

BIRDING GUIDE

TO THE TOWN OF ORCHID ISLAND




ORCHID ISLAND

BIRDS OF ORCHID ISLAND

From our nation's symbol to Florida's majestic state bird, Orchid Island is home to many species of gorgeous birds. Abundant oak trees and crystal clear waterways provide the unremarkable habitat that these birds need in order to live a fruitful life. Birdwatching is naturally a favorite pastime for residents of Orchid island as it's simply effortless living in this beautiful environment.

Over the next couple of pages, read about the magnificent species of birds that are native to not only the state of Florida but to Orchid Island itself. Then use this guide to enjoy and explore the habitat for yourself by taking advantage of the many locations set up around Orchid Island with an overlook to enjoy the outstanding birdwatching that is only available here.



BALD EAGLE



This majestic bird, also our national symbol, was once in decline because of pesticide overuse. Soon after the use of DDT was banned and strong protective measures were initiated, the Bald Eagle began a remarkable comeback. Today, this bird is almost a common sight here in Florida.

- Best seen high in dead or dying oaks
- Year-round resident
- Feeds on dead or dying fish



AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN



Considerably larger than their Brown Pelican cousins, White Pelicans can be seen here on the east coast throughout the winter months. They can often be seen on our ponds hunting in large groups driving fish into shallow water where they can easily scoop them up into their large bills.

- Seen on ponds, lagoon and beach
- Arrives in the late fall, leaves in the early spring
- Herds fish in groups



WOOD STORK



Great Egrets



Wood Duck

EASTERN MEADOWLARK



Fairly common throughout this part of Florida, this bird is distinguished by its beautiful golden colors and melodic song. It prefers an open grassy habitat and feeds upon larger flying insects. They can often be seen, as shown here, perched on fence posts and barbed wire.



GREAT BLUE HERON



An elegant and colorful wading bird, the Great Blue Heron can be seen frequenting the numerous ponds and waterways throughout the community. Many nest and rear their young in the long leaf pine trees right here in the community.

- Seen in water and on marshy land
- Year-round resident
- All waders feed on fish, insects, small reptiles, and mammals



ROSEATE SPOONBILL



Red Shouldered Hawk



Cormorant



White Pelican

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD



Our State Bird, the iconic Northern Mocking Bird can be seen and heard throughout Orchid Island and River Wilderness. This bird is known for its ability to accurately mimic everyday sounds, such as the calls of other birds and animals.

- Seen everywhere on land, trees, and shrubs
- Year-round resident
- Feeds on insects and berries



OSPREY



The many waterways and streams in Orchid Island provide an ideal habitat for the Osprey. This bird was also listed as “endangered” due to the overuse of the pesticide DDT but has made a remarkable comeback since the pesticide was banned back in the early 70’s

- Seen flying, diving in ponds and on ground
- Year-round resident
- Feeds on small live fish





Tri-Colored Heron



Snowy Egret



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH



Crested Caracara



Cattle Egret

ROSEATE SPOONBILL



Noted for its beautiful coloration, the Spoonbill is sometimes mistakenly identified as a Flamingo. Small flocks of these birds can be seen feeding, wading knee-deep in Orchid Islands' ponds, and rhythmically sweeping their heads side-to-side scooping up minute grass shrimp and other small crustaceans.

- Seen in marshy grounds and pond edges
- Year-round resident
- Feeds on small crustaceans



GREAT HORNED OWL



There are several species of Owls here. If you go outside at dusk and listen carefully, you are apt to hear them calling. They are nocturnal feeders and can often be seen flying from tree to tree at nightfall. One pair of Great Horned Owls can be seen nearly every evening near the Orchid Island Golf Club.



SANDHILL CRANE



Sandhill Cranes are large birds distinguished by a bright red crown and can be seen throughout the area. Pairs, often accompanied by one or two chicks, can be seen wandering over grassy meadowlands foraging for insects and targets of opportunity. The chicks are known strangely enough as colts.



NORTHERN BOB WHITE



A reclusive game-bird, the Northern Bob White can often be heard in the early morning and evening making its characteristic "Bob White" call. With a little patience, this bird can be called within easy viewing distance simply by mimicking its melodic call.

