



## BIRDS OF BEAR RIVER REFUGE



The Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge is located about 15 miles west of Brigham City, Utah, on the delta of the Bear River where it empties into Great Salt Lake. Containing about 65,000 acres, it was established by a special act of Congress on April 23, 1928. It is administered by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in the Department of the Interior, as both an outstanding nesting area and a resting and feeding refuge for waterfowl and other birds that nest in Canada and Alaska and winter southward into Mexico. This is one of the few remaining marshlands where ducks and geese nest in great numbers, and fall concentrations occur in flocks that resemble the descriptions by early explorers.

Migrant waterfowl move into the Bear River marshes beginning in August. By the end of the month or in early September the refuge is host to 1½ to 2 million waterfowl. Among them is one of the largest concentrations of whistling swan to be found in the United States; flocks totaling 15,000 frequently are seen. Thousands of Canada and snow geese visit the refuge during migration. Predominating in the fall flights are pintails, whose numbers often exceed half a million birds. The green-winged teal is nearly as abundant. As many as 100,000 canvasbacks have visited the refuge at one time during fall migration.

Many of these birds remain into the winter, leaving the refuge only as cold weather freezes over the water areas. Upon leaving Bear River, about half of the birds migrate west into California, some move south to Arizona and New Mexico, while others move eastward into Colorado, Texas, and Mexico. With the spring they return, but the concentrations of birds then are smaller, and their stay shorter. Courtship activities are often seen among the migrants, and the nesting of some species, particularly the Canada goose, begins early.

In the development of the refuge, a system of shallow water impoundments was constructed to conserve and prevent fresh water from entering Great Salt Lake. A roadway on top of the dike around one of these impoundments is open for auto traffic except during late fall and winter. This is a trip of 12 miles and permits observations in one of the best parts of the refuge. Species more or less peculiar to the West and to this area, such as the western grebe, yellow-headed blackbird, avocet, black-necked stilt, long-billed curlew, Wilson's phalarope, white-faced ibis, Franklin's gull, ruddy duck, cinnamon teal, and gadwall may be seen.

The following list contains 184 species of birds as observed by various individuals since establishment of the refuge in 1928. Another 12 species which are considered rare or generally out of their normal range have been added on the last page. Those preceded with an \* nest on the refuge. This list, using species names, is in accordance with the Fifth

(1957) A.O.U. Check-list. Status and abundance symbols are as follows:

<u>Season</u>	<u>Abundance</u>
Column 1 - S - March-May	a - abundant
2 - Su- June-August	c - common
3 - F - September-November	u - uncommon
4 - W - December-February	o - occasional
	r - rare

	<u>S</u> <u>Su</u> <u>F</u> <u>W</u>		<u>S</u> <u>Su</u> <u>F</u> <u>W</u>
Common Loon	r r	Lesser Scaup	c r c o
Horned Grebe	r r	Common Goldeneye	c c o o
*Eared Grebe	c o c	Barrow's Goldeneye	o r o
*Western Grebe	c a c r	Bufflehead	c c o o
*Pied-billed Grebe	c c c o	Oldsquaw	o
White Pelican	c a c	Harlequin Duck	r r
*Double-crested Cormorant	c c u	White-winged Scoter	o
*Great Blue Heron	c c c o	Surf Scoter	o o
Common Egret	r r	*Ruddy Duck	a c a o
*Snowy Egret	c a c	Hooded Merganser	o
Green Heron	r	Common Merganser	c o c u
*Black-crowned Night Heron	c c u r	Red-breasted Merganser	u o c u
Least Bittern	r	Turkey Vulture	u
*American Bittern	r u r	Goshawk	o
*White-faced Ibis	c a c	Sharp-shinned Hawk	r r
Whistling Swan	a a a u	Cooper's Hawk	r r
*Canada Goose	a a a c	Red-tailed Hawk	r r
White-fronted Goose	r r	Swainson's Hawk	r r
Snow Goose	c c r	Rough-legged Hawk	c c c
Ross' Goose	r r	Ferruginous Hawk	c
*Mallard	a c a c	Golden Eagle	o c
Black Duck	r	Bald Eagle	o c
*Gadwall	c a c o	*Marsh Hawk	c c c c
*Pintail	a c a o	Prairie Falcon	o o o o
*Green-winged Teal	a u a o	Peregrine Falcon	o o o o
*Blue-winged Teal	o c o	Pigeon Hawk	r
*Cinnamon Teal	c a c	Sparrow Hawk	o o r r
American Widgeon	c u c o	Sage Grouse	r r r r
*Shoveler	a c a o	*Ring-necked Pheasant	c c c c
*Redhead	a a a o	Sandhill Crane	r r
Ring-necked Duck	r r	*Virginia Rail	r
Canvasback	a r a o	*Sora	r
Greater Scaup	r r	*American Coot	a a a o

	<u>S</u> <u>Su</u> <u>F</u> <u>W</u>		<u>S</u> <u>Su</u> <u>F</u> <u>W</u>
*Snowy Plover	u	*Eastern Kingbird	u c u
Semipalmated Plover	r r c	*Western Kingbird	u c u
*Kildeer	c a c o	Say's Phoebe	r r
American Golden Plover	o o	Dusky Flycatcher	r r
Black-bellied Plover	c o	*Horned Lark	c c c c
Ruddy Turnstone	r u	Violet-green Swallow	c r
*Common Snipe	o u o	Tree Swallow	c o r
*Long-billed Curlew	c c o	Bank Swallow	u c u
*Spotted Sandpiper	u c u	Rough-winged Swallow	c o c
Solitary Sandpiper	r	*Barn Swallow	c a c
*Willet	c c u	*Cliff Swallow	c a c
Greater Yellowlegs	c o c	Purple Martin	o o
Lesser Yellowlegs	u a c	*Black-billed Magpie	c c c c
Knot	r	*Common Raven	c c c c
Pectoral Sandpiper	r r	Common Crow	o
Baird's Sandpiper	u c c	*Long-billed Marsh Wren	c a c o
Least Sandpiper	r c	Mockingbird	r r
Dunlin	r r	Catbird	r
Dowitcher (two species?)	u a a	Sage Thrasher	o o o
Western Sandpiper	o a a	*Robin	u o u
Marbled Godwit	a a a	Hermit Thrush	r r
Sanderling	o o	Western Bluebird	r r
*American Avocet	a a c	Mountain Bluebird	o r
*Black-necked Stilt	c a c	Townsend's Solitaire	r r r
*Wilson's Phalarope	c c c	Kuby-crowned Kinglet	o o o
Northern Phalarope	a c	Water Pipit	u c c c
Herring Gull	u r u u	Bohemian Waxwing	r r
*California Gull	c a c	Loggerhead Shrike	o o u o
Ring-billed Gull	a u a c	Starling	c c a
*Franklin's Gull	c a c	Nashville Warbler	o o
Bonaparte's Gull	r o	Virginia's Warbler	r r
*Forster's Tern	c a c	*Yellow Warbler	u c u
Common Tern	r r r	Myrtle Warbler	r r r
*Caspian Tern	o c o	*Audubon's Warbler	u o u
*Black Tern	u a u	MacGillivray's Warbler	r u
*Mourning Dove	o u o	Yellowthroat	r o
Great Horned Owl	r r	Wilson's Warbler	u
*Burrowing Owl	o o o	*House Sparrow	a a a a
Long-eared Owl	o u o	Bobolink	r
*Short-eared Owl	u u u o	*Western Meadowlark	c c c u
Poor-will	r	*Yellow-headed Blackbird	c a c
Common Nighthawk	r o	*Red-winged Blackbird	a a a c
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	o	Bullock's Oriole	r r
Rufous Hummingbird	o	*Brewer's Blackbird	c c o o
Belted Kingfisher	o o o	*Brown-headed Cowbird	c a c
*Red-shafted Flicker	u u u u	Western Tanager	r
Red-headed Woodpecker	r	*Lazuli Bunting	o
Lewis' Woodpecker	r	Evening Grosbeak	o o
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	r	Cassin's Finch	o
Downy Woodpecker	r r	Pine Siskin	r r

	<u>S</u>	<u>Su</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>		<u>S</u>	<u>Su</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>
American Goldfinch	c		a	c	Oregon Junco	c		c	u
Green-tailed Towhee	r				Gray-headed Junco	c		c	u
Rufous-sided Towhee	r		r		Tree Sparrow	o		o	o
Lark Bunting			r		Chipping Sparrow	o	o		
*Savannah Sparrow	c	a	c		Brewer's Sparrow	o			
*Vesper Sparrow	c	u	c		White-crowned Sparrow	u		o	o
Lark Sparrow	u	u	c		Song Sparrow	o		o	o
Sage Sparrow	o	r	o		Snow Bunting	r		r	

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These 12 additional species are rare and generally out of their normal ranges. The birds classified as rare in the main list are within their distribution limits but rare for other reasons.

Wood Ibis	Fulvous Tree Duck	Mountain Plover
Little Blue Heron	European Widgeon	Whimbrel
Black Brant	Wood Duck	Parasitic Jaeger
Blue Goose	Osprey	Glaucous Gull

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NOTES

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