

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Sonny Bono Salton Sea

National Wildlife Refuge

Wildlife List



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. Less than two thousand acres of agricultural fields and freshwater marsh remain manageable.

Located 228 feet below sea level, the Salton Sea is one of the lowest places in the United States. The sea 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 are slowly receding.

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.

Common egrets in the bulrush. D.B. Marshall/USFWS



An egret chick and egg in their nest

Enjoying the Refuge's Wildlife

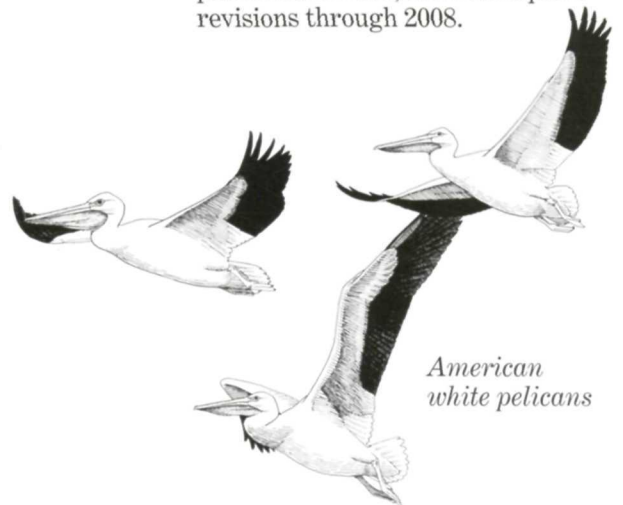
The study of wild animals in their natural habitat has become an increasingly popular pastime for many people. Viewing of wildlife can be greatly enhanced by a pair of binoculars or a spotting scope. This equipment allows the wildlife to be viewed at a distance, thus minimizing disturbance. Also, a good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



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 424 species that have been recorded at Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The common name and taxonomic order used in this list follows that appearing in the 6th edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check List of North American Birds, published in 1998, and subsequent revisions through 2008.



*American
white pelicans*

*Yuma clapper rail
strolls through the reeds*



Seasons

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

- 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 the 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 salt 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.

Habitat Codes
continued

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.

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.

Codes Listed Under Notes

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.

* – **Federally Endangered or Threatened Species**



Birds of Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	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	
Taiga/Tundra Bean Goose						1
Snow Goose	fom	r	o	e	a	
Ross' Goose	fom	r	o	e	a	
Cackling Goose	fom			o	o	
Canada Goose	fom	o	o	u	u	
Brant Goose	om	r	r	o		
Tundra Swan	om	2	1		o	
Wood Duck	m	2	1		o	
Gadwall	om	u	u	u	u	b+
Eurasian Wigeon	om			o	o	
American Wigeon	om	r	o	e	e	
American Black Duck						1
Mallard	fom	u	u	u	u	b+
Blue-winged Teal	om	r	o	u	u	
Cinnamon Teal	fom	e	u	e	u	b
Northern Shoveler	bmo	c	r	a	a	
Northern Pintail	om	r	r	e	e	
Baikal Teal						1
Green-winged Teal	om	u	o	e	e	
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	e	
Surf Scoter	o	r	o	o	o	
White-winged Scoter	o	o	o		o	
Black Scoter		2	7			
Long-tailed Duck	o	o	2			
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	e	u	e	a	b

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
Pheasants						
Ring-Necked Pheasant	f	u	u	u	u	b
New World Quail						
Gambel's Quail	s	e	e	e	e	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	mo	c	u	c	c	b+
Western Grebe	mo	u	u	u		b
Clark's Grebe	mo	u	u	u	u	b
Albatross						
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				
Double-crested Cormorant	o	a	a	a	a	b
Neotropic Cormorant		3	4	2	1	
Darters						
Anhinga		1			1	
Frigatebirds						
Magnificent Frigatebird	a		o	o	1	ep

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
Bitterns, Herons and Egrets						
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	e	e	e	
Yellow-crowned Night Heron			1			
Ibis and Spoonbills						
White Ibis			2			
Glossy Ibis	f		o	o		
White-faced Ibis	mf	c	c	a	a	b
Roseate Spoonbill	bm	o	o	o	o	ep
Stork						
Wood Stork	bm		r	o		p
New World Vultures						
Turkey Vulture	af	c	u	c	c	
Kites, Eagles and Hawks						
Osprey	ao	r	r	u	u	
White-tailed Kite	af	r	r	u	u	b+
Bald Eagle	am		1	o	o	
Northern Harrier	afm	u	o	e	e	b+
Sharp-shinned Hawk	afh	r		u	u	
Cooper's Hawk	afh	u	2	u	u	
Harris' 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	e	e	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	e	e	e	b
Merlin	afh	r		r	r	
Peregrine Falcon	abf	u	u	u	u	
Prairie Falcon	af			r	r	

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
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	om	a	c	a	a	b
Cranes						
Sandhill Crane	fm			c	c	
Plovers						
Black-bellied Plover	bf	c	r	c	c	
American Golden Plover	bf	o		o		
Pacific Golden-Plover	bf	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				

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
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	bo	c	o	c	o	
Red Phalarope	o	o	4	o		
Gulls, Terns and Skuas						
Black-legged Kittiwake	o		3	o	o	
Sabine's Gull	o	o	6	r		
Bonaparte's Gull	ob	c	r	c	u	
Black-headed Gull					1	
Little Gull	b	o	o	o	o	
Ross's Gull				1		
Laughing Gull	obf	o	c	c	o	pb+
Franklin's Gull	fb	r	o	r		
Heermann's Gull	ob	o	o	o	o	b+
Mew Gull	ob	o	o		r	
Ring-billed Gull	obf	a	c	a	a	
Western Gull	bo	o	o	r	r	
Yellow-footed Gull	ob	o	c	e	r	p
California Gull	obf	c	c	c	c	b
American Herring Gull	ob	u	o	c	c	
Thayer's Gull	ob	o			r	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	ob	o		o	o	
Glaucous-winged Gull	ob	o	o		r	
Glaucous Gull	ob				o	
Bridled Tern			1			
Least Tern	ob	o	o			
Gull-billed Tern	bf	c	c	o	5	b
Caspian Tern	ob	c	c	a	u	b
Black Tern	bf	c	r	a		
Common Tern	ob	o		r		
Arctic Tern		o		o		6
Forster's Tern	ob	c	c	c	u	b

Gulls, Terns and Skuas *continued on next page*

Common Name **H** **Sp** **S** **F** **W** **N**

Gulls, Terns and Skuas *continued*

Royal Tern			4			
Elegant Tern	ob	o	o			
Black Skimmer	ob	c	c	c	4	b
Pomarine Jaeger	o	3	o	2	1	
Parasitic Jaeger	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	fsh	c	c	r	o	b
Mourning Dove	fsh	a	a	a	a	b
Inca Dove	h	c	c	c	c	b
Common Ground-Dove	sh	c	c	c	c	b
Ruddy Ground-Dove	h	o	o	o	o	lb+

Cuckoos

Yellow-billed Cuckoo	r		o			
Greater Roadrunner	sf	u	u	u	u	b
Groove-billed Ani				1		

Barn Owls

Barn Owl	hf	u	u	u	u	b
----------	----	---	---	---	---	---

Typical Owls

Flammulated Owl				1		
Western Screech-Owl	h	r	r	r	r	lb
Great Horned Owl	hf	r	r	r	r	b
Elf Owl				1		
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				1	1	

Goatsuckers

Lesser Nighthawk	afs	c	c	u	o	b
Common Poorwill	s	o		o		
Whip-poor-will				1		

Swifts

Black Swift		5	1			
Chimney Swift			1			
Vaux's Swift	a	u		u		
White-throated Swift	a	r		r	u	

Common Name **H** **Sp** **S** **F** **W** **N**

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	brm	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	e		u		
Least Flycatcher				1	1	
Hammond's Flycatcher	rh	u		r		
Dusky Flycatcher	hs	o		o		
Gray Flycatcher	hs	r		o	o	
Pacific-Slope Flycatcher	hrs	c		u	1	
Black Phoebe	hfm	c	c	c	c	b
Eastern Phoebe	rh			o	o	
Say's Phoebe	h	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	a		c	c	
Western Kingbird	hf	c	c	u	a	b

Tyrant Flycatchers *continued on next page*

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
Tyrant Flycatchers <i>continued</i>						
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, Magpies 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
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		3		1		
Barn Swallow	a	c	r	a	u	b+
Chickadees and Titmice						
Mountain Chickadee				1	1	
Oak Titmouse					1	
Verdin						
Verdin	s	c	c	c	c	b
Nuthatches						
Red-breasted Nuthatch	h			r	r	e
White-breasted Nuthatch				7	1	
Creepers						
Brown Creeper	hr			o	o	
Wrens						
Cactus Wren	sh	u	u	u	u	b
Rock Wren	s			r	r	
Canyon Wren				1		

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
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
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				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	

Wood Warblers *continued on next page*

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
Wood Warblers <i>continued</i>						
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	
Black-throated Green Warbler		1				
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		
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	hrs	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	

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
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' 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		b
Bullock's Oriole	hr	c	u	u	o	b
Scott's Oriole	h			o	o	

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
Finches						
Purple Finch	rh				o	
Cassin's Finch	rh				o	
House Finch	hs		c		c	
Red Crossbill	h				o	
Pine Siskin	rsh				r	
Lesser Goldfinch	hs		r		u	
Lawrence's Goldfinch	s				o	
American Goldfinch	hs				r	
Evening Grosbeak					l	

Old World Sparrows

House Sparrow	h		c		c	
---------------	---	--	---	--	---	--

Mammals of the Refuge



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 tropical 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
(*Parastrellus 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 12-13 inches), relatively slow wingbeats, and audible chatter.

Hoary Bat
(*Lasiurus cinereus*)

This large, rare bat (wingspan to 16 inches) is a strong and fast flier; a winter migrant to this area. The only bat with white-tipped hairs.

Western Yellow Bat
(*Lasiurus xanthinus*)

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; fast, direct flight; and long tails, which extend well beyond the membrane connecting the hind legs. The species are difficult to tell apart, but the Brazilian Free-tailed Bat is the most common in our 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 of 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
Geomysidae)

Botta's Pocket Gopher

(*Thomomys bottae*)

These burrowing rodents have large yellow incisors which are always exposed, since the lips close behind them. They feed on roots, and also cut off stems below ground and then 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 need 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 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.

New World Rats and Mice *continued on next page*



Opposite: Baby desert cottontails huddle together in the protection of their soft grass and fur lined nest.

New World Rats and Mice

continued

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*)

Musk rats 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.

An unusual daytime sighting of the desert kit fox

Joe Engler/USFWS



A coyote wanders the wetlands.

Bobcat
(family Felidae)

Bobcat
(*Lynx rufus*)

Highly adaptable to its environment, this crepuscular predator maintains a well-defined territory and will hunt a variety of prey.

Wolves, Foxes and the Coyote
(family Canidae)

Coyote
(*Canis latrans*)

Distinctive howls help coyotes track each others' location and reunite members of a 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 mammals.

Western Spotted Skunk
(*Spilogale gracilis*)

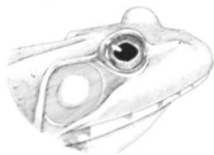
Faster and more agile than the larger skunks, it also is a good climber.

Striped Skunk
(*Mephitis mephitis*)

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

Amphibians, Reptiles and Fish

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

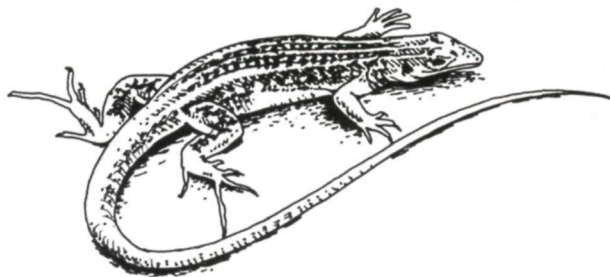
Spiny Softshell

Lizards

Long-nosed Leopard Lizard
Desert Spiny Lizard
Side-blotched Lizard
Long-tailed Brush Lizard
Flat-tailed Horned Lizard
Western Whiptail

Snakes

Western Blind Snake
Coachwhip
Western Patch-nosed Snake
Glossy Snake
Gopher Snake
Common Kingsnake
Long-nosed Snake
Checkered Garter Snake
Ground 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. 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



Western diamondback rattlesnake in a defensive posture.

Gary Kramer/USFWS

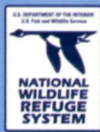
Sonny Bono Salton Sea
National Wildlife Refuge
906 West Sinclair
Calipatria, CA 92233
Telephone: 760/348 5278

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/sonny_bono_salton_sea

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

Refuge Information
1 800/344 WILD

This brochure is available in alternative
format upon request.



March 2014

All illustrations: ©Kendal Morris

*Cover photograph: Black necked stilt,
© Jenny E. Ross/www.jennyross.com*

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Sonny Bono Salton Sea

National Wildlife Refuge

Wildlife List



*Printed on 100% recycled paper with a minimum 50%
post-consumer fiber content.*