff Swallow R

\_\_\_\_\_Barn Swallow F F

**Chickadees and Titmice**

\_\_\_\_\_Carolina Chickadee C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Tufted Titmouse C C C C

**Nuthatches**

\_\_\_\_\_Red-breasted Nuthatch U U U

\_\_\_\_\_White-breasted Nuthatch C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Brown-headed Nuthatch F F F F

**Creepers**

**\_**\_\_\_\_Brown Creeper U U U

**Wrens**

\_\_\_\_\_Carolina Wren C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_House Wren U F U

\_\_\_\_\_Winter Wren U R U U

\_\_\_\_\_Marsh Wren R

**Gnatcatchers and Kinglets**

\_\_\_\_\_Blue-gray Gnatcatcher C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Golden-crowned Kinglet F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Ruby-crowned Kinglet U U U

**Thrushes**

\_\_\_\_\_Eastern Bluebird C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Gray-cheeked Thrush R

\_\_\_\_\_Swainson’s Thrush F

\_\_\_\_Hermit Thrush U U U

\_\_\_\_Wood Thrush F F U

\_\_\_\_American Robin C C C C

**Mockingbirds and Thrashers**

\_\_\_\_Gray Catbird F C F

\_\_\_\_Northern Mockingbird C C C C

**S s F W**

\_\_\_\_Brown Thrasher F F U U

**Starlings**

\_\_\_\_European Starling C C C C

**Wagtails and Pipits**

\_\_\_\_American Pipits R

**Waxwings**

\_\_\_\_\_Cedar Waxwing C C C F

**Wood-Warblers**

\_\_\_\_\_Ovenbird C C

\_\_\_\_\_Worm-eating Warbler F F

\_\_\_\_\_Louisiana Waterthrush F F

\_\_\_\_\_Blue-winged Warbler U U

\_\_\_\_\_Black-and-white Warbler F F

\_\_\_\_\_Tennessee Warbler F

\_\_\_\_\_Orange-crowned Warbler R

\_\_\_\_\_Nashville Warbler O

\_\_\_\_\_Kentucky Warbler O O

\_\_\_\_\_Common Yellowthroat C C F

\_\_\_\_\_Hooded Warbler C C F

\_\_\_\_\_American Redstart U U F

\_\_\_\_\_Cape May Warbler R

\_\_\_\_\_Northern Parula C C F

\_\_\_\_\_Magnolia Warbler U

\_\_\_\_\_Blackburnian Warbler O O

\_\_\_\_\_Yellow Warbler O

\_\_\_\_\_Blackpoll Warbler U

\_\_\_\_\_Black-throated Blue Warbler U

\_\_\_\_\_Palm Warbler F

\_\_\_\_\_Pine Warbler F F U U

\_\_\_\_\_Chestnut-sided Warbler F

\_\_\_\_\_Yellow-rumped Warbler F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Yellow-throated Warbler F F

\_\_\_\_\_Prairie Warbler C C

\_\_\_\_\_Black-throated Green Warbler F F

\_\_\_\_\_Yellow-breasted Chat C C

**Towhees and Sparrows**

\_\_\_\_\_Eastern Towhee C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Chipping Sparrow F F F U

\_\_\_\_\_Field Sparrow C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Savannah Sparrow U U U

\_\_\_\_\_Grasshopper Sparrow F F O

\_\_\_\_\_Fox Sparrow R U U

\_\_\_\_\_Song Sparrow C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Swamp Sparrow U U F

\_\_\_\_\_White-throated Sparrow C C C

**S s F W**

\_\_\_\_\_White-crowned Sparrow C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Dark-eyed Junco C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Vesper Sparrow O

\_\_\_\_\_Clay-colored Sparrow R

\_\_\_\_\_Lincoln’s Sparrow O

**Cardinal, Tanagers and Allies S s F W**

\_\_\_\_\_Summer Tanager R

\_\_\_\_\_Scarlet Tanager F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Northern Cardinal C C C C

\_\_\_\_\_Rose-Breasted Grosbeak F

\_\_\_\_\_Blue Grosbeak F F

\_\_\_\_\_Indigo Bunting C C C

**Blackbirds and Orioles**

\_\_\_\_\_Red-winged Blackbird F F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Eastern Meadowlark F F F F

\_\_\_\_\_Rusty Blackbird R R

\_\_\_\_\_Common Grackle U U

\_\_\_\_\_Brown-headed Cowbird F F

\_\_\_\_\_Orchard Oriole U U

\_\_\_\_\_Baltimore Oriole O O

**Finches and Allies**

\_\_\_\_\_Purple Finch O O O

\_\_\_\_\_House Finch U U U U

\_\_\_\_\_Red Crossbill R R R

\_\_\_\_\_Pine Siskin O O O

\_\_\_\_\_American Goldfinch C C C C

**Notes**

**Observer(s):** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Start/End Times:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Weather Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Observation Type:** Stationary or Traveling

**Distance Traveled: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

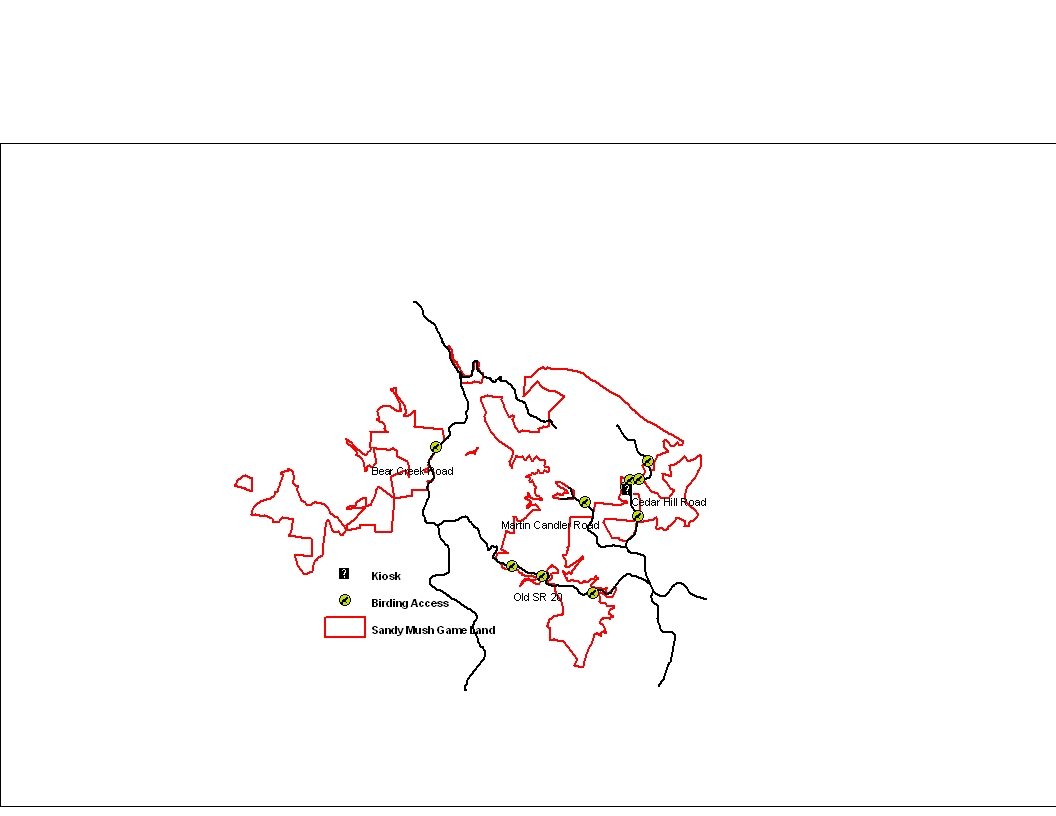
**Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**No. of Species: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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

[](http://emasnc.org/index.html)

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**Special Note**

Additional info can be obtained from the NCWRC website @ ncwildlife.org, NC Birding Trail @ncbirdingtrail.org and Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society @ emasnc.org or stop by the Sandy Mush Game Land Information Kiosk located across from the Cedar Hill Baptist Church on Cedar Hill Road (35°43′18.391N, 82°39′46.795W). Directions for the access points are available @ emasnc.org/ Revised 1/8/2013

**BIRDS**

**of**

**SANDY MUSH**

**GAME LANDS**



Illustration by Paul Thompson

12/23/10