

## Birding Opportunities at Grey Cloud Dunes SNA

This 220 acre SNA is an urban oasis in the rapidly expanding community of Cottage Grove. Grey Cloud Dunes encompasses two sandy terraces along the Mississippi River. The first, 40 to 60 feet above the river, is remarkable for its crescents and blowouts sculpted by southwesterly winds. The second, 110 feet above the river, has a dramatic cut-face. Dunes on both terraces rise 10 to 20 feet above the swales. Elm, silver maple, cottonwood, and box elder rim a wetland and a half-mile of today's riverbank. The SNA features dry prairie, oak savanna, and oak woodland plant communities.

An impressive total of 117 bird species have been sighted on the unit. Gray Cloud Dunes SNA provides a good birding area near the Twin Cities, with diverse upland prairie along with some deciduous woodland habitat. Grasshopper sparrows can be heard singing throughout the grassland areas. Dickcissels, yellow-billed cuckoo, warbling vireo and blue-headed vireo are all possibilities here. Indigo buntings are commonly seen, as are black and white warblers.

The SNA is accessible from both the NW corner off of Hadley Ave., and the SE corner at the end of 110th St., with parking lots at both locations. There are no developed trails within the SNA, but it is easy to walk through the prairie and an old field road follows the upper terrace between the two parking areas. Birder access is rated good/excellent. Grey Cloud Dunes SNA appears to be used often by hikers and birders, and it is a great location to get out and see birds in their native habitats.

### 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	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mallard	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Turkey	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Double-crested Cormorant	U	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Bittern	U	O		
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron	C	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Heron	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Vulture	O	U	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle	U	U	U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Harrier	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooper's Hawk	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> American Kestrel	U	U	U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-billed Gull	C	U	C	
<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	C	O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chimney Swift	U	U	O	

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-throated Hummingbird	C	U	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	C	O	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"/> Alder Flycatcher	U		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Willow Flycatcher	O	U	O	
<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	C	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-throated Vireo	U	O	U	
<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"/> Horned Lark	U	U	U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Martin	U	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Swallow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Rough-winged 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"/> Red-breasted Nuthatch	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper	U		C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> House Wren	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Wren	O		O	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sedge Wren	C	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet	C		C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-crowned Kinglet	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Bluebird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Thrush	C		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Robin	C	C	C	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Catbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Thrasher	C	C	C	

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> European Starling	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing	C	C	C	
<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"/> Black-throated Green Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackburnian Warbler	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Palm Warbler	C		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-and-white Warbler	C		C	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Redstart	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ovenbird	C	U	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Waterthrush	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Warbler	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"/> Eastern Towhee	U	U	U	
<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	
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Sparrow	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vesper Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lark Bunting	U	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Savannah Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grasshopper Sparrow	C	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Henslow's Sparrow	O	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sparrow	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln's Sparrow	O		U	
<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	

SNA Bird Checklist	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
<input type="checkbox"/> Dickcissel	O	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Bobolink	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Meadowlark	C	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rusty Blackbird	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Orchard Oriole	C	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Oriole	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> House Finch	U	U	U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Finch	O		U	O
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch	C	C	C	C
<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, Tania Harnayoun, Tom and Elizabeth Bell, 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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*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.

# Grey Cloud Dunes

## Scientific and Natural Area

# Checklist



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

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

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

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

