

Birding Opportunities
at Cottonwood River Prairie SNA

Cottonwood River Prairie SNA protects a unique prairie remnant. It contains 478 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
☐ Cackling Goose	U		U	
☐ Canada Goose	C	C	C	
☐ Wood Duck	C	C	C	
☐ Mallard	C	C	C	U
☐ Blue-winged Teal	C	C	C	
☐ Northern Shoveler	U		U	
☐ Ring-necked Duck	U		U	
☐ Common Goldeneye	U		U	
☐ Hooded Merganser	U	U	U	
☐ Common Merganser	U			
☐ Gray Partridge	U	U	U	U
☐ Ring-necked Pheasant	C	C	C	C
☐ Pied-billed Grebe	C	C	C	
☐ Double-crested Cormorant	U	U	U	
☐ American Bittern	O	O		
☐ Great Blue Heron	C	C	C	
☐ Green Heron	U	U	U	
☐ Turkey Vulture	O		O	
☐ Northern Harrier	C	C	C	
☐ Sharp-shinned Hawk	U		U	O
☐ Cooper's Hawk	U	U	U	
☐ Broad-winged Hawk	U		U	
☐ Red-tailed Hawk	C	C	C	U
☐ American Kestrel	C	C	C	U

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

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

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

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is available to all individuals regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, age, sexual orientation, membership or activity in a local commission, or disability. Discrimination inquiries should be sent to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4031; or the Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

This document is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling 651-297-1158 (Metro Area, TTY 651-296-5484, 800-657-3929

Cottonwood River Prairie

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.

© 2008 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Ecological Resources
DNR Web Site: www.dnr.state.mn.us