

# Bird Guide for Pleasure House Point



Jamie Betts, Courtesy of Trust for Public Land

Special thanks to Steve Coari, Virginia Beach Audubon Society, and Bill Portlock, Chesapeake Bay Foundation Senior Educator for the Bay, for help with this guide.

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Welcome to Pleasure House Point!

This guide will help you identify a number of bird species you may find at Pleasure House Point Natural Area. The birds are divided into six categories: **Songbirds** are very common and are known for their rhythmic calls and often melodious songs. **Shorebirds** are usually small birds that hunt for small fish, shellfish, and insects along the beach and mudflats. **Wading Birds** are large, usually have longer legs, and stalk the shoreline to catch and eat small crabs and fish. **Waterfowl** include ducks, geese, and swans. Technically not waterfowl, Brown Pelicans are included in this group. **Gulls and terns** are medium-size birds that fly, eat, and roost near the beaches. Terns are graceful in flight and dive head-first for fish; gulls are scavengers and opportunists of the shores and waters. **Raptors** are predatory birds that eat fish, small mammals, or birds. This guide will help you explore the natural area and identify the birds you will see flying, walking, or swimming around you.

See if you can identify all of the species.



**CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION**  
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# Songbirds



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## Nelson's Sparrow

*Ammodramus nelsoni*

Lives in marshes, where it eats insects. Migrates here only in the winter.



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## Pine Warbler

*Setophaga pinus*

Nests in tall pine forests, where it eats small insects.



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## Eastern Towhee

*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*

Looks similar to a robin but is smaller and has a call that sounds like "Towhee."



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## Seaside Sparrow

*Ammodramus maritimus*

The darkest of sparrows, it lives in the marsh year-round.



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## Yellow-Rumped Warbler

*Setophaga coronata*

Smallish winter resident often found in forests with wax myrtle thickets. It eats the myrtle's waxy berries plus insects in the forests or along the beach.

# Birds of the Shore



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## Clapper Rail

*Rallus longirostris*

Heard more than seen, rails wade in marshes where they prey on small fish and crustaceans.



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## Greater Yellowlegs

*Tringa melanoleuca*

A small speckled bird with yellow legs and a yellow bill typically seen probing mud flats.



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## Black Skimmer

*Rynchops niger*

A gull-like bird with a bright orange and black beak, often skimming the water with its bill.



7

## Belted Kingfisher

*Megaceryle alcyon*

This very vocal bird often perches on branches or stakes over the water and dives into the water for small fish.



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## Killdeer

*Chararius vociferus*

A plover that forages near beach grasses and eats insects.

# Wading Birds



## Great Egret

*Ardea alba*

Large, white, very common on the shoreline; wades in the water and spears fish with its sharp, long beak.

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## Green Heron

*Butorides virescens*

Small, stocky heron has orange eyes and feathers with a hint of purple and green.

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## Yellow Crowned Night Heron

*Nyctanassa violacea*

Crow-size, usually nocturnal heron with grey feathers and white and black head as adult.

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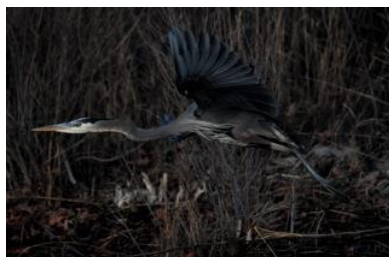


## American Bittern

*Botaurus lentiginosus*

Marsh dweller whose mixture of grey and brown feathers act as very good camouflage.

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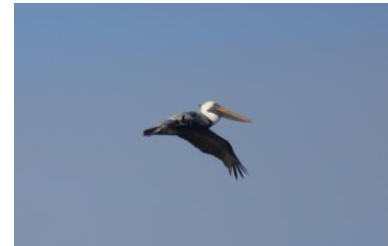
## Great Blue Heron

*Ardea herodias*

Extremely long neck and legs; has grayish blue feathers and a sharp, orange beak.

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# Waterfowl/Water Birds



## Brown Pelican

*Pelicanus occidentalis*

Common large-beaked pelican that lives near beaches and dives headfirst into the water for fish.

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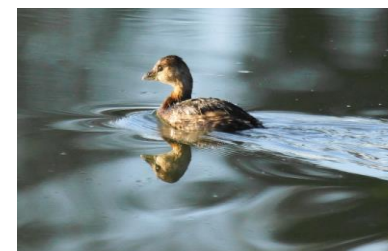


## Bufflehead

*Bucephala albeola*

Small diving duck with a large white spot on each side of its rounded head; often seen in winter.

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## Pied-billed Grebe

*Podilymbus podiceps*

A very small chicken-like swimmer that dives to the bottom of lakes and rivers to eat small fish, insect larvae, and soft plants.

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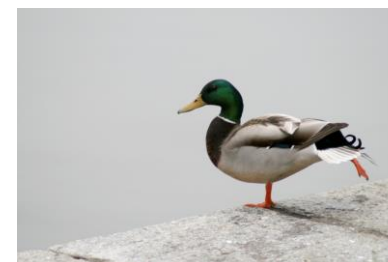


## Hooded Merganser

*Lophodytes cucullatus*

Magnificent smallish duck with very large, colorful head plumage; dives underwater for fish and crustaceans.

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## Mallard

*Anas platyrhynchos*

Most common duck; males are white, black, gray, and brown with a green head; females are all brown. They tip tail-up to feed in shallow water.

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# Gulls and Terns



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## Royal Tern

*Thalasseus maximus*

A large tern that is known for its headfirst free-fall dives for small fish and shrimp; only found along beaches.



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## Laughing Gull

*Leucophaeus atricilla*

Very common gull with the well-known gull call; has a completely black head.



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## Great Black-backed Gull

*Larus marinus*

Our largest gull; has a completely white body with charcoal black wings, yellow beak, and pink legs.



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## Common Tern

*Sterna hirundo*

Fork-tailed bird with a white body, grey wings, and reddish orange beak and legs. Plunge-dives for small fish.



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## Herring Gull

*Larus argentatus*

Common large, white gull with grey wings, yellow beak, and a loud call.

# Raptors

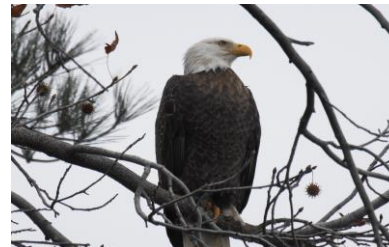


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## Osprey

*Pandion haliaetus*

Large hawk that nests around the bay in dead trees or man-made structures during the summer; usually seen in the nest or flying with a fish.



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## American Bald Eagle

*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

Largest raptor at Pleasure House Point. Nests in large live trees near water Jan.-June. Adults have white head and tail with dark brown body. Sub-adults have brownish plumage.



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## Merlin

*Falco columbarius*

Medium-size falcon that lives in wide-open spaces and open-forested areas. Preys on smaller birds.



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## Red-tailed Hawk

*Buteo jamaicensis*

A large hawk with a very broad wingspan. Adults have a rusty red tail and a "Kee-yeeer" call.



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## Peregrine Falcon

*Falco peregrinus*

Medium size, greyish falcon that often preys on birds and can fly at over 100 mph.