

Birding Opportunities at Falls Creek SNA

This SNA, located in northern Washington County, is 136 acres in size. Falls Creek SNA is one of the most diverse natural areas remaining in Washington County. Folded and faulted rocks at this site show the largest displacement of any known Paleozoic rocks in Minnesota, revealing Decorah, Platteville, Glenwood, and St. Peter formations. Steep ravines line the intermittently active stream beds. Pine canopy openings on south slopes permit growth of many species native to bluff prairies. Oak forest occupies the drier ridge top. The site is unique for its stand of virgin hardwood and white pine forest, which is rare along the St. Croix. Several bird studies have been conducted on the unit, and a total of 124 bird species have been seen here. Rare species sighted include the blue-headed vireo, and the Louisiana water thrush. During migration, 23 warbler species have been spotted. Pileated woodpeckers and white-breasted nuthatch's can be seen in the pine areas, and the hillsides are noisy with red-eyed vireos, hermit thrush, and white-throated sparrow during the spring months. Look for Louisiana waterthrush along the streams. There are two parking areas; one immediately off of Hwy. 95, in the wooded portion of the SNA, and the other at the Whispering Pines Township Park south of the SNA.

Several unofficial trails can be followed; one from the N. parking area leads through ravines and along an esker, dead-ending at private land abutting the W. boundary of the SNA. The other extends to the E. of the S. parking area at the adjacent Township Park. Birder access in the unit is good.

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"/> Canada Goose	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tundra Swan	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mallard	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Loon	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruffed Grouse	O	O	O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Turkey	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Vulture	C	U	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooper's Hawk	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-shouldered Hawk	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad-winged Hawk	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk	U	U	U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Peregrine Falcon			O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sandhill Crane	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer	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"/> Black-billed Cuckoo	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Horned Owl	U	U	U	U

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-throated Hummingbird	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Belted Kingfisher	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	U	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	U	U	U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Pileated Woodpecker	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Wood-Pewee	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acadian Flycatcher	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Flycatcher	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Phoebe	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Crested Flycatcher	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Kingbird	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-throated Vireo	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-headed Vireo	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-eyed Vireo	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> American Crow	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Swallow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Rough-winged Swallow	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bank Swallow	O	O		
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn Swallow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Nuthatch	U		U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> House Wren	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Wren	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sedge Wren	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-crowned Kinglet	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Bluebird	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray-cheeked Thrush	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Swainson's Thrush	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Thrush	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Thrush	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Robin	C	C	C	

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Catbird	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Thrasher	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> European Starling	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing	C	U	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-winged Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-winged Warbler	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tennessee Warbler	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange-crowned Warbler	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Nashville Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut-sided Warbler	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Magnolia Warbler	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cape May Warbler	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-rumped Warbler	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Green Warbler	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackburnian Warbler	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Warbler	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Palm Warbler	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bay-breasted Warbler	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cerulean Warbler	U	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-and-white Warbler	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Redstart	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ovenbird	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Louisiana Waterthrush	U	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Warbler	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Yellowthroat	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Warbler	R	R		
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Warbler	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Scarlet Tanager	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Towhee	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Tree Sparrow	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chipping Sparrow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Clay-colored Sparrow	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Sparrow	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vesper Sparrow	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Savannah Sparrow	O		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	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow	C	O	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Harris's Sparrow	O		O	

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco	C		C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Lapland Longspur	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cardinal	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak	O	O	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigo Bunting	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bobolink	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird	C	O	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Meadowlark	O			
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird	U	U	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Oriole	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Finch	O		O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> House Finch	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Siskin	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Evening Grosbeak	O		O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow	O	O	O	

This checklist contains the names of all birds that have been documented at this site by reliable observers, including Bob Janssen, William H. Longley, 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 Lintemann. Persons interested in the sources used in preparation of this list may contact the Project Supervisor/Nongame Specialist 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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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.

Falls Creek

Scientific and Natural Area

Checklist



Date: _____

Weather: _____

Observers: _____

Notes: _____

