

Birding Opportunities at Whitney Island SNA

Whitney Island SNA is a 40 acre island preserve located in Cedar Lake, Rice County. Trees found on the island include sugar maple, basswood, bur oak, hackberry, green ash, silver maple, box elder and rock elm. Areas of relatively open canopy have experienced the loss of American elms or other disturbances, and as a result, buckthorn, prickly ash, and brambles are common. The island is a complex of knolls interspersed with marshes. In addition to the island itself, the SNA includes a strip of shoreland along the east side of Cedar Lake, providing a vantage point from which to view the island.

The island and surrounding lake provide several good birding opportunities. There have been 104 bird species sighted here. Colonial water birds, herons, egrets and cormorants regularly move around and over the island. Waterfowl frequent the island's bays and secluded spots. The island itself provides good nesting habitat for yellow-billed cuckoo, woodpeckers, eastern wood pewee, red-eyed vireo, chickadee, house wren, yellow warbler and American redstarts. The island is alive with bird song early in the morning. There is boat access off of Co. Rd. 38. The island is located about ½ mile south of the public access, and it takes about 2-3 hours to circumnavigate the island by canoe or kayak. Weather conditions will dictate the best times to visit the island, but early mornings are best as the lake does have quite a bit of boat traffic later in the day. Access for birders is rated as difficult, since a boat or canoe is required.

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	C	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mallard	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-winged Teal	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Merganser	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant	U	U	O	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Pied-billed Grebe	C	U	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Double-crested Cormorant	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Heron	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-crowned Night-Heron	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Vulture	O		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Osprey	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle	U		U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Harrier	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooper's Hawk	U	O	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad-winged Hawk	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> American Kestrel	U	O	U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> American Coot	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer	C	C	U	

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Yellowlegs	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Solitary Sandpiper	C	U	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Sandpiper	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-billed Gull	C	U	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Tern	U	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Pigeon	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove	C	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-billed Cuckoo	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Barred Owl	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Chimney Swift	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-throated Hummingbird	C	U	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Belted Kingfisher	C	U	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	C	U	C	
<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	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Pileated Woodpecker	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Wood-Pewee	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Flycatcher	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Phoebe	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Crested Flycatcher	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Kingbird	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-throated Vireo	U	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-headed Vireo	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Warbling Vireo	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-eyed Vireo	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> American Crow	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Martin	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Swallow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Rough-winged Swallow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cliff Swallow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn Swallow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee	C	C	C	C
<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	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet	U		C	O

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<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	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray-cheeked Thrush	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Thrush	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Robin	C	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Catbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> European Starling	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing	C	C	C	U
<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"/> Magnolia Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut-sided Warbler	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-rumped Warbler	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Palm Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-and-white Warbler	C		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Redstart	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ovenbird	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Yellowthroat	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Scarlet Tanager	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chipping Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Swamp Sparrow	C	C	C	
<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	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cardinal	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigo Bunting	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-headed Blackbird	U		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Oriole	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> House Finch	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow	C	C	C	C

Additional Observations

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 the 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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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.

Whitney Island

Scientific and Natural Area

Checklist



Date: _____

Weather: _____

Observers: _____

Notes: _____

