

# BIRDING GUIDE

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

## AIR AND SURF TEMPERATURES (°F)

70°		70°		70°		80°		80°		70°	
50°		60°		60°		80°		80°		70°	
JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
WINTERING BIRDS			SPRING MIGRATION		NESTING SEASON			FALL MIGRATION		WINTERING BIRDS	
Redhead, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Bufflehead			Warblers (Ex. Magnolia & Northern Parula)		Wilson's Plover			Warblers		Redhead, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Bufflehead	
Peregrine Falcon, Osprey			Vireos (Ex. Red-eyed)		Hérons			Flycatchers		Peregrine Falcon, Osprey	
Marsh Wren, Swamp Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat			Tanagers (Ex. Summer)		White Ibis			Vireos		Marsh Wren, Swamp Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat	
Dunlin, Yellowlegs, Long-billed Curlew			Orioles (Ex. Baltimore)		Roseate Spoonbills			Shorebirds		Dunlin, Yellowlegs, Long-billed Curlew	
Belted Kingfisher			Flycatchers		Terns			Gulls		Belted Kingfisher	
Sora			Painted Bunting		Least Bittern			Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds		Sora	
Herring Gull			Hummingbirds							Herring Gull	
Brown Pelicans, Reddish Egret, American Oystercatcher, Roseate Spoonbills, Great Blue Heron, Royal Tern, Snowy Plover, Willet, Tri-colored Heron, Mottled Duck											

## SPI NATURE & BIRDING CENTER

6801 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, TX 78597 | (956) 761-6801 | [www.spibirding.com](http://www.spibirding.com)

One of nine World Birding Center sites in the lower Rio Grande Valley, the SPI Birding & Nature Center provides one-of-a-kind birding opportunities, coupled with interpretive tours on site. Nestled along the wetlands of the Laguna Madre Bay, this is an ideal place to observe the birds, butterflies and natural wildlife in coastal South Texas. The Birding & Nature Center features various exhibits with the Island's birds, flora and fauna, along with a viewing tower, bird blinds, and boardwalk nature trails.

## ANNUAL EVENTS

### HALLOWINGS ACROSS SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

*Held the last weekend in October*

Treat the family to a friendly holiday event in celebration of the fall migration of the Monarch butterfly. It's a 3-day city-wide event with numerous children's activities, a variety of live entertainment, guided tours, nature talks, and so much more.

### Winter Outdoor Wildlife Expo (W.O.W.E.)

*Held the second to last week in January*

Join us for five days of fun for the whole family! This five-day expo is full with fantastic speakers covering all coastal outdoor and nature topics. Each day has a different theme and you are sure to learn something new and interesting each day!



## BIRDS ON SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

**Peregrine Falcon** - Peregrine Falcons are the largest falcon over most of the continent, with long, pointed wings and a long tail. Adults are blue-gray above with barred underparts and a dark head with thick sideburns.

**Osprey** are very large, distinctively shaped hawks. Despite their size, their bodies are slender, with long, narrow wings and long legs. Ospreys are brown above and white below, and overall they are whiter than most raptors. The head is white with a broad brown stripe through the eye.

**Dunlin** - This small shorebird is distinctive in breeding plumage, with a black belly-patch extending behind its black legs. Its head and breast are light-colored, and its back is bright rufous. During non-breeding their plumage is drab gray with a brownish head and breast.

**Greater Yellowlegs** - Large and lanky for a shorebird, with very long legs, a long neck, and a thick-based, slightly upturned bill. In breeding plumage the Greater Yellowlegs is a striking bird, with dense, dark bands on the breast and neck. Most of the year, the pattern is more subdued: a black and white checkerboard of speckling on the back, with a finely streaked neck and head.

**Long-billed Curlew** - Large, long-legged shorebird with a very long, thin curved bill. It has a heavy football-shaped body, a long neck, and a small round head. Speckled and barred in browns above with a pale cinnamon wash throughout and a plain cinnamon belly. The head and neck are pale with faint streaks and the lower bill is pink at the base.

**Marsh Wren** – The Marsh Wren is a small, plump, round-bodied wren with a short tail that it often holds up almost vertically above its back. It has a thin bill and short wings. They sing a gurgling, rattling trill, usually while hidden in reeds.

**Swamp Sparrow** – A medium-sized sparrow with a short, conical bill, a compact, robust body, and a moderately long tail. Swamp Sparrows look quite dark overall, especially in dim or shadowy habitats, where they often remain concealed.

**Sora** – Soras are small, chubby, chickenlike birds with long toes. Soras are mottled gray and brown with white-edged feathers, but the feature that stands out the most is their yellow candy-corn bill.

**Belted Kingfisher** – Belted Kingfishers are stocky, large-headed birds with a shaggy crest on the top and back of the head and a straight, thick, pointed bill. These kingfishers are blue-gray above with fine, white spotting on the wings and tail.

**Herring Gull** – Herring Gulls are large gulls with hefty bills and robust bodies. Adults have light-gray backs, black wingtips, and white heads and underparts. In winter, dusky streaks mark their heads.

**White Ibis** – White Ibises are large wading birds with football-shaped bodies. They have long legs and a long neck that they hold out straight in flight. Their bill is long and curved. This ibis is almost entirely white, save for the black-tipped wings and brilliant reddish pink legs and bill.

**Roseate Spoonbills** – Roseate Spoonbills are medium-sized waterbirds with a football-shaped body and long legs. The long bill that is flattened into a spoon at the end protrudes from their small head. Roseate Spoonbills are pale pink birds with brighter pink shoulders and rump.

**Brown Pelican** – Brown Pelicans are huge, stocky seabirds. They have thin necks and very long bills with a stretchy throat pouch used for capturing fish. Their wings are very long and broad and are often noticeably bowed when the birds are gliding. Adult Brown Pelicans are gray-brown birds with yellow heads and white necks. In breeding plumage, the back and sides of the neck turn a rich, dark reddish-brown.

**Reddish Egret** – The Reddish Egret is one of the rarest egrets in North America. It's easily distinguished from other egrets and herons by its shaggy appearance, hyperactive feeding behavior, and pink-and-black bill.

**American Oystercatcher** – The flashy American Oystercatcher was once known as the "sea pie," but it was renamed in 1731 when naturalist Mark Catesby observed the bird eating oysters. This is one of the few bird species that specializes in feeding on saltwater mollusks.

**Great Blue Heron** – Largest of the North American herons with long legs, a sinuous neck, and thick, daggerlike bill. Head, chest, and wing plumes give a shaggy appearance. Great Blue Herons appear blue-gray from a distance, with a wide black stripe over the eye.

**Snowy Plover** – The diminutive Snowy Plover can be found along sandy coastlines in North and South America and the Caribbean. They are ground-nesters, creating small hollows called scrapes for their nests. They will try to divert predators from their nest using alarm calls and distraction displays.

**Willet** – Willets are large, stocky shorebirds with long legs and thick, straight bills considerably longer than the head. Their wings are broader and rounder than those of many shorebirds and the tail is short and squared off at the base. Willets are gray or brown birds that, when flying, display a striking white and black stripe along each wing.

**Tri-colored Heron** – A medium-sized, delicate and slim heron with a long, daggerlike bill. Its long thin neck curves up to its small head. A colorful heron with a mix of blue-gray, lavender, and white. Unlike other dark herons, they have a white belly.

**Royal Tern** – The Royal Tern is a large, slender tern. It has a long, sharp, orange-red bill, black legs and feet, and a short forked tail. The Royal Tern has a black cap with a shaggy, black crest, a slate-gray back and wings, and a white breast and belly.

**Mottled Duck** – The Mottled Duck is medium-sized with a dark brown mottled body. They have a buff-brown face and unmarked neck, darker crown and eye line, and the feathers usually show distinct multi-toned chevrons.

## Additional Species Found on the Island

**Redhead, American Widgeon, Northern Pintail, Bufflehead, Hummingbirds, Common Yellowthroat, Baltimore Oriole, Summer Tanager, Wilson's Plover, Magnolia Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Least Bittern**