

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park



John D. MacArthur Beach State Park houses 436 acres of rich subtropical coastal habitat, featuring mangrove estuaries, seagrass meadows, hardwood hammocks, dunes, beaches, and rock reefs. As a result of this variety of ecosystems, over 150 different species of birds have been identified in the Park. Only a handful of these are featured in this guide, with the focus of aiding identification. If you are interested in a more comprehensive list, the MacArthur Beach Bird Species Checklist is available in the Nature Center.

All animals, plants, and other resources are protected in Florida's State Parks. Please take nothing but pictures and memories. For your protection and that of the resources, please stay on designated trails and obey all Park signs.

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

10900 Jack Nicklaus Drive North Palm Beach, FL 33408

Park Office 561-624-6950
Nature Center 561-624-6952
Beach Outfitters Gift Shop
561-776-7449 Ext. 101

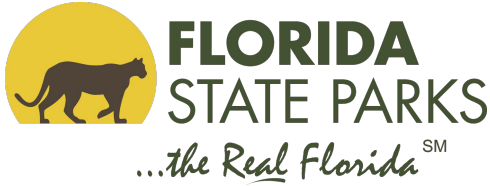
www.macarthurbeach.org



Bird Guide



John D. MacArthur Beach State Park



Welcome to MacArthur Beach State Park! This Guide is intended to help you identify species you are most likely to encounter during your visit. The birds are organized according to the ecosystems where they are most commonly found, but several species may frequent more than one (or even all) of these locations.

The **Estuary Boardwalk** is a great place to find wading birds, particularly at low tide, while the **Satinleaf Trail** and **Dune Trail** contain the **maritime hammock**, a home for many songbirds. The **beach** is where you may find pelicans and gulls in flight, or shorebirds during the winter months.

Birds of the Estuary



Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) This bird is named for its spatulate bill and pink color, which comes from red algae eaten by the spoonbill's crustacean prey.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) The largest of the wading birds in the Park. Has a primarily gray-blue body, a large yellowish bill, and a black, plumed crown.



Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) A small heron, almost entirely slate-blue with a purplish head and neck. Look closely near mangrove edges for this bird, as it tends to sit motionless and blend in with the shadows.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) A large, brown-and-white raptor that fishes in the estuary. Often seen flying overhead or perched at the top of taller mangroves.



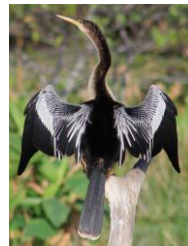
Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) A small, all-white heron with a black bill, black legs, and distinctive yellow feet. Known for its elegant plumes that are particularly extravagant during breeding.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) This heron has a gray body and black and white face, along with a thick black bill and red eyes. Occasionally roosts in mangroves; hunts on the beach at dawn and dusk.



Belted Kingfisher (*Megasceryle alcyon*) A small bird with a very large bill compared to its body. The female has an orange "belt" across the belly, while both sexes have a dark band across the breast. Perches in mangroves and flies to the open water to fish.

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) A large black seabird with an orange bill that fishes in both fresh and saltwater. Look for cormorants swimming and diving in the estuary.



Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) A large black bird commonly called a "snake-bird" because of its habit of swimming with only its long neck stretched out of the water. Can be found swimming and diving or perched with wings outstretched to dry.

Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) At 9" in length, this is the smallest North American tern and is listed as Threatened in Florida. Watch for terns along the estuary bridge.



Birds of the Maritime Hammock

Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) A common year-round resident songbird of the Park. The male cardinal is distinctive with his bright red plumage and black mask.



Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) A large, vibrant, and noisy resident songbird, with a distinctive blue-and-white body and crest. Listen for its harsh, jeering call.



Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) A slim, gray songbird with white wing patches and a long tail that it often thrashes about. Mockingbirds make themselves conspicuous, perching in high places to sing a long, whistling stream of mimicked songs and sounds.



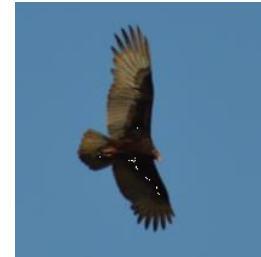
Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) A medium-sized woodpecker with a red cap, pale belly, and striped back. Watch for it moving along tree trunks and listen for its rolling "kwirr" call.



Boat-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus major*) A large, gregarious songbird with a very long tail. Males are a shimmering blue-black while females are brown.



Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)



A large, dark, broad-winged raptor often seen soaring in circles high overhead throughout the park. Soars with wings held in a V-shape.

Birds of the Beach

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) A large brown seabird with a very long bill and flexible throat pouch. Watch for squadrons of them gliding over the dune and surf, or diving into the ocean for fish.



Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) A medium-sized gull found year-round in the Park, named for its call that sounds like raucous laughter. Adult has a black hood during the summer, which is replaced by light gray streaking outside of breeding season.



Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) A medium-sized gull found in the Park most abundantly during the winter months. Named for the black band across its yellow bill.



Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) A small, pale-bodied sandpiper that is a winter visitor, arriving in the fall and leaving in the spring. Watch for Sanderlings running near the water, "chasing" receding waves as they search for food.



Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) A large shorebird with long legs and a long, straight bill. Look for Willets during winter and fall/spring migration. Usually found alone, probing through the sand for crabs or worms or occasionally feeding alongside Sanderlings.

