

Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge

22500 Salton Drive

Imperial, CA 92233

Telephone: 760/348-5278

Fax: 760/348-7245

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov>

Refuge Information

F 800/344 WILD

Illustrations: Kenda Morris/USFWS

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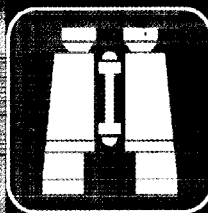


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

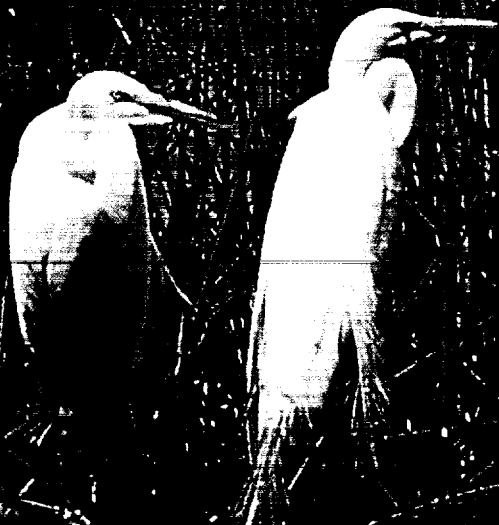
# Salton Sea

## *National Wildlife Refuge*

### *Watchable Wildlife*



*The 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.*



*An egret chick and egg in their nest*



## Introduction

Established as a national refuge in 1930 by a Presidential Proclamation, the 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. 1785 acres of agricultural fields and freshwater marsh remain manageable.

Located 226 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 continue to rise.

## 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.

Common  
egrets in the  
bulrush

(Photo: D.B. Marshall/  
USFWS)

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



*Yuma clapper  
rail strolls  
through the reeds*

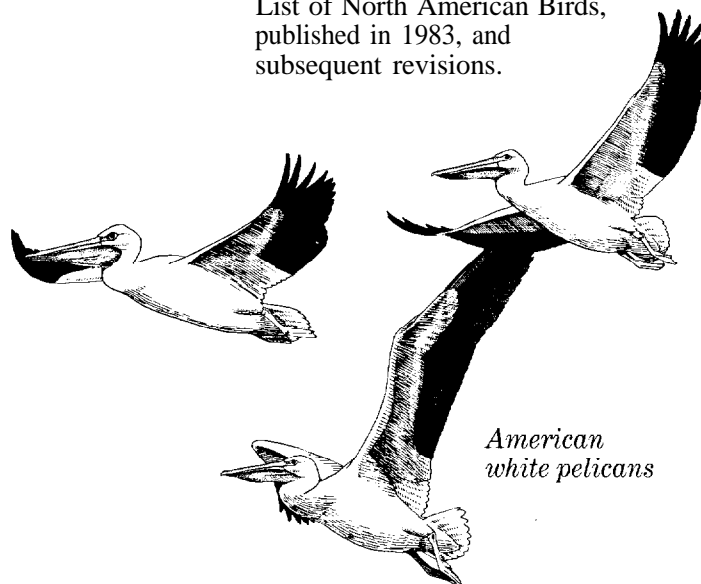
## Enjoying the Refuge's **Birdlife**



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 November 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 384 species that have been recorded on 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 1983, and subsequent revisions.



*American  
white pelicans*

## Salton Sea NWR Bird list Key

### Seasons

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

- 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.
- a - accidental, less than ten records for the entire area, and not to be expected.

Threatened/Endangered Species
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### 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.

**Salton Sea NWR Bird List Key**

**Birds of the Salton Sea NWR**

**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.

**Codes listed Under Notes**

Listed in the notes column is information over and above the relative abundance shown for each season and it clarifies the status of some species in the area.

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.

l-9 - actual number of recorded occurrences for those species listed as accidentals in the area.

Y - present year round, origin unknown.

**Common Name**

**H Sp S F W N**

**Loons**

Red-throated Loon					a	1
Pacific Loon	0	0	a	a	a	
Common Loon	0	0	a	0	a	

**Grebes**

Pied-billed Grebe	m	u	u	u	u	b
Horned Grebe	0	0	a	0	0	
Eared Grebe	0	c	u	c	c	b+
Western Grebe	0	u	u	u	u	b
Clark's Grebe	0	u	u	u	u	b

**Albatross**

Laysan Albatross		a	a			2
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**Fulmars, Petrels and Shearwaters**

Cook's Petrel			a			1
Buller's Shearwater			a			1
Sooty Shearwater			a			3

**Storm-Petrels**

Leach's Storm-Petrel			a	a		2
Black Storm-Petrel				a		8
Least Storm-Petrel			a	a		20

**Boobies and Gannets**

Blue-footed Booby		a	a	0		ep
Brown Booby		a	a	a		ep

**Pelicans and Cormorants**

American White Pelican	oa		c	c	c	u	xb
/Brown Pelican	o	u	c	c	c	u	pb+
Double-crested Cormorant	o	c	c	c	c	c	b
Neotropic Cormorant			a	a	a		7

**Frigatebirds**

Magnificent Frigatebird	a		0	r	a	p
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**Bitterns, Herons and Egrets**

American Bittern	m	r	o	u	u	
Least Bittern	m	r	u	r	o	b
Great Blue Heron	bm	c	c	c	c	b
Great Egret	bm	c	c	c	c	b
Snowy Egret	bm	c	c	c	c	b
Little Blue Heron	m	o	o	a	a	b+
Tricolored Heron	bm	o	o	a	a	
Reddish Egret		a	a	a		7
Cattle Egret	fm	e	c	c	c	b

Bitterns, Herons and Egrets, *continued next page*

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
Bitterns, Herons and Egrets, continued						
Green Heron	m	u	u	u	u	b
Black-crowned Night-Heron	m	c	c	c	c	b
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron		a				l
Ibis and Spoonbills						
White Ibis			a			2
White-faced Ibis	mf		u	u	c	c b+
Roseate Spoonbill	bm	a	o	o	a	ep
Stork						
Wood Stork	bm	a	c	o	a	p
Flamingos						
Lesser Flamingo	ob	o	o	o	o	y
Chilean Flamingo	ob	o	o	o	o	y
Waterfowl						
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	mr		r	0	a	b+
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck		a	a			8
Tundra Swan	om			a	0	
Greater White-fronted Goose	fm	a	a	r	r	
Snow Goose	fm	o	0	c	c	
Ross' Goose	fm	0		c	c	
Brant	om	r	0	0	0	
Canada Goose	fm	0	0	e	c	
<u>Aleutian Canada Goose</u>	fm			r	r	
Wood Duck	om		a		o	
Green-winged Teal	om		c	r	e	c
Baikal Teal						a l
American Black Duck						a l
Mallard	om	u	o	u	u	b
Northern Pintail	om		r	r	c	c
Blue-winged Teal	om	r	0	r	0	
Cinnamon Teal	om		e	u	c	r b
Northern Shoveler	om		e	r	c	c
Gadwall	om		r	r	u	u
Eurasian Wigeon	om			0	0	
American Wigeon	om		r	0	c	c
Canvasback	0	u	0	u	c	
Redhead	o	u	u	u	u	b
Ring-necked Duck	0	0	a	0	r	
Tufted Duck						a l
Greater Scaup	0	0	a		r	
Lesser Scaup	0	u	0	u	c	
Oldsquaw	0	o	a	a	0	
Black Scoter		a	a		a	3
Surf Scoter	0	r	o	0	0	
White-winged Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	
Common Goldeneye	0	0	0		u	
Barrow's Goldeneye						a 4
Bufflehead	o	u	o	0	u	

Common Name	H	Sp	S	F	W	N
Hooded Merganser	o					o
Common Merganser	0	0	a			r
Red-breasted Merganser	0		u	r	r	r
Ruddy Duck	om	c	c	e	c	b
Vultures						
Turkey Vulture	af	u	r	u	r	
Osprey, Kites, Eagles and Hawks						
Osprey	a0	0	0	0	0	
White-tailed Kite		0	0	0	o	b+
<u>Bald Eagle</u>	a0			a	0	
Northern Harrier	afmu		0	c	c	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	ars	r		u	u	
Cooper's Hawk	ars	0		u	u	
Northern Goshawk						a l
Harris' Hawk						xb
Red-shouldered Hawk				0	0	
Broad-winged Hawk					a	2
Swainson's Hawk	af		o		o	
Zone-tailed Hawk					a	3
Red-tailed Hawk	af	u	r	u	u	
Ferruginous Hawk	af			r	r	
Rough-legged Hawk	af				0	
Golden Eagle		a			a	
Falcons						
American Kestrel	afh		u	u	c	c b
Merlin	af			r	r	
<u>Peregrine Falcon</u>	am	o	o	o	0	
Prairie Falcon	af	r	0	r	r	
Gallinaceous Birds						
Ring-necked Pheasant	f	r	r	r	r	b
Gambel's Quail	s	u	u	u	u	b
Rails						
<u>Black Rail</u>	m	o	o	o	o	b
<u>Yuma Clapper Rail</u>	m	r	r	r	r	b
Virginia Rail	m	u	r	u	u	b
Sora	m	c	r	c	e	
Common Moorhen	m	u	u	u	u	b
American Coot	om		e	c	e	c b
Cranes						
Sandhill Crane	f			u	u	
Plovers						
Black-bellied Plover	bf	c	u	c	c	
Pacific Golden-Plover	bf	o		0	a	

Plovers. continued next page

## Common Name

H Sp S F W N

### Plovers, *continued*

Snowy Plover	b	u	u	u	r	b
Wilson's Plover			a			1xb
Semipalmated Plover	b	c	o	u	o	
Killdeer	f	b	c	c	c	c
Mountain Plover	f	o		o	u	

### Oystercatchers

American Oystercatcher				a		l
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### Stilts and Avocets

Black-necked Stilt	mf		e	c	c	c
American Avocet	m		c	c	c	b

### Shorebirds

Greater Yellowlegs	mf		c	o	c	c
Lesser Yellowlegs	mf		u		u	r
Spotted Redshank			a			l
Solitary Sandpiper	mf		a		o	a
Willet	mf		e	u	c	c
Wandering Tattler	m		o	a	a	
Spotted Sandpiper	m		u		u	u
Whimbrel	mf		e	o	c	o
Long-billed Curlew	mf		e	u	c	e
Hudsonian Godwit					a	2
Marbled Godwit	b		e	u	e	u
Ruddy Turnstone	b		r		o	a
Black Turnstone	b		o	o	o	
Surfbird	b		o	a		
Red Knot	b		u		a	r
Sanderling	b		u		u	o
Semipalmated Sandpiper	b		o	o	o	
Western Sandpiper	b		c	c	c	e
Little Stint					a	1
Least Sandpiper	b		e	c	e	c
White-rumped Sandpiper			a			3
Baird's Sandpiper	b		o		r	
Pectoral Sandpiper	b		a		o	a
Dunlin	b		c	o	c	u
Curlew Sandpiper			a		a	2
Stilt Sandpiper	b		r		u	r
Ruff					a	a
Short-billed Dowitcher	b		u	o	u	4
Long-billed Dowitcher	b		c	c	c	c

### Snipe

Common Snipe	m		u		u	u
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### Phalaropes

Wilson's Phalarope	bo		c	o	c	a
Red-necked Phalarope	bo		c	o	c	a
Red Phalarope	o		a	a	o	

## Common Name

H Sp S F W N

### Jaegers

Pomarine Jaeger		a	a	a		5
Parasitic Jaeger	o	a	a	r		
Long-tailed Jaeger				a		5

### Gulls and Terns

Laughing Gull	ob	o	c	r	o	pb+
Franklin's Gull	ob	r	o	r		
Little Gull		a		a	a	5
Bonaparte's Gull	ob	c	r	r	o	
Heermann's Gull	ob	a	o	a	a	p
Mew Gull	ob	o	a		o	
Ring-billed Gull	obf	c	u	c	c	
California Gull	obf	e	c	c	u	b+
Herring Gull	obf	r	o	u	c	
Thayer's Gull	ob	o	a	o	r	
Lesser Black-backed Gull				a	a	3
Yellow-footed Gull	ob	o	c	u	o	p
Glaucous-winged Gull	ob	o	o	o	r	
Glaucous Gull	ob	a	a	a	o	
Black-legged Kittiwake		a	a	a		7
Sabine's Gull	o	a	o			
Gull-billed Tern	bf	u	u	o	a	b
Caspian Tern	ob	c	c	c	c	b
Elegant Tern			a			3
Common Tern	ob	r	r	c		
Arctic Tern		a		a		6
Forster's Tern	ob	c	c	c	u	b
California Least Tern	ob	a	a	a		
Black Tern	bf	c	c	c	a	

### Skimmers

Black Skimmer	b	u	u	r	a	b
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### Seabirds

Ancient Murrelet		a	a			3
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### Doves

Rock Dove	h	c	c	c	c	b
Band-tailed Pigeon		a		a		2
Spotted Dove				a		1
White-winged Dove	sh	u	u	o	a	b
Mourning Dove	fsh		c	c	c	b
Inca Dove	h	r	r	r	r	bl
Common Ground-Dove	sh		u	u	u	b

### Cuckoos

Yellow-billed Cuckoo			a			x2
Greater Roadrunner	sf	c	c	c	c	b
Groove-billed Ani				a	a	2



Common Name                    H   Sp   S   F   W   N

Wrens, continued

House Wren                    sr   r   r   u   u  
 Winter Wren                                                                             a   4  
 Marsh Wren                    m   c   c   c   c   b

**Kinglets, Bluebirds and Thrushes**

Golden-crowned Kinglet       rh                    0   0  
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet       rsh   u                    c   c  
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher       rs   0                    u   u  
 Black-tailed Gnatcatcher    s   u   u                    u   u   b  
 Western Bluebird            sh                    0   0  
 Mountain Bluebird           f                    a   u   e  
 Townsend's Solitaire       s   a                    0   0  
 Swainson's Thrush           rsh   u  
 Hermit Thrush               rsh   r                    u   u  
 Rufous-backed Robin        a                    a                    2  
 American Robin             h   r                    r   u   e  
 Varied Thrush                a                    a                    4

**Mockingbirds and Thrashers**

Northern Mockingbird       sh                    c   c   c   c   b  
 Sage Thrasher               s                    r                    o  
 Brown Thrasher              a                    a                    3  
 Bendire's Thrasher                                    a   a                    2  
 Curve-billed Thrasher                                a                    4  
 Crissal Thrasher            s   r   r   r   r   b  
 Le Conte's Thrasher                                    xb

**Wagtails and Pipits**

American Pipit               f   r                    c   c  
 Sprague's Pipit                                        a                    1

**Waxwings**

Cedar Waxwing               h   u                    r   u   e

**Phainopela**

Phainopela                    s   u                    u   u   b

**Shrikes**

Northern Shrike                                    a                    1  
 Loggerhead Shrike        sf   u   u   u   u   b

**Starlings and Mynas**

European Starling            hf                    c   c   c   c   b

**Vireos**

Bell's Vireo    a                    2  
 Solitary Vireo                sh   u                    r   0  
 Hutton's Vireo                                        o  
 Warbling Vireo                sh   c                    u   a  
 Red-eye Vireo                                        a                    1

Common Name                    H   Sp   S   F   W   N

**Warblers**

Tennessee Warbler                                    a                    a  
 Orange-crowned Warbler    r   e                    c   c  
 Nashville Warbler            rs   e                    u   a  
 Virginia's Warbler            s   a                    o  
 Lucy's Warbler                                        a                    a                    4  
 Northern Parula                                                                              a                    4  
 Yellow Warbler                rh   e                    c   r  
 Chestnut-sided Warbler     a   a                    a                    3  
 Magnolia Warbler            a                    a                    2  
 Cape May Warbler            a   a                    a                    2  
 Black-throated Blue Warbler                        a                    a                    2  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler     rsh   e                    c   c  
 Black-throated Gray Warbler                        sh   e                    u   o  
 Townsend's Warbler        sh   u   a                    r   o  
 Hermit Warbler                sh   u                    r  
 Prairie Warbler                                        a                    a                    1  
 Palm Warbler                                        a                    a                    8  
 Bay-breasted Warbler                                a                    a                    1  
 Cerulean Warbler                                                                              a                    1  
 Black-and-white Warbler    hr   o                    o   o  
 American Redstart            rh   o                    r   r  
 Ovenbird                        a   a                    a                    2  
 Northern Waterthrush        r                    0   0  
 MacGillivray's Warbler     rs   u                    r  
 Common Yellowthroat        mr   u   u   u   u   b  
 Wilson's Warbler              rs   e                    u   o  
 Painted Redstart                                                                              a                    1  
 Yellow-breasted Chat        r   0   0   0                    b

**Tanagers**

Summer Tanager                h                    a   0   a  
 Western Tanager                hs   e                    u   0

**Grosbeaks and Buntings**

Pyrrhuloxia    a                    a                    4  
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak    a                    a                    3  
 Black-headed Grosbeak     hs   e                    u  
 Blue Grosbeak                rs   u   u   r   a  
 Blue Bunting    a                    1  
 Lazuli Bunting                rs   e                    u  
 Indigo Bunting                                        a   a   a                    3  
 Dickcissel    a                    1

**Towhees and Sparrows**

Green-tailed Towhee        s   r                    r   r  
 Spotted Towhee                s                    r   r  
 Abert's Towhee                s   c   c   c   c   b  
 American Tree Sparrow                                           a                    3  
 Chipping Sparrow            h   r                    r   r

Towhees and Sparrows, *continued next page*

Common Name                    H    Sd S    F    W    N

Towhees and Sparrows, *continued*

Brewer's Sparrow	fsu			u	u	
Black-chinned Sparrow		a		a		2
Vesper Sparrow	f	0		r	u	
Lark Sparrow	fs	r		r	r	
Black-throated Sparrow	s			o		
Sage Sparrow	fs			r	u	
Lark Bunting	fs				o	
Savannah Sparrow	f	c	0	c	c	
Grasshopper Sparrow			a	a	a	4
Fox Sparrow	rs			0	0	
Song Sparrow	rm	u	r	u	u	b
Lincoln's Sparrow	rf	u		e	c	
Swamp Sparrow	m	o			o	
White-throated Sparrow	rsf	a			o	
Golden-crowned Sparrow	rsf				o	
White-crowned Sparrow	rsf		u	c	c	
Harris' Sparrow	sf				o	
Dark-eyed Junco	sf	0		u	u	
McCown's Longspur	f					
Lapland Longspur	f		.00	00		
Chestnut-collard Longspur	f			0	0	
Bobolink			a	a		2

Blackbirds,  
Meadowlarks and Orioles

Red-winged Blackbird	fm	c	c	c	c	b
Tricolored Blackbird					a	2
Western Meadowlark	f	u	u	c	c	b
Yellow-headed Blackbird	mf	c	c	c	e	b
Brewer's Blackbird	fh	u	o	c	e	
Great-tailed Grackle	mf		u	u	u	b
Bronzed Cowbird	h	o	r			b
Brown-headed Cowbird	fhs	e	u	c	e	b
Orchard Oriole				a	a	3
Hooded Oriole	h	u	u		o	b
Baltimore Oriole	hrs		u	a	a	a
Bullock's Oriole	hrs		c	r	u	a
Scott's Oriole				a	a	4

Finches

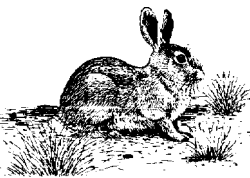
Purple Finch	rh			0	0	e
Cassin's Finch	rh			0	0	e
House Finch	hs	c	c	c	c	b
Red Crossbill	h	s	o	o	o	e
Pine Siskin	rsh			r	r	e
Lesser Goldfinch	s	u	r	u	u	b
Lawrence's Goldfinch	s	u		r	r	e
American Goldfinch	s	r		r	r	r
Evening Grosbeak				a		l

Weaver Finches

House Sparrow	h	c	c	c	c	b
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*A coyote  
wanders the  
wetlands*





## Mammals of the **Salton** Sea NWR

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 and Moles

**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.

### Bats

**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**  
(*Pipistrellus 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 ega*)

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*)

**Pikas, Rabbits  
and Hares**

**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.

**Rodents**

**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 *Geomyidae*)

**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**  
(*Perognathus formosus*)

**Desert Pocket Mouse**  
(*Perognathus penicillatus*)

**Spiny Pocket Mouse**  
(*Perognathus spinatus*)

**Desert Kangaroo Rat**  
(*Dipodomys deserti*)

**Merriam's Kangaroo Rat**  
(*Dipodomys merriami*)



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

**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.

An unusual  
daytime sighting  
of the desert  
kit fox

(Photo:  
Joe Engler/  
USFWS)



Rodents  
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 xibethicus*)  
Muskrats 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.

Carnivores

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.

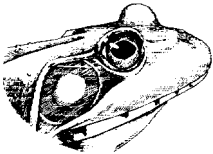
Weasels, Skunks, Badgers,  
Otters and Allies  
(family *Mustelidae*)

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 of the **Salton** Sea NWR

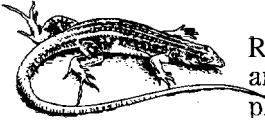


The name amphibian means “double life” and refers to the fact that most amphibians spend part of the year on land but return to water to breed. It also reflects the change of an aquatic tadpole to a terrestrial adult frog or toad. In the spring and early summer look for them gathering in shallow ponds where they mate and lay eggs.

### Frogs and Toads

Woodhouse Toad  
Red-spotted Toad  
Bullfrog

### Reptiles of the **Salton** Sea NWR



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

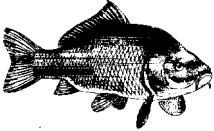
### lizards \*

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 of the **Salton** Sea NWR



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

Tilapia (in both fresh and saltwater)

### Saltwater Fish

Gulf Croaker


Orangemouth Corvina

Sargo

Longjaw Mudsucker

Striped Mullet

Tilapia (in both fresh and saltwater)



*Western  
diamondback  
rattlesnake  
in a defensive  
posture*

*(Photo:  
Gary Kramer/  
USFWS)*