

BIRDS OF THE OKEFENOKEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Okefenokee Swamp, a huge, shallow, peat-filled depression of flooded and semiflooded forests and prairies, located in Ware, Charlton, and Clinch Counties of southeast Georgia, is one of the most primitive wilderness areas in the Nation. This historical "land of the trembling earth," source of the famed Suwannee River, embraces about 400,000 acres, of which 331,000 acres are included in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, administered by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Department of the Interior.

Majestic moss-draped cypresses and gnarled black gum trees predominate in the forested portions of the swamp, providing a somber background for the delicate beauty and fragrance of the red and white bays and cassena, while "hurrah bush" and "bamboo brier" form a dense tangled, often impenetrable undergrowth.

The "prairies," roughly 15 per cent of the swamp, are shallowly flooded marsh areas which sustain a colorful mixture of white and yellow waterlily, never-wet, pickerelweed, paint root, hardhead, beakrush, and maidencane. Scattered throughout the prairies are various sized islets of trees and shrubs known locally as "houses."

The open water areas--the small prairie lakes, the 'gator holes, the canals and the boat runs, together with the wider places in the upper reaches of the Suwannee River, known as Billy's Lake, Minnie's Lake and Big Water--comprise a small but very important part of the swamp, for it is here that the rich variety of the swamp's fauna and flora is most easily accessible.

The uplands bordering the swamp, and also the islands within the swamp, are clothed in longleaf and slash pine forests, dotted with occasional hardwood clumps or "hammocks," and here and there a cypress or black gum brake.

This varied habitat, this mixture of cypress and black gum forests, prairies and houses, open water areas, pine barrens and hammocks, affords a haven for large numbers and many species of birds. In the fall, robins by the hundreds of thousands congregate in the swamp to feed on the bounteous crop of black gum and gallberry fruits. All species of ducks, common to the Atlantic flyway, find food and protection in the prairies. Here, also, the sandhill crane makes its home the year round. The wild turkey inhabits the pine barrens. Fish-eating birds--the herons, white and wood ibises, anhingas, and kingfishers--are common along the water courses most of the year. The loud hoot of the barred owl and the raucous scream of the red-shouldered hawk are as characteristic of the swamp as the bellow of the bull alligator or the deafening frog chorus.

The following bird list contains 201 species which have been recorded from Okefenokee Swamp by visiting ornithologists and refuge personnel. An additional 22 species, which are of accidental, very rare, or former occurrence, are included on the last page. This list, using species names, is in accordance with the Fifth A.O.U. Check-List. Where new names are sufficiently different, the former name is added in parentheses. Abundance symbols are grouped under columns representing the four seasons of the year. These are defined as follows:

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

	<u>S</u> <u>S</u> <u>F</u> <u>W</u>		<u>S</u> <u>S</u> <u>F</u> <u>W</u>
Common Loon	r r r	Ring-necked Duck	c c c
Horned Grebe	u u u	Canvasback	r r r
Pied-billed Grebe	c r c c	Greater Scaup	r r r
Double-crested Cormorant	r r r	Lesser Scaup	u u u
Anhinga (Water-Turkey)	c c c c	Common Goldeneye (American)	r r r
Great Blue Heron	c c c c	Bufflehead	r r r
Green Heron	c c c o	Ruddy Duck	o o o
Little Blue Heron	c c c o	Hooded Merganser	c c c
Common Egret	c c c u	Red-breasted Merganser	r r r
Snowy Egret	u u r	Turkey Vulture	c c c c
Louisiana Heron	o o o o	Black Vulture	c c c c
Black-crowned Night Heron	o o c c	Swallow-tailed Kite	r
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	u u u u	Sharp-shinned Hawk	u u u
Least Bittern	r o r	Cooper's Hawk	u r u u
American Bittern	u u u c	Red-tailed Hawk	u r u u
Wood Ibis	o c c r	Red-shouldered Hawk	c c c c
White Ibis	o a a o	Broad-winged Hawk	o o
Canada Goose	o o o	Bald Eagle	u u u
Mallard	c c c	Marsh Hawk	c c c
Black Duck	c c c	Osprey	u u u u
Gadwall	r r	Peregrine Falcon (Duck Hawk)	o o o
Pintail	u u u	Pigeon Hawk	r r r
Green-winged Teal	u u u	Sparrow Hawk	c u c c
Blue-winged Teal	u u u	Bobwhite	c c c c
American Widgeon	u u u	Wild Turkey	r r r r
Shoveler	u u u	Sandhill Crane	c c c c
Wood Duck	c c c c	King Rail	c r c c
Redhead	o o o	Virginia Rail	r r

	<u>S</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>		<u>S</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>
Sora	r	r			Carolina Chickadee	u	u	u	u
Black Rail	r	r			Tufted Titmouse	u	u	u	u
Purple Gallinule	u	u	u	u	White-breasted Nuthatch	r	r	r	r
Common Gallinule	u	u	u	u	Brown-headed Nuthatch	c	c	c	c
Coot	c	c	c		Brown Creeper	o	o	o	
Killdeer	c	c	c		House Wren	c	c	c	
American Woodcock	c	o	c	c	Winter Wren	u	u	u	
Common Snipe (Wilson's)	a	a	a		Bewick's Wren	r	r	r	
Spotted Sandpiper	u	u			Carolina Wren	c	c	c	c
Solitary Sandpiper	o	o			Long-billed Marsh Wren	o	o	o	
Willet	r	r			Short-billed Marsh Wren	c	c	c	
Greater Yellowlegs	u	u			Mockingbird	c	c	c	c
Lesser Yellowlegs	u	u			Catbird	c	c	c	
Dunlin (Red-backed Sandpiper)	r	r			Brown Thrasher	c	c	c	c
Semipalmated Sandpiper Dowitcher	o	o	o		Robin	u	a	a	
Western Sandpiper	r	r	r		Wood Thrush	u	u	u	
Sanderling	o	o	o		Hermit Thrush	u	u	u	
Herring Gull	r	r	r		Swainson's Thrush (Olive-backed)	r			
Black Tern	r	r			Gray-cheeked Thrush	r			
Mourning Dove	c	c	c	c	Veery	r			
Ground Dove	c	c	c	c	Eastern Bluebird	c	c	c	c
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	c	c	c		Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	c	u	u	o
Screech Owl	u	u	u	u	Golden-crowned Kinglet	c	c	c	
Great Horned Owl	u	u	u	u	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	c	c	c	
Barred Owl	c	c	c	c	Water Pipit (American)	u	u	u	
Chuck-will's-widow	c	c	c		Cedar Waxwing	c	u	c	
Whip-poor-will	o	o	r		Loggerhead Shrike	c	c	c	c
Common Nighthawk	c	c	c		Starling	o	o	o	
Chimney Swift	c	c	c		White-eyed Vireo	c	c	c	u
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	u	u	u		Yellow-throated Vireo	r	r	r	
Belted Kingfisher	c	u	c	c	Solitary Vireo (Blue-headed)	c	c	o	
Yellow-shafted Flicker	c	u	c	c	Red-eyed Vireo	u	u	u	
Pileated Woodpecker	c	c	c	c	Black-and-white Warbler	u	u	o	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	c	c	c	c	Prothonotary Warbler	c	c	c	
Red-headed Woodpecker	c	u	c	u	Swainson's Warbler	u	u	u	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	u	u	u		Worm-eating Warbler	u	u		
Hairy Woodpecker	o	o	o	o	Golden-winged Warbler	o	o		
Downy Woodpecker	c	c	c	c	Blue-winged Warbler	o	o		
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	u	u	u	u	Bachman's Warbler	r	r	r	
Eastern Kingbird	c	c	c		Orange-crowned Warbler	u	u	u	
Great Crested Flycatcher	c	c	c		Parula Warbler	c	c	c	o
Eastern Phoebe	c	c	c		Yellow Warbler	u	u		
Acadian Flycatcher	c	c	c		Magnolia Warbler	r	u		
Eastern Wood Pewee	c	c	c		Cape May Warbler	u	u		
Tree Swallow	c	a	c		Black-throated Blue Warbler	u	u		
Barn Swallow	c	c	c		Myrtle Warbler	a	a	a	
Purple Martin	c	u			Black-throated Green Warbler	r	r		
Blue Jay	c	c	c	c	Blackburnian Warbler	r	r		
Common Crow	o	o	o	o	Yellow-throated Warbler	c	c	c	o
Fish Crow	c	c	c	o	Chestnut-sided Warbler	r			

	<u>S</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>		<u>S</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>
Blackpoll Warbler	u		u		Scarlet Tanager	r		r	
Pine Warbler	c	c	c	c	Summer Tanager	u	u	u	
Prairie Warbler	c		o		Cardinal	c	c	c	c
Palm Warbler	a		a	c	Blue Grosbeak	r		r	
Ovenbird	c		c		Indigo Bunting	u		u	
Northern Waterthrush	r				Purple Finch	u		u	u
Louisiana Waterthrush	o			o	Pine Siskin	o		o	o
Kentucky Warbler	o		o		American Goldfinch	c		c	c
Connecticut Warbler	o		o		Rufous-sided Towhee	c	u	c	c
Yellowthroat	c	u	c	c	Savannah Sparrow	u		u	u
Yellow-breasted Chat	r				Grasshopper Sparrow	o		o	o
Hooded Warbler	c	u	c		Le Conte's Sparrow	r		r	r
Canada Warbler	r				Henslow's Sparrow	o		o	o
American Redstart	c		a		Vesper Sparrow	u		u	u
House Sparrow (English)	r	r	r	r	Bachman's Sparrow (Pine-woods)	c	c	c	c
Bobolink	c		u		Slate-colored Junco	r			r
Eastern Meadowlark	c	c	c	c	Chipping Sparrow	u		u	u
Redwinged Blackbird	c	c	c	c	Field Sparrow	u		u	u
Orchard Oriole	u	u	u		White-throated Sparrow	c		c	c
Rusty Blackbird				u	Fox Sparrow	u		u	u
Boat-tailed Grackle	o		o	o	Swamp Sparrow	c		c	c
Common Grackle	c	c	c	c	Song Sparrow	c		c	c
Brown-headed Cowbird	o		o	o					

These additional 22 species are of very rare or accidental occurrence:

White Pelican	Whimbrel (Hudsonian Curlew)
Glossy Ibis	Arctic Tern
Whistling Swan	Black-billed Cuckoo
Snow Goose	Barn Owl
Blue Goose	Ivory-billed Woodpecker (formerly)
European Widgeon	Gray Kingbird
Rough-legged Hawk	Western Kingbird (Arkansas)
Golden Eagle	Baltimore Oriole
Limpkin	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Clapper Rail	Tree Sparrow
Semipalmated Plover	Lark Sparrow
<i>Cattle Egret</i>	<i>Fainted hunting</i>

NOTES

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