



## Bird Checklist



Kittlitz's Murrelet in breeding plumage

*This bird checklist includes the 281 bird species found in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve through February, 2016. This list is designed to help narrow the identification possibilities in specific habitats at various seasons. An abbreviated checklist (with species names and frequency listed only) can be obtained at the Glacier Bay National Park Visitor Center or online at [www.nps.gov/gbla](http://www.nps.gov/gbla). A variety of field guides and bird reference materials are available through Alaska Geographic.*

### Introduction

Glacier Bay is a 5,220 square mile wilderness, comparable in size to the state of Connecticut, containing both inshore and offshore marine waters, mountain ranges to 15,000 feet, ice fields and glaciers, rivers and lakes, alpine meadows, mature coniferous forests, cottonwood/alder/willow thickets, and glacial barrens. The park ecosystem has been rapidly changing since the Little Ice Age covered much of it with ice 250 years ago. As glaciers flux and vegetation evolves, bird composition also changes. These changes are expected to continue.

Most of the park is roadless and remote, and even the most popular areas, such as Glacier Bay and the Gustavus Forelands (included in the checklist) are lightly visited. The park boundary extends three miles into the Pacific Ocean and about one mile into Icy Strait and Cross Sound. Bird records for those areas are included.

Bird observations are important. Please share your sightings with us at Park Headquarters, P.O. Box 140, Gustavus, Alaska 99826, or enter them into the eBird database ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)).



## Top Birding Locations

(see maps on following two pages)

### Near Park Headquarters: Bartlett Cove, Bartlett River estuary, Gustavus beaches, Gustavus (Nagoonberry Trail), Beardslee Islands.

Forest, beach meadows, and tidal flats attract many bird species, particularly during migration. Rain forest species include the American Three-toed Woodpecker often seen near Blackwater Pond. Shorebirds, waterfowl, and eagles use beaches. Gulls, diving ducks, and alcids feed near shore.

### Island and Cliff Seabird Colonies: South Marble Island, Lone Island, South Russell Islands, Geikie Rock, cliffs south of Margerie Glacier.

Isolated islands offer refuge from land predators. A variety of species may nest side by side. These colonies are sensitive to human disturbance and many are closed to landings.

### Remote Inlets: Adams Inlet, Hugh Miller Inlet, Dundas Bay.

Tidal flats and shallow waters in these areas attract a large number and variety of waterfowl.

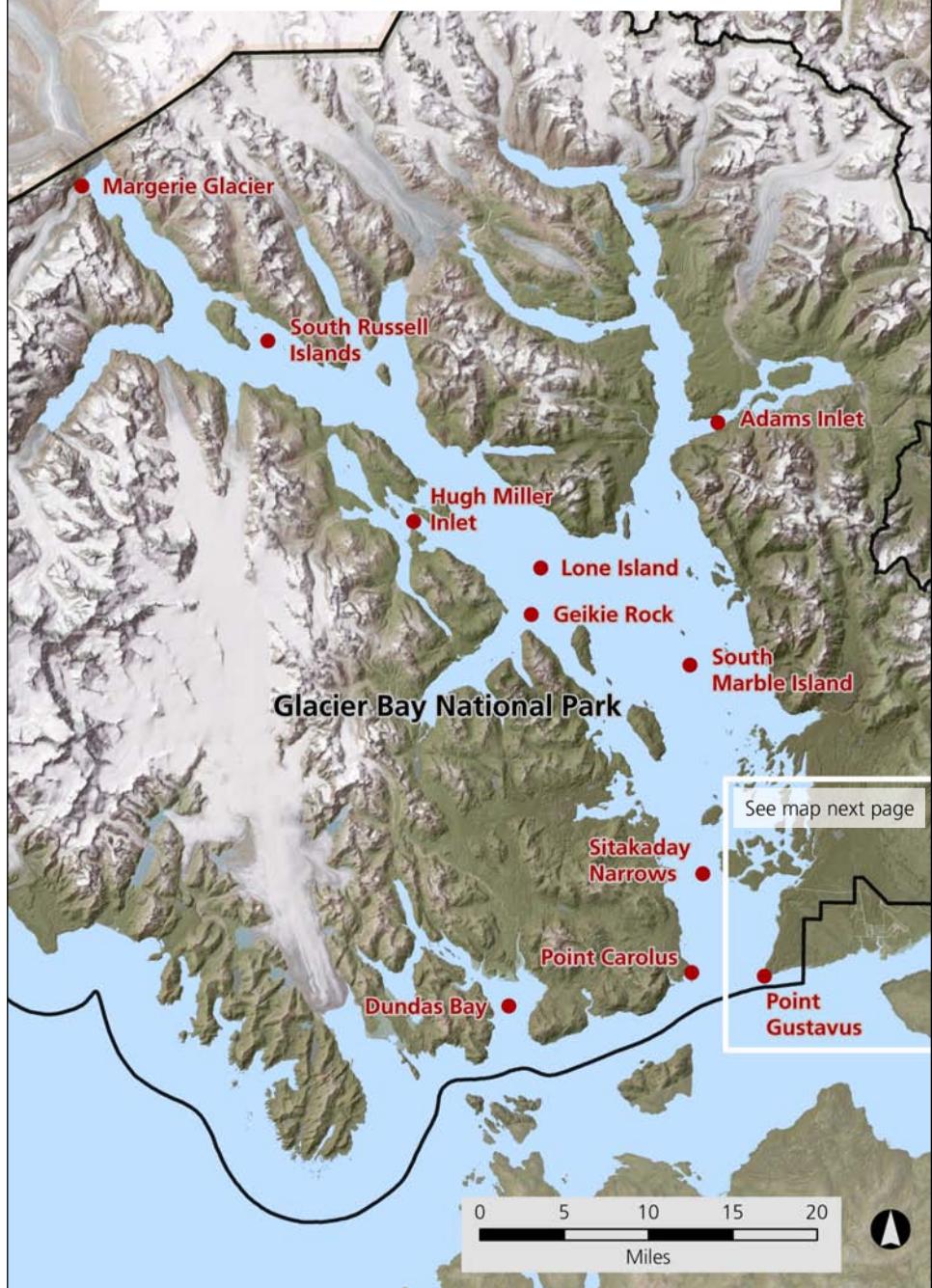
### Marine Feeding Sites: Point Carolus, Point Gustavus, Sitakaday Narrows.

Tidal currents and turbulence at certain locations stir food organisms to the surface for feeding sea birds.



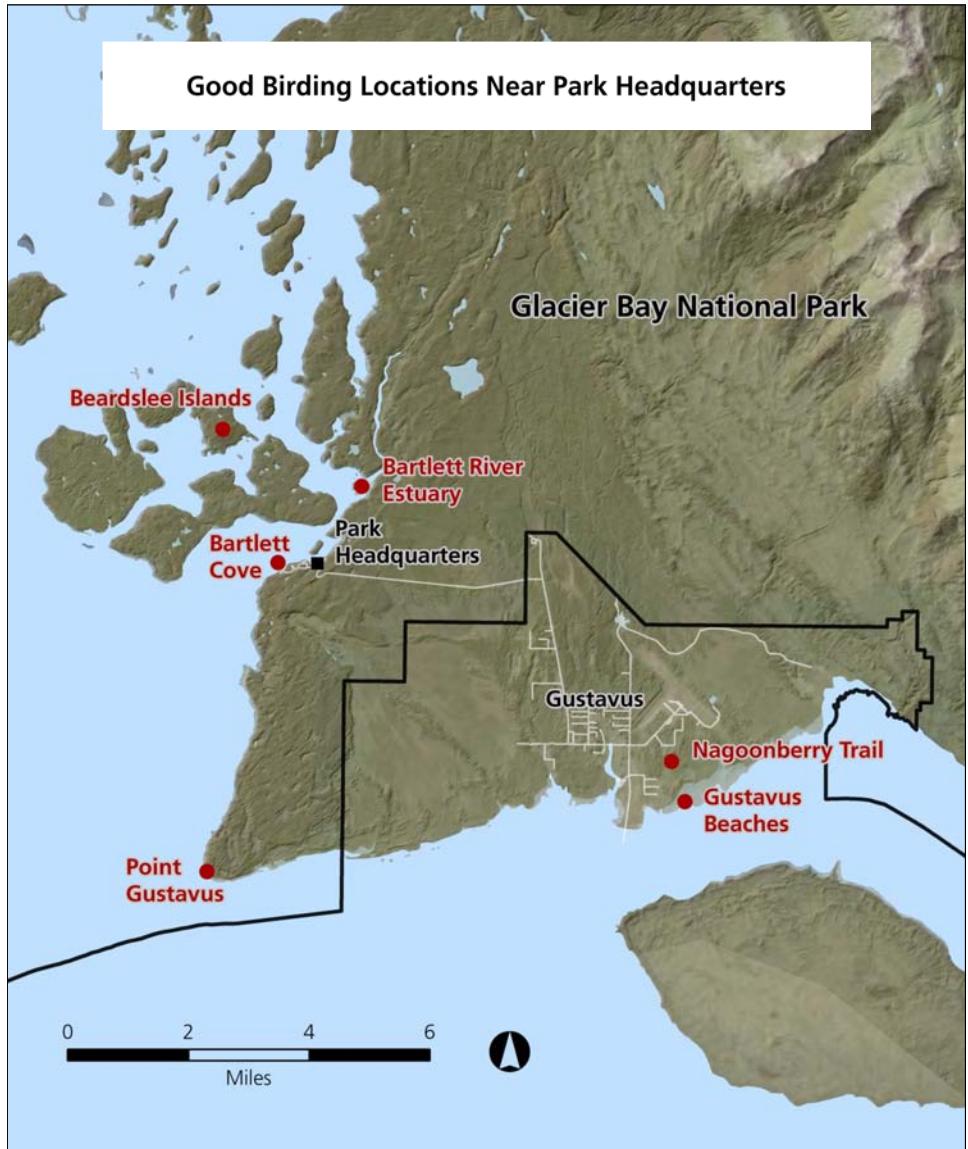
Common Loon

## Good Birding Locations in Glacier Bay National Park





### Good Birding Locations Near Park Headquarters





Common Redpoll



Pacific Wren



## When To Visit

Spring brings excellent birding, including the largest variety of species in colorful, breeding plumage. Waterfowl, most shorebirds, and some land birds arrive in high numbers by April 20 and those numbers begin to wane by mid-May. May also tends to be one of the warmer, drier months to visit.

June and early July are when land bird fledglings seem to be everywhere, the forest still echoes with bird song, and nesting colonies in the upper bay are very active. By the end of June, the first shorebirds begin moving southward.

In August, the forests become noticeably quiet, many land birds gather in mixed flocks prior to migration, gulls and sea birds are busily raising the last young, and birds from the north and high country begin to move through the area in increasing numbers.

September may be wet and stormy, but clear periods are filled with the last birds flushing from the northern boreal forests and tundra, passing southward. The sights and sounds of migrating waterfowl and Sandhill Cranes can be spectacular.

Winter brings days of short daylight and can be wet, cold, and windy, with snow cover up to several feet at the park headquarters. If estuaries or freshwater are iced over water bird variety is reduced.

The Glacier Bay/Gustavus Christmas Bird Count averages about 56 species, most associated with marine waters. Look for American Tree Sparrows, Black-billed Magpies, Bald Eagles, and a variety of alcids, waterfowl, and gulls.



Long-tailed Ducks

## Give Wildlife A Helping Hand

Hike or camp only on the mainland or forested islands. Treeless islands attract seabirds throughout the summer season. Always ask a ranger about current wildlife closures.

Be informed of federal regulations that close the following islands to foot traffic:

South Marble Island, Lone Island, Flapjack Island, three small islands south of Flapjack Island, Eider Islands, Boulder Islands, Geikie Rock, or any of the small un-named islands near Russell Island.

Navigate boats around flocks of waterbirds. Many species, including loons, scoters, and Canada Geese are flightless during molt and vulnerable to predators and human disturbance.

Photograph all wildlife at a distance.



## A Bird To Watch For: *The Kittlitz's Murrelet*

Glacier Bay offers one of the best opportunities for most birders to see the Kittlitz's Murrelet, an alcid that selects active glacial fiords to nest. Recent research has shown most nest on remote, bare mountain slopes, sometimes at considerable elevation.

Look for them in the Bay's West Arm, particularly in Tarr and Johns Hopkins Inlets. They can be distinguished from the common Marbled Murrelet by their much paler breeding plumage and white outer tail feathers (spread when they fly from the water).



## Terms and Symbols

The checklist on the following pages uses symbols. Although these may at first seem confusing, they provide much information in little space and allow fast, easy comparisons between seasons and between species.

### Frequency Classification

- C Common:** Can expect to observe on 90%+ of field days *in appropriate habitat*.
- F Fairly Common:** Can observe on 50–89% of field days.
- U Uncommon:** Can expect to observe on less than half of field days.
- R Rare:** 1–5 records are expected each year.
- V Very Rare:** More than 2 records exist, but many years may go by without observations.
- +** **Accidental:** No more than 2 documented records for the species.
- \*** **Nesting:** Record(s) exist or nesting is suspected.



Varied Thrush

### Habitat

- a** alpine above tree line.
- c** coniferous forest.
- d** deciduous forest/thicket.
- f** freshwater; includes, rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams.
- m** marshes, estuaries, and freshwater above tidal influence.
- o** open, lightly vegetated early successional stages or upper beach meadows.
- s** inshore and offshore saltwater.
- t** tidelands, includes all habitats subject to regular tidal inundation.

### Seasons

- Spring** March through May.
- Summer** June through July.
- Fall** August through November.
- Winter** December through February.



Sooty Grouse

Common names and taxonomic order in this checklist follow those established by the American Ornithologist's Union through 2015.

## Spring   Summer   Fall   Winter   Habitat

**GEESE, SWANS, AND DUCKS**

Greater White-fronted Goose	F	V	F	V	s,t,o
Emperor Goose	V	-	-	+	m,s,t
Snow Goose	F	V	F	+	s,t,o
Ross's Goose	+	+	-	-	t,o
Brant	F	U	U	V	s,t,o
Cackling Goose	U	V	U	-	s,t
Canada Goose	C	F*	C	C	a,c,d,f,m,o,s,t
Trumpeter Swan	U	V	U	F	f,s,t
Tundra Swan	U	+	U	V	f,s,t
Wood Duck	+	-	-	+	f
Gadwall	U	R	U	U	f,m,s,t
Eurasian Wigeon	R	+	V	V	f,m,s,t
American Wigeon	C	U	C	F	f,m,s,t
American Black Duck	-	-	-	+	s,t
Mallard	C	C*	C	C	f,m,s,t
Blue-winged Teal	U	U*	R	-	f,m,t
Cinnamon Teal	R	V	+	-	f,m,t
Northern Shoveler	F	U*	F	R	f,m,t
Northern Pintail	C	U*	C	U	f,m,s,t
Green-winged Teal	C	U*	C	F	f,m,s,t
Canvasback	R	+	R	V	f,m,s
Redhead	V	V	V	+	f,m,s
Ring-necked Duck	F	R	F	R	f,s
Tufted Duck	-	-	-	+	f,s
Greater Scaup	F	R	F	U	f,s,t
Lesser Scaup	U	R*	U	R	f,s,t
Steller's Eider	+	-	-	-	s
King Eider	+	+	+	+	s
Common Eider	V	V*	+	-	s
Harlequin Duck	F	F*	F	C	f,s,t
Surf Scoter	C	C	C	C	s
White-winged Scoter	C	C	C	C	s
Black Scoter	F	R	F	F	s
Long-tailed Duck	C	R*	C	C	s
Bufflehead	C	R	C	C	f,m,s,t
Common Goldeneye	F	R*	F	F	f,s,t
Barrow's Goldeneye	C	F*	C	C	f,s,t
Hooded Merganser	R	R*	R	R	f,s,t
Common Merganser	F	F*	F	F	f,s,t
Red-breasted Merganser	C	U*	C	C	f,s,t
Ruddy Duck	+	-	+	-	f

**GROUSE, PTARMIGAN**

Willow Ptarmigan	U	U*	U	U	a,d
Rock Ptarmigan	U	U*	U	U	a,d
White-tailed Ptarmigan	U	U*	U	U	a,d
Sooty Grouse	C	C*	F	U	a,c,o

## Notes

White-fronted and Snow Geese are heard and seen frequently during migration.

Glacier Bay NP's Pacific coast/Icy Strait is a significant migratory route for the low-flying Brant.

Trumpeter Swans have been overwintering in increasing numbers recently.

Drake Eurasian Wigeon are most often seen in spring among American Wigeon flocks.

American Wigeon occur widely except in mid-summer, when they are scarce.

Mallards are the most common puddle duck throughout the year.

Blue-winged Teal are most often seen in spring and early summer.

Redheads and Canvasbacks are mostly ducks of the interior, less regularly seen near the coast.

Ring-necked Ducks are usually found on lakes during migration.

Common Eiders were once regular in summer in upper Glacier Bay, but now are extremely rare.

Harlequin Ducks nest near local rivers, then winter along rocky sea shores.

Large rafts of flightless, molting scoters spend late summer in upper Glacier Bay.

Large numbers of Long-tailed Ducks are present some winters.

Bufflehead are common in salt and fresh water except in summer.

Barrow's Goldeneyes often nest in tree cavities near lakes, then overwinter on saltwater.

Common Mergansers nest in tree cavities and can be found on both fresh and saltwater.

Red-breasted Mergansers occasionally nest along Glacier Bay's shores and forage in saltwater.

Ptarmigan of three species are found around Glacier Bay and surrounding mountains.

The "hooting" of Sooty Grouse is commonly heard from Apr-June, broods visible from July-Sept. They are secretive, dispersed and hardest to find in the winter.



## Notes

Large numbers of loons migrate along Pacific coastal waters.

Flocks of Pacific Loons can be found in any season.

Common Loons are lake nesters, then feed in saltwater most of the year.

Yellow-billed Loons are seen more regularly in Glacier Bay than in most N. A. areas.

These "tubenosed" sea birds are most often seen in Cross Sound and off the outer coast of the park.

Double-crested Cormorants are most often seen near the Pacific coast and Cross Sound.

The Pelagic Cormorant is the most common, widely distributed cormorant.

The only resident large wader; feeds in fresh and salt water. Nests in trees.

Ospreys are not known to nest, but are seen during migration, mostly along rivers.

Common along bays and rivers particularly during fish runs.

Northern Goshawks are most often seen in the late summer and fall when young fledge.

The most common buteo in the mountain country of Glacier Bay.

The Gustavus foreland is a historical Sandhill Crane migratory resting point.

Spring   Summer   Fall   Winter      Habitat

### **SHOREBIRDS**

Black Oystercatcher	F	C*	F	R	t
Black-bellied Plover	C	R	C	V	t
American Golden-Plover	U	+	U	-	t
Pacific Golden-Plover	U	+	U	-	t
Semipalmated Plover	F	U*	F	-	t
Killdeer	R	R*	R	V	t
Spotted Sandpiper	U	F*	U	-	f,m,t
Solitary Sandpiper	R	R*	R	-	f,m,o,t
Wandering Tattler	U	R	U	-	t
Greater Yellowlegs	C	F*	C	V	f,m,t
Lesser Yellowlegs	F	F*	C	-	f,m,t
Upland Sandpiper	-	+	V	-	m,o
Whimbrel	F	R	U	-	m,o,t
Bristle-thighed Curlew	+	-	-	-	t
Hudsonian Godwit	R	V	V	-	t
Bar-tailed Godwit	V	+	V	-	t
Marbled Godwit	R	+	V	-	t
Ruddy Turnstone	U	V	U	+	t
Black Turnstone	U	R	U	R	t
Red Knot	R	+	V	-	t
Surfbird	U	U	U	-	t
Ruff	-	+	+	-	t
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	-	+	R	-	t
Stilt Sandpiper	-	-	V	-	m,t
Curlew Sandpiper	-	-	+	-	t
Red-necked Stint	-	+	-	-	t
Sanderling	U	U	F	F	t
Dunlin	C	V	C	F	t
Rock Sandpiper	U	+	U	F	t
Baird's Sandpiper	R	V	U	-	t
Least Sandpiper	C	U*	C	-	m,t
White-rumped Sandpiper	-	+	+	-	t
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	-	-	V	-	o,t
Pectoral Sandpiper	U	R	F	-	m,t
Semipalmated Sandpiper	U	U	U	-	t
Western Sandpiper	C	U	C	-	t
Short-billed Dowitcher	C	R	C	-	m,t
Long-billed Dowitcher	C	U	C	+	t
Wilson's Snipe	F	F*	F	R	m,t
Wilson's Phalarope	V	V	+	-	f,t
Red-necked Phalarope	C	C	C	-	f,m,s,t
Red Phalarope	+	+	+	-	s

## Notes

Often found along rocky shorelines in Glacier Bay and along Pacific Coast.

The shorebird migration is best from late-April through May and from late-July through September.

Golden-Plovers may be found in tidal areas, beaches, and fields during migration.

Killdeer were formerly more common year around.

Spotted Sandpipers nest along lake and salt-water shores.

Wandering Tattlers are often found on Pacific coast headlands during migration.

Greater Yellowlegs nest in bogs.

Lesser Yellowlegs are present during migration along lakes and rivers.

Only a few observations of godwits are made in tidal areas each annual migration.

Turnstones and Surfbirds are most common on the park's Pacific coast.

Red Knots are most likely to be seen in early May in tidal areas.

A few Sharp-tailed Sandpipers may be seen in flocks of Pectoral Sandpipers each fall.

Sanderlings are one of few shorebird species to overwinter in Glacier Bay/Gustavus.

A few thousand Dunlins, Sanderlings, and Rock Sandpipers overwinter.

"Winnowing" snipe are a common sound around local summer bogs.

Large numbers of Red-necked Phalaropes use Glacier Bay during migration.



## Notes

Parasitic Jaegers formerly nested in Glacier Bay in greater numbers.

Glacier Bay hosts several murre colonies and large numbers overwinter.

Pigeon Guillemots are common nesters on cliffs or docks and many overwinter.

Marbled Murrelets nest in forests and are present on salt water year-around.

Kittlitz's Murrelets commonly nest on bare, rugged slopes in Glacier Bay's west arm.

A few Horned Puffins nest each year in Glacier Bay.

Tufted Puffin colonies are found from mid to upper Glacier Bay and along the coast.

Among the most southerly known N. A. kittiwake colonies are in the park.

Mew Gulls occur widely year-around and scour tidal beaches in flocks.

Large mixed species flocks of post-breeding gulls gather along Glacier Bay and Icy Strait in late summer.

Glaucous-winged Gulls are the most common large gull with numerous nesting colonies.

Look for the occasional Aleutian Tern in Glacier Bay and the Alsek River areas of the park.

Caspian Tern numbers have increased in recent years.

Arctic Terns, world champion distance migrants, nest in the upper bay.

The first Eurasian collared-dove was recorded in 2007. Gustavus and Bartlett Cove are the most likely spots to find this exotic species.



## Notes

Owls are rarely heard during the summer months and fluctuate with vole populations.

Great Horned Owls are the most frequently recorded large owl in the area.

Snowy Owls are sometimes seen along Gustavus beaches in winter.

Northern Pygmy-Owls occupy lower bay and outer coast forests.

Barred, Western Screech, and Northern Saw-whet owls all were first recorded relatively recently.

Short-eared Owl populations fluctuate noticeably from year to year.

Small numbers of Vaux's Swifts are seen during migration each year.

Anna's Hummingbirds have recently been recorded at Gustavus feeders in the fall and early winter.

Rufous Hummingbirds often arrive in March, nest, and most leave by mid-August.

Red-breasted Sapsuckers commonly nest in areas with mature forests.

Downy Woodpeckers have declined over the past few years.

Hairy Woodpeckers are the most widely distributed resident woodpecker.

Formerly more common during bark beetle infestations in lower Glacier Bay.

Merlins nest in small numbers, but are most often seen in fall.

Peregrines often are associated with shorebird migrations or bird rookeries.

Alder Flycatchers prefer open areas or thickets.

Look and listen for Pacific-slope Flycatchers in mature coniferous forests.



## Notes

Northern Shrikes are widely distributed in open areas during migration and winter.

Steller's Jays are best found in mature coniferous forests of the coast and lower bay.

Black-billed Magpies nest in interior Alaska. Flocks overwinter in Glacier Bay/Gustavus.

Northwestern Crows feed and nest in flocks along beachlands.

Ravens are widely distributed during all seasons.

Tree Swallows are usually the first swallows to arrive in the spring and are found throughout the area.

Bank Swallows nest locally along river banks and cliffs.

Barn Swallows often build nests on buildings, docks and other man-made structures.

Black-capped Chickadees are more numerous than indicated in the far northern part of the region.

Chestnut-backed Chickadees are widely distributed in local thickets and forests.

Red-breasted Nuthatch populations vary substantially from year to year.

Brown Creepers can be heard and seen in forested areas during all seasons.

American Dippers can be found throughout the year in large, clear streams and rivers.

Golden-crowned Kinglets can be heard and seen in forested areas during all seasons.

The Ruby-crowned Kinglet's song is one of the more commonly heard in spring.

Look for Gray-cheeked Thrush in the thickets of mid to upper Glacier Bay.

The Swainson's Thrush is most often heard in June, particularly along the outer coast.

Hermit Thrush are one of the most common summer birds throughout the park.

Varied Thrush are best heard and found in mature coniferous forests and sometimes over-winter.

Spring Summer Fall Winter Habitat

**STARLINGS**

European Starling	R	V	R	R	d,m,o,t
<b>WAGTAILS, PIPITS</b>					
White Wagtail	-	+	-	-	o,t
Red-throated Pipit	-	-	V	-	m,t
American Pipit	C	U*	C	R	a,m,o,t
<b>WAXWINGS</b>					
Bohemian Waxwing	R	V	R	U	c,d
Cedar Waxwing	-	R*	R	-	d
<b>LONGSPURS, BUNTINGS</b>					
Lapland Longspur	C	-	C	R	a,t
Smith's Longspur	-	-	+	-	t
Snow Bunting	U	U*	U	U	a,o,t
McKay's Bunting	-	-	+	+	a,o,t
<b>WARBLERS</b>					
Northern Waterthrush	-	+	+	-	d,m
Tennessee Warbler	-	V	+	-	d
Orange-crowned Warbler	C	C*	C	-	c,d,o
MacGillivray's Warbler	-	V	V	-	d
Common Yellowthroat	R	U*	R	-	d,m
American Redstart	-	V	+	-	d
Yellow Warbler	F	F*	F	-	d,m
Blackpoll Warbler	+	+	+	-	d
Palm Warbler	-	-	+	-	d
Yellow-rumped Warbler	C	C*	C	V	c,d
Yellow-throated Warbler	-	-	+	-	c,d
Townsend's Warbler	C	C*	C	-	c,d
Wilson's Warbler	C	C*	C	-	c,d
<b>SPARROWS</b>					
American Tree Sparrow	R	-	U	U	d,m,t
Chipping Sparrow	+	V	+	-	c,d,o,m
Savannah Sparrow	C	C*	C	V	d,m,o,t
Fox Sparrow	C	C*	C	V	c,d
Song Sparrow	F	F*	F	U	d,m,t
Lincoln's Sparrow	C	C*	C	+	d,m,o,t
Swamp Sparrow	-	-	V	V	m
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	V	V	c,d
Harris's Sparrow	-	-	+	+	d
White-crowned Sparrow	U	V	U	R	c,d,o
Golden-crowned Sparrow	C	C*	C	V	a,c,d
Dark-eyed Junco	C	C*	C	C	c,d,m,o,t
Rustic Bunting	-	-	+	+	d,o

## Notes

American Pipits nest in Glacier Bay's alpine and barren country.

Bohemian Waxwings feed on berries that persist in colder months.

Cedar Waxwings exploit good berry crops during late summer.

Large flocks of Lapland Longspurs can be found on beachlands during migration.

Snow Buntings nest in recently deglaciated terrain in upper Glacier Bay.

Savannah Sparrows nest in beach meadows throughout the area.

Lincoln's Sparrows are furtive nesters that are as often heard as seen.

Golden-crowned Sparrows nest in upper Glacier Bay.

Dark-eyed Juncos are common at any season in forested and brushy lowlands.

*Spring*   *Summer*   *Fall*   *Winter*      *Habitat*

### TANAGERS, GROSBEAKS

Western Tanager	V	V	+	-	c,d
Black-headed Grosbeak	-	+	+	-	d

### BLACKBIRDS

Red-winged Blackbird	U	U*	U	V	m,t
Yellow-headed Blackbird	-	+	-	-	t
Rusty Blackbird	R	R*	R	R	d,m,o,t
Brewer's Blackbird	+	+	-	+	m
Brown-headed Cowbird	R	V	R	-	m,o

### FINCHES

Brambling	+	-	-	+	d,m,t
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (I)	U	F*	U	R	a,o,t
Pine Grosbeak	U	U*	U	U	c,d
Red Crossbill (I)	F	F*	F	F	c
White-winged Crossbill (I)	F	F*	F	F	c
Common Redpoll (I)	F	F*	F	F	c,d,m,o,t
Hoary Redpoll (I)	-	-	-	+	c,d,m,o,t
Pine Siskin (I)	C	C*	C	C	c,d
Evening Grosbeak	-	+	-	-	c,d

### UNSUBSTANTIATED SPECIES

Buller's Shearwater
Red-shouldered Hawk
Little Curlew
Long-billed Murrelet
Great Gray Owl
Brewer's Sparrow

**Notes:**

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Red-winged Blackbirds nest in marshy areas in upper Glacier Bay.

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Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches nest in upper Glacier Bay.

Pine Grosbeaks are widely distributed in the region in small numbers, but are not often seen.

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Common Redpolls nest in upper Glacier Bay and frequently overwinter.

Pine Siskins can be common or scarce, depending on the conifer seed supply.

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## **Acknowledgments**

The 2016 edition of the Birds of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve checklist was updated by Nat Drumheller and was previously revised and updated in 2013 by Bruce Paige and Nat Drumheller. We acknowledge the contributions of earlier editions upon which this checklist is based by Dennis Wik 1967, Wik and Greg Streveler 1968, and Bruce Paige 1973, 1979, and 1998. The authors would also like to thank Steve Heinl, Paul Suchanek, and Gus van Vliet for their excellent suggestions in 2013 after reviewing the manuscript. Layout and design by Tom Vandenberg and Paul Atkinson.

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Horned Puffin

February, 2016



## Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve

P.O. Box 140  
Gustavus, AK 99826  
907-697-2230  
[www.nps.gov/glba](http://www.nps.gov/glba)  
[www.facebook.com/GlacierBayNationalPark](http://www.facebook.com/GlacierBayNationalPark)