

## Birding Opportunities at Cottonwood River Prairie SNA

Cottonwood River Prairie SNA protects a unique prairie remnant. It contains 347 acres of prairie hills, wet prairie and creek bottom. The Prairie Sky Unit at the southeast end of the Cottonwood River Prairie SNA occupies north- and southwest-facing slopes of a gravel ridge between the present Cottonwood River and an older, abandoned channel on Mound Creek. The Prairie Champion Unit at the northwest end of the SNA is connected to the southeast unit by an abandoned railroad grade that crosses the Cottonwood River. 135 bird species have been observed, and the large size and variety of habitats make this an excellent spot for viewing resident and migrating birds. The trees along Mound Creek are home to eastern wood-pewee, great-crested flycatcher, orchard and Baltimore oriole, and indigo bunting. LeConte's and sharp-tailed sparrows can occasionally be seen in this area of the SNA during fall migration. Blue grosbeaks, an unusual bird species in Minnesota, are found in this area.

The Prairie Sky Unit is accessed off of Brown Co. Hwy. 2. There is a field driveway available for parking at the east end of the bridge over Mound Creek. There are no maintained trails on the unit. The Prairie Champion Unit, accessed along 175th St., or the gravel road on the south boundary contains more upland prairie. Henslow's sparrow and eastern meadowlark can be seen here. The gravel hill prairie in this unit does not have any trails, but it is easy to walk the entire area, accessing it from the road along the south side of the unit. The abandoned railroad bed that runs from NW to SE through a large cattail wetland can also be hiked, and is best accessed from the Prairie Champion Unit off of 175th St. The gravel pit seen from the railroad bed north of the Prairie Sky Unit, also provides some ponds for migrating waterfowl in the spring and fall. Birder access is rated good on the SNA. The spectacular view from the top, combined with the plants and wildlife of this prairie community, make this a rewarding site to visit.

### 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

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Cackling Goose	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada Goose	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mallard	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-winged Teal	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Shoveler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Duck	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Goldeneye	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Merganser	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Merganser	U			
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Partridge	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Pied-billed Grebe	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Double-crested Cormorant	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Bittern	O	O		
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Heron	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Vulture	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Harrier	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk	U		U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooper's Hawk	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad-winged Hawk	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> American Kestrel	C	C	C	U

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Merlin	O		O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Rail		U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sora	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Coot			O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Upland Sandpiper	O	O		
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Snipe	U		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Franklin's Gull	U		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-billed Gull	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Pigeon	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove	C	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-billed Cuckoo	U	U	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Horned Owl	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-throated Hummingbird	U	O	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Belted Kingfisher	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-headed Woodpecker	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker	U	O	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Downy Woodpecker	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Hairy Woodpecker	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Flicker	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pileated Woodpecker	U	U	U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Wood-Pewee	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Alder Flycatcher	O	O		
<input type="checkbox"/> Willow Flycatcher		U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Flycatcher	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Phoebe	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Crested Flycatcher	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Kingbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-headed Vireo	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Warbling Vireo	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Philadelphia Vireo			U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-eyed Vireo	C	U	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> American Crow	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Lark	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Martin	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Swallow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Rough-winged Swallow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bank Swallow	U	U	U	

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Cliff Swallow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn Swallow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Nuthatch	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper	U		U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> House Wren	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Wren	O		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sedge Wren	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Wren	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet	C		C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-crowned Kinglet	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Bluebird	C	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> American Robin	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Catbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Thrasher	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> European Starling	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing	U	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Tennessee Warbler	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange-crowned Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Nashville Warbler	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Warbler	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut-sided Warbler	C		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Magnolia Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Palm Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-and-white Warbler	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Redstart	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ovenbird	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Waterthrush	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Yellowthroat	C	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Towhee	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Tree Sparrow	C		C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Chipping Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Clay-colored Sparrow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Sparrow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vesper Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Savannah Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grasshopper Sparrow	U	U	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Henslow's Sparrow	O	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Le Conte's Sparrow	O		U	

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow				O
<input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sparrow	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln's Sparrow	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Swamp Sparrow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Harris's Sparrow	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco	C		C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Lapland Longspur	C		C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cardinal	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Grosbeak	O	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigo Bunting	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dickcissel	U	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bobolink	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird	C	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Meadowlark	U	O		
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Meadowlark	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-headed Blackbird	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rusty Blackbird	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brewer's Blackbird	U		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle	C	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Orchard Oriole	O	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Oriole	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> House Finch	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow	C	C	C	C

This checklist contains the names of all birds that have been documented at this site by reliable observers, including Jerry Bonkoski, volunteer observers, as well as 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 53155-4000, 651-296-6157 or toll-free 888-MIN-NDNR (646-6367).

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# Cottonwood River Prairie

## Scientific and Natural Area

# Checklist



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_

Observers: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



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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