

Birding Opportunities at Prairie Couteau SNA

Prairie Couteau SNA is one of the most important and stunning prairies in SW Minnesota. This 329 acre SNA, is located in Pipestone County. The unit exhibits typical glacial moraine topography, as the area occupies steep slopes and valleys which cut through the Bemis glacial moraine. The vegetation is a mix of original native prairie and restored prairie areas. Despite former grazing, two rare plant communities, the SW dry hill prairie and the dry sand-gravel prairie, survive here. The area is cut by small rivulets from seeps that drain from north to south. This surface water forms a grassy/willow marsh in the southwest corner and on the entire southeast border of the SNA. There is also a very small stock pond on the west side. In addition, there is an area of about 25 acres on the southeast side of highway 23 that is almost completely grassy marshland. The SNA is now closely bordered on both the north and east sides by wind turbines.

A total of 63 bird species were recently recorded in surveys on the SNA. Northern Harrier and Swainson's Hawk have been observed. Twelve sparrow species have been seen here, including Swamp, Lincoln's, Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows. Unusual prairie plant species also can be seen here at various times of the year.

Public access is good off highway 23 in a small parking area (after crossing a rough set of railroad tracks).

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada Goose	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mallard	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Duck	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Double-crested Cormorant	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Vulture	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Harrier	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Swainson's Hawk	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk	U	U	U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> American Kestrel	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Merlin			O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Yellowlegs	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Upland Sandpiper	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Snipe	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-billed Gull	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Pigeon	O	O	O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Horned Owl	O	O	O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Flicker	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Kingbird	U	U	U	

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Warbling Vireo	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay	O	O	O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> American Crow	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Lark	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Swallow	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Rough-winged Swallow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bank Swallow	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cliff Swallow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn Swallow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> House Wren	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sedge Wren	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-crowned Kinglet	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Bluebird	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Robin	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> European Starling	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing	U		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Yellowthroat	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Tree Sparrow	C		C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Clay-colored Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vesper Sparrow	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Savannah Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grasshopper Sparrow	C	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln's Sparrow	O		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Swamp Sparrow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco	O		O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Lapland Longspur	C		C	O

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Bunting	O		O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Dickcissel		C		
<input type="checkbox"/> Bobolink		C		
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Meadowlark	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-headed Blackbird	C	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brewer's Blackbird	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow	O	O	O	O

Taxonomy, Season and Abundance Key

The names and taxonomic arrangement of species follows that of the Checklist of the Birds of Minnesota (January, 2005) prepared by the Minnesota Ornithological Union (MOU) Records Committee.

The **seasons** in the checklist are defined as follows:

Sp (Spring) = March, April, May

Su (Summer) = June, July

Fa (Fall) = August, September, October, November

Wi (Winter) = December, January, February

Abundance codes are defined as follows:

C = Common — present, relatively easy to find

U = Uncommon — observed, may be difficult to find

O = Occasional — may or may not be present in any year

R = Rare — has occurred at least once, may recur

This checklist contains the names of all birds that have been documented at this site by reliable observers, including Doug Buri and Jerry Bonkoski, MOU records, and data contained in research reports. Funding for this project was provided in part by the State Wildlife Grants program administered by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Checklist layout by Jennifer Lintelmann. Persons interested in the sources used in preparation of this list may contact Project Supervisor/Nongame Specialist Katie Haws at 218-308-2641.

For more information contact DNR Information Center, 500 Lafayette Rd. St. Paul, MN 55155-4040 651-296-6157 or toll-free 888-MIN-NDNR (646-6367).

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Prairie Couteau

Scientific and Natural Area

Checklist



Date: _____

Weather: _____

Observers: _____

Notes: _____



MINNESOTA'S
WILD & RARE

Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare is the state's conservation action plan for protecting Minnesota's native animal species that are rare or likely to become rare in the near future.

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