

Selected Birds of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and Vicinity

Birdlife of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and Vicinity

The Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) and surrounding areas are located in southeastern Jackson County, Mississippi, and contain a diversity of habitats which support numerous and significant populations of pelicans, Ospreys, marshbirds, waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, and migrant landbirds. In the first assessment of the environmental and biological characteristics of the proposed Grand Bay NERR, biologists noted 83 bird species during their 1998 surveys. Based on daily field observations of NERR/NWR staff, visiting scientists, and birders, as well as specific ornithological studies, 268 bird species have been observed in and around the Grand Bay NERR/NWR area during the period 2001-2009 (See Checklist). This represents 69% of the 387 species documented in the Birds of the Mississippi Coastal Counties Checklist for the six southern-most counties in Mississippi. Of the 268 species noted for the reserve/refuge, 49 species (18%) are known to nest in the vicinity, 57 (21%) are permanent residents, 102 (38%) are winter residents, 24 (9%) are summer residents and 85 (32%) are transients or species that migrate through the area.

Bird-Habitat Relationships

All good birders know that an appreciation for and the knowledge of habitats used by the local bird species are the keys to a successful birding trip. In addition to its relevance to both the casual and serious bird-watcher, understanding ecological bird-habitat relationships is an important first step in identifying potential management issues, and developing conservation strategies to address the needs of bird species of concern. In this section, we provide a brief overview of our current understanding of species-habitat relationships for birds of the Grand Bay NERR area.