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## Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge and Gateway National Recreation Area

### Day Trip

#### OVERVIEW

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is a wildlife refuge in New York City managed by the National Park Service and is composed of the open water and intertidal salt marshes of Jamaica Bay. The refuge provides habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna, both marine and terrestrial. It was established in 1972 and covers an area of 9155 acres (37.05 km<sup>2</sup>). It is one of the most significant bird sanctuaries in the northeastern United States.

The refuge is part of the greater Gateway National Recreation Area, a 26607 acre (10767 ha) National Recreation Area in the Port of New York and New Jersey. Scattered over Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island, New York, and Monmouth County, New Jersey, it provides recreational opportunities that are rare for a dense urban environment, including ocean swimming, bird watching, boating, hiking and camping.

These two sites are fantastic year-round birding sites, great for both land birds and waterfowl, while the nearby Atlantic coast in Rockaway is a reliable place for seabirds in season. In the spring and fall, warblers, grosbeaks and thrushes pass through in great numbers, while the ponds at Jamaica Bay are packed with shorebirds for most of late summer. Fall and winter bring large flocks of ducks and geese, while just off-shore lucky birders can find alcids, gulls and occasionally even a migrating whale. ). It's a birder's paradise with almost 300 bird species sighted at the refuge over the last 25 years; that is nearly half the species in the Northeast!

The easy walking trails throughout the parks make for a comfortable day of birding, and the close proximity of John F. Kennedy International Airport can permit the adventurous birder an exciting few hours during an extended layover.

The exact nature of this trip varies based on the season, and other places nearby may be substituted where appropriate.

## POSSIBLE SPECIES – SEASONAL

### Spring

Woodcock  
American Oystercatcher  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Yellow-crowned Night Heron  
Black-crowned Night Heron  
Wood-warblers (many species)  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Baltimore Oriole  
Orchard Oriole  
Eastern Kingbird  
Osprey

### Summer

Many of the same birds listed above breed in the park, but the following are more easily found in the summer months:

Little Blue Heron  
Tricolored Heron  
Glossy Ibis  
Laughing Gull  
Barn Owl  
Boat-tailed Grackle  
Willet  
Clapper Rail  
Foster's Tern  
Marsh Wren

A wide variety of sandpipers (most easily seen during high tide on mudflats in the park)

## **Fall**

The list here is similar to that of spring, but most waterfowl begin to show up in October. Peak hawk migration also occurs during the fall months.

Brandt

Snow Goose

American Black Duck

Peregrine Falcon

American Kestrel

Cooper's Hawk

Bald Eagle

## **Winter**

Waterfowl are the primary target within the park, as are wintering sparrows. The coastline offers the possibility for alcids and rare gulls.

Horned Grebe

Green-winged Teal

Greater Scup

Canvasback

Gadwall

Ruddy Duck

Tree Sparrow

**Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.**