



Painted Buntings are one of the most beloved birds in Florida. You can attract them to your yard by trying these:

- Feed **white millet**.
- Provide low-lying, dense shrubs near your feeder for cover.
- Place your feeder near cover but allow a view of the surroundings for safety.
- Use a feeder that has a cage or wire to keep larger birds and mammals out.

Painted Buntings on the east coast breed in northern Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. They migrate south as early as mid-August, but the majority arrive in central and south Florida in early October. Most return north by March, but some remain until April.

### **PAINTED BUNTING: A SPECIES IN DECLINE AND A NEED FOR STUDY**

It is well known that Painted Bunting numbers are dropping. Before this species gets to an endangered level, studies are being conducted by the Florida Wildlife Commission and the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNC). These groups are mostly studying the breeding populations. In Florida, the Painted Bunting Banding Team is working with over-wintering Painted Buntings and color banding them. UNC has a web page to track Painted Buntings in any season. Data can be submitted there.

*[www.paintedbuntings.org](http://www.paintedbuntings.org)*

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on that page have a lot of information.

### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

Let us band your birds.

If you have Painted Buntings and your yard is banding friendly, your birds can be banded with color bands that will let you identify individual birds. Your birds can then be reported to UNC. Resightings of your birds provide important data that will be used to help protect Painted Buntings.

### **MAKING YOUR YARD BANDING FRIENDLY**

- Leave some room around your feeders to allow placement of nets.
- Consider feeding on the ground or on a short table big enough to hold a trap (2 by 3 feet min).
- Try to determine where the birds fly through your yard.
- Email the banders at *[keepbirding2@yahoo.com](mailto:keepbirding2@yahoo.com)*

### **MORE INFORMATION**

Banders are highly trained to protect the birds as much as possible. There are safe methods of handling birds. Birds are used to constant stress and they handle banding well.

The Painted Bunting Banding Team also runs a banding station at Possum Long, a property owned by Audubon of Martin County.

You can follow the banding activities, past and present, at their blog.

*[brdbander.blogspot.com](http://brdbander.blogspot.com)*

In this blog you can also find news and photos of the Painted Bunting banding at the pages link in the upper right hand corner.

### **IF YOU SEE A BANDED BUNTING**

\*Try to note the 4 colors and record them in this order: **upper left, lower left, upper right, lower right**.

\*One of the bands will be a metal band and should be noted as silver. Another band has two colors and is called a split band. Record it as "split" and note the two colors. The black/white split is used in Florida in winter.

THE REPORTING OF ANY BANDED BUNTING PROVIDES IMPORTANT DATA IN THE EFFORT TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE SPECIES!!

\*Note if it is green or male. Green birds are either females or young males. Males are unmistakably colored. It takes almost a year and a half for a male to obtain its vibrant colors. In the winter, no one can tell if a green is a young male or female.

\*Report the bird and its band colors to:

- [www.paintedbuntings.org](http://www.paintedbuntings.org) (UNC website data entry) AND
- [keepbirding2@yahoo.com](mailto:keepbirding2@yahoo.com) (bander's email)