

# Your Guide to Birding at **CHIMNEY ROCK**

## WELCOME

Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park, located in Hickory Nut Gorge, offers excellent opportunities for bird watching throughout the seasons due to its endless variety of habitats ranging from riverbanks to high cliffs.

Along the Rocky Broad River, floodplain trees and wet thickets attract Yellow and Yellow-throated Warblers. Belted Kingfishers may be seen sitting on a branch surveying the river.



Climbing up the north-facing slopes, the vegetation changes. Moist cove forests alternate with drier oak-mixed hardwoods forests. Rhododendrons are very common in these woods. A mixed oak forest with hickories and dogwoods covers the east side of the mountain. These deciduous forests attract many summer-breeding birds. Scarlet Tanagers are common, and up to 15 warblers and vireos can be found here during the summer months. The most elusive of these are the Cerulean and Swainson's Warblers. Cerulean Warblers prefer the tall trees immediately below the parking lot at the Chimney, and the Swainson's Warbler is found in rhododendron thickets, especially along the Hickory Nut Falls Trail.

The high cliffs on top of the steep, north-facing wooded slopes have an unusually cool climate considering the low altitude of the Park (1100–2800 ft.). This makes Chimney Rock attractive for several high-elevation species such as the Dark-eyed Junco and the Common Raven, both of which breed here at a much lower elevation than anywhere else in the state.

Birds of prey are an integral part of the area. The most exciting of these is a pair of Peregrine Falcons that has been present in the Park for the past few years. In 1990 they successfully fledged three chicks in Chimney Rock.

The spring and fall migration of birds through Hickory Nut Gorge is very impressive. These are the best times for birding in the Park. Mixed flocks of tanagers, warblers and vireos move through the Gorge in the spring on the way to their summer breeding grounds in the north and return on their journey back to the south in the fall. The most spectacular fall sight occurs during the hawk migration. In September and October, more than 500 Broad-winged Hawks may be observed soaring together high in the sky on their way south. Smaller numbers of Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Red-shouldered Hawks also pass through. In the winter months birds are scarce in the Park, as birds of higher elevations move into the valleys as cold weather approaches.

## LEGEND TO BIRD LIST

### SEASONS

**Spring** - March, April, May

**Summer** - June, July, August

**Fall** - September, October, November

**Winter** - December, January, February

### ABUNDANCE

**C**—Common and widespread, easily seen throughout the Park

**U**—Uncommon, smaller numbers present, seen in appropriate habitat

**R**—Rare, occurs annually in small numbers

**A**—Accidental, one or two records for the Park

**\*** — Breeding confirmed

### HABITAT PREFERENCE

This outline serves as a guide to the main habitats in the Park and as a key to the areas where the birds are most likely to be seen. However, they are not restricted to these areas, and several species can be found in many habitats.

**S**—Skyline Trail; rock faces and the higher reaches of the Park

**N**—Hickory Nut Falls Trail; deciduous and coniferous forests and their associated vegetation

**R**—Riverine Forest; along Rocky Broad River and other streams

**M**—The Meadows and associated pine forests

**H**—All habitats

To date, over 100 species of birds have been recorded at Chimney Rock, 33 of which have been confirmed breeding.

Birdlife in Chimney Rock has only been studied in recent years. More species are expected to be added to this list in the future.

## LOONS

\_\_\_ Common Loon      A      S

## HERONS

\_\_\_ Great Blue Heron      A      R

## WATERFOWL

\_\_\_ Snow Goose      A      S

## OSPREY

\_\_\_ Osprey      R   R   R      S

## VULTURES

\_\_\_ Black Vulture      U   U   U   U      S

\_\_\_ Turkey Vulture      C   C   C   C      S

## BIRDS OF PREY

\_\_\_ Northern Harrier      R      S

\_\_\_ Sharp-shinned Hawk      U      U   U      H

\_\_\_ Cooper's Hawk      R   R   U   U      H

\_\_\_ Red-shouldered Hawk      R      S

\_\_\_ Broad-winged Hawk      C   U   C      S

\_\_\_ Red-tailed Hawk      U   U   C   C      S



Peregrine Falcon

## FALCONS

\_\_\_ American Kestrel      R   R   U   R      S

\_\_\_ Merlin      A      S

\_\_\_ Peregrine Falcon      U   U   U   U   \*      S

## GAMEBIRDS

\_\_\_ Ruffed Grouse      R   R   R   R      S

\_\_\_ Wild Turkey      R   R   R   R      SN

\_\_\_ Northern Bobwhite      R   R      S

## SANDPIPERS

\_\_\_ Spotted Sandpiper      A      R

## PIGEONS & DOVES

\_\_\_ Rock Pigeon      R   R   R   R      S

\_\_\_ Mourning Dove      U   U   U   U      H

## OWLS

\_\_\_ Eastern Screech Owl      R   R   R   R      H

\_\_\_ Barred Owl      U   U   U   U      R

## CUCKOOS

\_\_\_ Black-billed Cuckoo      A      N

\_\_\_ Yellow-billed Cuckoo      U   U      S

## NIGHTJARS

\_\_\_ Common Nighthawk      U      S

## SWIFTS

\_\_\_ Chimney Swift      U   U   U      S

## HUMMINGBIRDS

\_\_\_ Ruby-throated Hummingbird      U   C   C      N

## KINGFISHERS

\_\_\_ Belted Kingfisher      R   R   R   R      R

## WOODPECKERS

\_\_\_ Red-headed Woodpecker      R      H

\_\_\_ Red-bellied Woodpecker      C   C   C   C   \*      N

\_\_\_ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker      U      U   C      N

\_\_\_ Downy Woodpecker      C   C   C   C   \*      N

\_\_\_ Hairy Woodpecker      C   C   C   C   \*      N

\_\_\_ Northern Flicker      U   U   U   U      N

\_\_\_ Pileated Woodpecker      U   U   U   U   \*      N

## FLYCATCHERS

\_\_\_ Eastern Wood-Pewee      U   C   C      N

\_\_\_ Acadian Flycatcher      R   R      N

\_\_\_ Eastern Phoebe      C   C   C   U   \*      H

\_\_\_ Great Crested Flycatcher      U   U   R      N

## LARKS

\_\_\_ Horned Lark      A      M

## SWALLOWS

\_\_\_ Northern Rough-winged Swallow      U   U   U      \*   SR

\_\_\_ Barn Swallow      R   R   R      R

## JAYS & CROWS

\_\_\_ Blue Jay      U   U   U   U      H

\_\_\_ American Crow      U   U   U   U      H

\_\_\_ Common Raven      U   U   U   U      S

## CHICKADEES & TITMICE

	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	NESTS?	HABITAT
___ Carolina Chickadee	C	C	C	C	*	H
___ Tufted Titmouse	C	C	C	C	*	H

## NUTHATCHES

___ Red-breasted Nuthatch			U	U		N
___ White-breasted Nuthatch	C	C	C	C	*	N

## CREEPERS

___ Brown Creeper	R			R		N
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## WRENS

___ Carolina Wren	C	C	C	C	*	H
___ House Wren	R		A			N
___ Winter Wren	U		U	U		N

## KINGLETS & GNATCATCHERS

___ Golden-crowned Kinglet	U		U	U		N
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	C		C	U		N
___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	C	C	U		*	N

## THRUSHES

___ Eastern Bluebird	R	R	R			M
___ Veery	U		R			N
___ Gray-cheeked Thrush			R			N
___ Swainson's Thrush	U		C			N
___ Hermit Thrush	R		R			N
___ Wood Thrush	C	C	C		*	N
___ American Robin	C	C	C	U	*	H

## MIMIC THRUSHES

___ Grey Catbird	U	U	U			R
___ Northern Mockingbird	U	U	U	U		R
___ Brown Thrasher	U	R				N

## WAXWINGS

___ Cedar Waxwing	U	U	U	U		H
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## STARLINGS

___ European Starling	R	R	R	R		H
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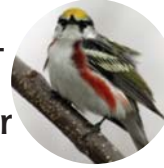
## VIREOS

___ White-eyed Vireo	R					N
___ Blue-headed Vireo	C	U	U			N

## VIREOS continued

___ Yellow-throated Vireo	C	C	U		*	N
___ Philadelphia Vireo			R			N
___ Red-eyed Vireo	C	C	C		*	N

Chestnut-sided Warbler



Worm-eating Warbler



## WARBLERS

___ Blue-winged Warbler				R		N
___ Tennessee Warbler	U		U			N
___ Orange-crowned Warbler	A					N
___ Nashville Warbler	R					N
___ Northern Parula	R	R				R
___ Yellow Warbler	U	U				R
___ Chestnut-sided Warbler	R	R	U			N
___ Magnolia Warbler	U		U			N
___ Cape May Warbler	C		U			N
___ Black-throated Blue Warbler	U	R	U			N
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	C		U	R		N
___ Black-throated Green Warbler	C	C	C		*	N
___ Blackburnian Warbler	U		U			N
___ Yellow-throated Warbler	R	R	R			RN
___ Pine Warbler	U	U	U	R	*	M
___ Prairie Warbler	A					N
___ Palm Warbler	A					N
___ Bay-breasted Warbler	U		U			N
___ Blackpoll Warbler	U		U			N
___ Cerulean Warbler	R	U	R		*	N
___ Black-and-white Warbler	C	C	C		*	N
___ American Redstart	C	C	C		*	N
___ Worm-eating Warbler	C	C	U		*	N
___ Swainson's Warbler	U	U	R			N
___ Ovenbird	R	R	R		*	N
___ Louisiana Waterthrush	U	U	R		*	RN

**WARBLERS** continued

	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	NESTS?	HABITAT
___ Kentucky Warbler	R					N
___ Connecticut Warbler	R					N
___ Common Yellowthroat	R		R			S
___ Hooded Warbler	C	C	U		*	N
___ Wilson's Warbler			A			N
___ Canada Warbler	R	R	U			N
___ Yellow-breasted Chat	R					S

Scarlet Tanager



Eastern Towhee



**TANAGERS**

___ Summer Tanager		U	R			M
___ Scarlet Tanager	C	C	C		*	N

**GROSBEAKS, BUNTINGS, ETC.**

___ Northern Cardinal	C	C	C	C	*	H
___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak	C		C			N
___ Blue Grosbeak			A			M
___ Indigo Bunting	C	C	C		*	N
___ Eastern Towhee	C	C	C	U	*	H

**SPARROWS**

___ Chipping Sparrow	U	U	U			M
___ Field Sparrow	R					S
___ Song Sparrow	U	U	U	U		R

**SPARROWS** continued

___ White-throated Sparrow	U		U	U		H
___ Dark-eyed Junco	U	U	C	C	*	H

**BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES, ETC**

___ Eastern Meadowlark				R		M
___ Common Grackle	C	C	U	U	*	H
___ Brown-headed Cowbird	U	U	U	R	*	N
___ Baltimore Oriole	U	U	U			R

**FINCHES**

___ Purple Finch	R		R	R		N
___ House Finch	U	U	U	U	*	R
___ Pine Siskin	R		U	U		H
___ American Goldfinch	U	U	C	R		H

**OLD WORLD SPARROWS**

___ House Sparrow	R	R	R	R		R
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NOTE: Copies of *Peterson's Field Guide EASTERN BIRDS* are available for purchase in the Sky Lounge. This field book includes drawings and descriptions of every bird species that visits the park.

Chimney Rock

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This list has been compiled by Park Ornithologist Simon Thompson.

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Record your sightings, please. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time in Field \_\_\_\_\_ Optional Information \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Conditions \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Observers \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Species \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Species \_\_\_\_\_

Return form to: Chimney Rock, PO Box 39, Chimney Rock, NC 28720