

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, NONGAME WILDLIFE PROGRAM

-- Prairie Birds Survey, Summer 1982

-- Kim R. Eckert, Observer

Conservation Biology Research Grants Program
Division of Ecological Services
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- Format of individual reports:
- 1) Name and location of tract
 - 2) Date, time and weather
 - 3) Habitat description
 - 4) Species and numbers observed (see below *)
 - 5) Comments (possibilities not observed, further information on underlined species, recommendations on management or acquisition of tract by DNR or TNC, other plants or animals observed, etc.)

* For species seen/heard on (or flying low over) the tract which are or could be nesting/feeding there, the number normally indicates the number of pairs present (usually determined by the number of singing males). In cases where the number represents total individuals, "ind." appears after the number (this is done only for the more significant species). If ten or more pairs/individuals are found, "many" is stated.

The species lists include birds found in wooded areas or in wet marshes on the tracts, even though these habitats may not have been thoroughly covered.

Not included are species flying high over the tract which probably are not using the tract to feed/nest.

Species underlined indicate rare/local birds or those defined "Special Concern" by the Bird Group of the DNR Endangered Species Advisory Committee.

Daily log of field coverage:

| | | | |
|---------|----|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| June 16 | -- | Crookston Cattle Co., | general roadside survey & scouting |
| June 17 | -- | " " | " , Section 8 |
| June 18 | -- | " " | " , Sec. 1 & N $\frac{1}{2}$ Sec. 12 |
| June 19 | -- | " " | " , Section 19 |
| June 20 | -- | " " | " , Section 20 |
| June 21 | -- | " " | " , Section 21 |
| June 22 | -- | " " | " , roadside survey |
| June 23 | -- | Pankratz Prairies, | North & South |
| June 24 | -- | Tympanuchus W.M.A. | |
| July 2 | -- | Pembina Trail Prairie | |
| July 3 | -- | Pembina Trail Prairie | |
| July 4 | -- | Pembina Trail / | Tympanuchus |
| July 6 | -- | Malmberg Prairie / | Tympanuchus |
| July 7 | -- | N. Liberty W.M.A. & | S. Chicog W.M.A. |
| July 8 | -- | Pennington Co. School Trust Land & | Marshall Co. Conservation Land |
| July 9 | -- | Norway Dunes | |

1) Crookston Cattle Co., Section 8

2) June 17; 5:45-9:45 a.m.; partly cloudy, moderate NE winds, cool

3) see map for habitat description

4) Great Blue Heron - 1

Mallard - 1

~~Red-tailed Hawk - 1~~ - Blue-winged Teal - 1

Marsh Hawk - 2

American Kestrel - 2

Greater Prairie Chicken - 5 ind. (all flushed; others heard s.e. & s.w. of tract)

Sora - 2

Yellow Rail - 1 (heard night of June 16)

Killdeer - 2

Common Snipe - 3

Upland Sandpiper - 6 ind.

Marbled Godwit - 1

Wilson's Phalarope - 3

Rock Dove - 2

Mourning Dove - many

Black-billed Cuckoo - 1

Common Flicker - 3

Red-headed Woodpecker - 1

Hairy Woodpecker - 1

Eastern Kingbird - 8

Great Crested Flycatcher - 1

Alder Flycatcher - 2

Least Flycatcher - 6

Horned Lark - 4

Tree Swallow - 1

Barn Swallow - 4

Cliff Swallow - 1

Blue Jay - 1

House Wren - 7

Long-billed Marsh Wren - 3

Short-billed Marsh Wren - many

Gray Catbird - 1

Brown Thrasher - 1

American Robin - 1

Veery - 1

Starling - 5

Warbling Vireo - 4

Yellow Warbler - 5

Common Yellowthroat - 9

Bobolink - many

Western Meadowlark - many

Yellow-headed Blackbird - 2

Red-winged Blackbird - many

Northern Oriole - 1

Brewer's Blackbird - 2

Common Grackle - many

Brown-headed Cowbird - many

American Goldfinch - many

Savannah Sparrow - many
Grasshopper Sparrow - many
Le Conte's Sparrow - many
Sharp-tailed Sparrow - 1 (heard night of June 16)
Clay-colored Sparrow - many

- 5) A fairly typical "prairie" tract for Polk County: fragmented by large aspen stands (note variety and numbers of woodland species) and marshes (although relatively small, they were enough to support Yellow Rail and Sharp-tailed Sparrow); also, tract was predominately of the wetter, sedge-type style of prairie (where Bobolinks, Savannah and Le Conte's Sparrows far outnumber drier, upland grasslands birds like Grasshopper Sparrow).

- 1) Crookston Cattle Co., Section 1 (NE $\frac{1}{4}$ not covered) & N $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 12
- 2) June 18; 5:30-9:15 a.m.; partly cloudy, light & variable winds, normal temp.
- 3) see map for habitat description; also see comments
- 4) (Great Blue Heron - 1 flying over; probably same ind. seen over other tracts)
 - Mallard - 1
 - Pintail - 1
 - Green-winged Teal - 1 (pair together seen June 16; probably non-breeding)
 - Blue-winged Teal - 2
 - Red-tailed Hawk - 2
 - Marsh Hawk - 2
 - Greater Prairie Chicken - 1 booming SE $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 1, plus 4 others flushed
 - Sora - 2
 - Killdeer - 2
 - Common Snipe - 3
 - Upland Sandpiper - 4 ind.
 - Marbled Godwit - 3 ind.
 - Wilson's Phalarope - 2 (1 pr. plus 1 other ind.)
 - Mourning Dove - 7
 - Great Horned Owl - 1
 - Short-eared Owl - 3 ind. (1 pr. apparently near nest SE $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 1, plus 1 other ind.)
 - Common Flicker - 1
 - Eastern Kingbird - 4
 - Alder Flycatcher - 4
 - Least Flycatcher - 8
 - Eastern Wood Pewee - 1
 - Tree Swallow - 4
 - Barn Swallow - 3
 - Common Crow - 2
 - House Wren - 8
 - Short-billed Marsh Wren - 1
 - Starling - many
 - Warbling Vireo - 2
 - Yellow Warbler - 1
 - Common Yellowthroat - many
 - Bobolink - many
 - Western Meadowlark - many
 - Red-winged Blackbird - many
 - Common Grackle - 2
 - Brown-headed Cowbird - 8
 - American Goldfinch - many
 - Savannah Sparrow - many
 - Grasshopper Sparrow - many
 - Clay-colored Sparrow - many
 - Song Sparrow - 1
- 5) Easily the best prairie area found on the property, primarily because of the dry, upland nature of much of the tract (e.g., leadplant was obvious here, but was virtually absent from rest of property); note the absence of Le Conte's Sparrow and only one sedge wren found, both indicative of lack of sedge-type prairie which predominates elsewhere. There is some urgency for preservation here since this tract may be plowed soon, according to Ray Mair. (Presence of cattle prevented a search for the Short-eared Owl nest.)

1) Crookston Cattle Co., Section 19

2) June 19; 5:45- 9:00; cloudy with occ. light rain after 7:45, light & variable winds with moderate SE winds after 7:45, cool

3) see map for habitat description; also see comments

4) Blue-winged Teal - 1

Red-tailed Hawk - 2

Marsh Hawk - 1

(Greater Prairie Chicken - heard west of SW $\frac{1}{4}$)

Sora - 3

Yellow Rail - 1 (see comments)

Common Snipe - 3

Upland Sandpiper - 7 ind.

Marbled Godwit - 1

Mourning Dove - many

Black-billed Cuckoo - 1

Short-eared Owl - 1 (hunting over NW $\frac{1}{4}$; see comments)

Common Flicker - 2

Hairy Woodpecker - 1

Eastern Kingbird - 6

Great Crested Flycatcher - 3

Alder Flycatcher - 5

Least Flycatcher - many

Eastern Wood Pewee - 2

Tree Swallow - 8

Rough-winged Swallow - 1

Barn Swallow - 4

Blue Jay - 1

Common Crow - 7

House Wren - many

Short-billed Marsh Wren - 3

Gray Catbird - 1

Brown Thrasher - 3

American Robin - 6

Veery - 2

Eastern Bluebird - 1

Warbling Vireo - 5

Yellow Warbler - 4

Common Yellowthroat - many

Bobolink - 8

Western Meadowlark - many

Yellow-headed Blackbird - 1

Red-winged Blackbird - many

Northern Oriole - 6

Common Grackle - 1

Brown-headed Cowbird - many

American Goldfinch - many

Savannah Sparrow - many

Grasshopper Sparrow - many

Le Conte's Sparrow - 8

Sharp-tailed Sparrow - 1 (in marsh east of trail; see comments)

Vesper Sparrow - 6 (all along trail)

Clay-colored Sparrow - many
Song Sparrow - 3

- 5) Marginal weather (light rain, wind and cold) after 7:45 probably resulted in some birds being missed. This section had more woods than prairie -- note the large number of woods birds found. The Short-eared Owl was seen about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of the presumed nest in Section 1, so it is possible this was one of those same individuals (or the same owl seen June 22 in Section 17). The Yellow Rail was in a relatively small marsh surrounded by aspens and alders, just west of the trail and south of the railroad grade -- hardly an extensive prairie-type sedge marsh. This species and the Sharp-tailed Sparrow do not seem to be very particular about the marshes they use. It is also important to note that almost all the rails and sparrows heard were in the daytime, and a survey at night would probably reveal more individuals present. Both these species, especially the Sharp-tailed Sparrow, do not sing as consistently as "normal" birds, so it should also be noted that even coverage at night would often miss these two species.

- 1) Crookston Cattle Co., Section 20
- 2) June 20; 5:30-10:00 a.m.; partly cloudy, moderate NW winds, cool
- 3) see map for habitat description
- 4) (Great Blue Heron - 1 flying over; probably same ind. seen over other tracts)
 - Mallard - 3
 - Pintail - 2
 - Blue-winged Teal - 7
 - Hooded Merganser - 1
 - Red-tailed Hawk - 2
 - Swainson's Hawk - 1
 - Greater Prairie Chicken - 3 ind. (flushed NE corner; others heard n.e. & s.w.)
 - Sora - 1
 - Common Snipe - 2
 - Upland Sandpiper - many ind.
 - Marbled Godwit - 4 ind.
 - Wilson's Phalarope - 1
 - Black Tern - 5
 - Rock Dove - 5
 - Mourning Dove - many
 - Great Horned Owl - 1 ad. seen and 1 juv. heard June 16)
 - Belted Kingfisher - 1
 - Common Flicker - 4
 - Eastern Kingbird - 5
 - Great Crested Flycatcher - 5
 - Alder Flycatcher - 2
 - Least Flycatcher - 3
 - Eastern Wood Pewee - 1
 - Horned Lark - 4
 - Tree Swallow - 3
 - Bank Swallow - 1
 - Rough-winged Swallow - 1
 - Blue Jay - 2
 - Black-billed Magpie - 1 ad. with 4 juv. in SE $\frac{1}{4}$
 - Common Crow - 2
 - House Wren - many
 - Long-billed Marsh Wren - 1
 - Short-billed Marsh Wren - many
 - Brown Thrasher - 3
 - American Robin - 5
 - Starling - 2
 - Warbling Vireo - 6
 - Yellow Warbler - 3
 - Common Yellowthroat - many
 - Bobolink - many
 - Western Meadowlark - many
 - Yellow-headed Blackbird - 4
 - Red-winged Blackbird - many
 - Northern Oriole - 5
 - Brewer's Blackbird - 4
 - Common Grackle - 3
 - Brown-headed Cowbird - many

American Goldfinch - many
Savannah Sparrow - many
Grasshopper Sparrow - many
Le Conte's Sparrow - 4
Sharp-tailed Sparrow - 1
Vesper Sparrow - 4 (all in hayfields)
Clay-colored Sparrow - many
Song Sparrow - 5

- 5) Bull Moose in SE $\frac{1}{4}$. Although there was a dry prairie ridge along the east side, most of the west side of the section was a hayfield, and there were still plenty of aspens and sedge present as evidenced by the long and varied list of species. The relatively high count of Upland Sandpipers and Marbled Godwits (more here than on any other tract on the property) primarily due to the extensive hayfield.

1) Crookston Cattle Co., Section 21

2) June 21; 5:30- 9:00 a.m.; mostly clear, light & variable winds, normal temp.

3) see map for habitat description

4) (Great Blue Heron - 2 ind. flying over)

American Bittern - 2 ind.

Mallard - 1

Northern Shoveler - 1

Red-tailed Hawk - 1

Marsh Hawk - 1

American Kestrel - 1

(Greater Prairie Chicken - 7 booming in plowed field in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 28)

Sora - 4

Yellow Rail - 1 (in small marsh in s.w. corner)

Killdeer - 1

Common Snipe - 2

Upland Sandpiper - 3 ind.

Black Tern - 2

Mourning Dove - 8

Black-billed Cuckoo - 2

Common Flicker - 3

Eastern Kingbird - 5

Great Crested Flycatcher - 1

Least Flycatcher - 6

Horned Lark - 2

Tree Swallow - 2

Bank Swallow - 4

Barn Swallow - 1

Common Crow - 5

House Wren - 8

Long-billed Marsh Wren - 7

Short-billed Marsh Wren - 4

Brown Thrasher - 2

American Robin - 4

Veery - 1

Warbling Vireo - 4

Yellow Warbler - 2

Common Yellowthroat - many

Bobolink - many

Western Meadowlark - many

Yellow-headed Blackbird - 7

Red-winged Blackbird - many

Northern Oriole - 1

Brewer's Blackbird - 1

Common Grackle - 2

Brown-headed Cowbird - many

American Goldfinch - many

Savannah Sparrow - many

Grasshopper Sparrow - many

Le Conte's Sparrow - many

Vesper Sparrow - 2

Clay-colored Sparrow - many

Song Sparrow - 3

- 5) The best of the three southern sections, primarily because of its openness with aspens mostly along the edges, and because of drier, upland grasslands which were fairly extensive in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$.

- 1) Crookston Cattle Co., General Roadside Survey (along Hwy. 2, the gravel trucks access road, and the Pembina Trail; coverage limited to those tracts not covered earlier)
- 2) June 22; 5:30-10:45 a.m.; clear, light & variable winds, normal temp.
- 3) see map for habitat description; also see comments
- 4) Great Blue Heron - 1
American Bittern - 1
Mallard - 2
Blue-winged Teal - 3
Red-tailed Hawk - 11 ind.
Swainson's Hawk - 3 ind. (an unexpected number; species rare in n.w. Minnesota)
Marsh Hawk - 4
American Kestrel - 1
Gray Partridge - 1
Sora - 4
Killdeer - many
Common Snipe - 5
Upland Sandpiper - 32 ind. (1)
Black Tern - 1
Rock Dove - many
Mourning Dove - many
Short-eared Owl - 1 (flying over S. 17; possibly the same owl as found on S. 19)
Belted Kingfisher - 1
Common Flicker - 5
Red-headed Woodpecker - 1
Eastern Kingbird - many
Western Kingbird - 1 (at ranch headquarters; the only one seen this summer)
Great Crested Flycatcher - 3
Willow Flycatcher - 1 (see comments)
Least Flycatcher - many
Eastern Wood Pewee - 4
Horned Lark - many
Tree Swallow - 1
Bank Swallow - 3
Rough-winged Swallow - 2
Barn Swallow - 3
Cliff Swallow - 3
Blue Jay - 2
Common Crow - many
House Wren - many
Long-billed Marsh Wren - 7
Short-billed Marsh Wren - 2
Gray Catbird - 1
Brown Thrasher - 2
American Robin - 5
Eastern Bluebird - 1
Starling - 4
~~Yellow Warbler~~ - 6 - Warbling Vireo - many
Common Yellowthroat - many
House Sparrow - 2
Bobolink - 7

Western Meadowlark - many
 Yellow-headed Blackbird - 8
 Red-winged Blackbird - many
Orchard Oriole - 1 (at ranch headquarters; species rare in n.w. Minnesota)
 Northern Oriole - 4
 Brewer's Blackbird - 1
 Common Grackle - 2
 Brown-headed Cowbird - many
 American Goldfinch - many
 Savannah Sparrow - many
 Grasshopper Sparrow - many
 Vesper Sparrow - many
 Song Sparrow - 5 - - - Clay-colored Sparrow - many

- 5) The above list does not include birds counted on previous days on the censused sections. Areas not covered by walking transects which may have some potential: S. 36, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 12, E $\frac{1}{2}$ S. 7, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 13, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 18, S $\frac{1}{2}$ S. 17; however, these tracts were either currently being grazed, or they appeared too heavily wooded or brushy. None of the following species were recorded anywhere on the property in the seven days spent there: Sprague's Pipit (a real possibility here since this species can be found on sedge-type grasslands; the pipit I found during the 1980 MNHP survey in Norman Co. was in such habitat), Baird's Sparrow (not enough dry, upland grasslands), Chestnut-collared Longspur (another real possibility in the lightly grazed pastures, unless there are simply too many aspens in the way), Loggerhead Shrike (no reason there couldn't be a shrike here), Sandhill Crane (although Ray said there was a nesting pair just west of his property in Section 13), Burrowing Owl (the only Richardson's Ground Squirrels seen were in the heavily disturbed area just south of the headquarters), Sharp-tailed Grouse (not easy to see in summer and may have been present), Virginia Rail (perhaps needs larger, deeper marshes), and Swamp Sparrow (?). It was also disappointing that relatively few Marbled Godwits were seen (none were seen on the roadside survey; perhaps the grasslands too fragmented by aspens) and that only one Willow Flycatcher was found (again, probably the result of too many aspen groves which appear to be favored by Alder Flycatchers; Willows prefer drier and smaller thickets in more open areas). This property does support impressive numbers of hawks and "Special Concern" species — especially noteworthy were the abundance of Upland Sandpipers and the 3-5 Short-eared Owls — but on the whole this property was somewhat disappointing. Too wet and too wooded.

- 1) Pankratz Prairie North (S $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 8, Kertsonville Twp.)
- 2) June 23; 5:30-7:15 a.m.; cloudy, moderate SE winds, normal temp.
- 3) basically a sedge-type grassland, but drier than Pandratz South; large aspen stands in middle of tract; thickets along railroad tracks
- 4)
 - Blue-winged Teal - 1
 - Wood Duck - 1
 - Marsh Hawk - 1
 - Killdeer - 1
 - Common Snipe - 1
 - Upland Sandpiper - 1
 - Mourning Dove - 5
 - Eastern Kingbird - 1
 - Great Crested Flycatcher - 1
 - Willow Flycatcher - 2 (calling males in thickets along tracks)
 - Alder Flycatcher - 2 (calling males at edge of aspens)
 - Least Flycatcher - 1
 - Barn Swallow - 2
 - Common Crow - 2
 - House Wren - 2
 - Short-billed Marsh Wren - many
 - Gray Catbird - 1
 - Brown Thrasher - 1

 - American Robin - 1
 - Veery - 1
 - Yellow Warbler - 5
 - Common Yellowthroat - many
 - Bobolink - 9
 - Western Meadowlark - many
 - Yellow-headed Blackbird - 1
 - Red-winged Blackbird - 2
 - Common Grackle - 1
 - Brown-headed Cowbird - many
 - American Goldfinch - 4
 - Savannah Sparrow - many
 - Grasshopper Sparrow - 3
 - Le Conte's Sparrow - many
 - Clay-colored Sparrow - 8
 - Song Sparrow - 3
- 5) Note the low number of individual birds present and the predictable and typical separation of the Willow and Alder Flycatchers into their respective habitats.

- 1) Pankratz Prairie South (SE $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 17 & NE $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 20, Kertsonville Twp.)
- 2) June 23; 7:15-9:00 a.m.; cloudy, moderate SE winds, normal temp.
- 3) most of tract on west side wet sedge marsh; drier grasslands along east side; scattered bushes along north side, but tract virtually open and free of aspens; more similar prairie on both the west and east sides of the N $\frac{1}{2}$ of the tract
- 4) Marsh Hawk - 3 ind.
Common Snipe - 3
Wilson's Phalarope - 6 or 7 ind. (at least 3 prs.)
Upland Sandpiper - 1
Mourning Dove - 2
Eastern Kingbird - 2
Horned Lark - 1
Barn Swallow - 3
Short-billed Marsh Wren - 8
Common Yellowthroat - 3
Bobolink - many
Western Meadowlark - many
Red-winged Blackbird - 7
Brown-headed Cowbird - 6
American Goldfinch - 2
Savannah Sparrow - many
Le Conte's Sparrow - many
Clay-colored Sparrow - 2
- 5) It was a refreshing change to be on on a treeless tract (note the relatively short species list due to the lack of woods birds), but this prairie was even wetter than most (also note the absence of Grasshopper Sparrows). It is possible some species were missed because I was not here at dawn; it is also possible that Yellow Rail and Sharp-tailed Sparrow would be heard here at night.

- 1) Tympanuchus W.M.A. (portions of Sections 28 & 33, Kertsonville Twp. Polk Co.)
- 2) June 24; 5:30-9:15 a.m.; cloudy & occ. lt. rain, strong NW winds, cool (see
 July 4; 7:30-9:15 a.m.; cloudy, wind calm, warm comments)
 July 6; 7:00-9:15 a.m.; mostly clear, light & variable winds, normal temp.
- 3) mostly a drier, upland grassland with some nice high short grass ridges (this was one of only two places where scarlet gaura was found during my survey; leadplant, pentstemons and needle-and-thread grass also present); the only sedge marsh-type of prairie in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 28; also an extensively open tract with the only aspen stands in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 33; the ridge south of the W.M.A. sign overgrown with sweet clover and some planted rye-type grasses; also see comments
- 4) Mallard - 1
 Swainson's Hawk - 1
 Marsh Hawk - 6 ind. ind.
 Greater Prairie Chicken - 1 flushed NW $\frac{1}{4}$ (others heard SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 29)
 Ring-necked Pheasant - 1 ^
 Common Snipe - 1
 Upland Sandpiper - 5 ind.
 Mourning Dove - many
 Black-billed Cuckoo - 1 1 pr.
 Short-eared Owl - 1 (seen July 6 only, hunting over Section 28)
 Common Flicker - 1
 Eastern Kingbird - 5
 Western Kingbird - 1 (seen July 6 only)
 Willow Flycatcher - 2
 Alder Flycatcher - 3
 Least Flycatcher - 1
 Horned Lark - 3
 Tree Swallow - 1
 Barn Swallow - 2
 Common Crow - 1
 House Wren - 5
 Short-billed Marsh Wren - many
 Gray Catbird - 1
 Brown Thrasher - 1
 American Robin - 1
 Veery - 2
 Starling - 2
 Red-eyed Vireo - 2
 Warbling Vireo - 2
 Yellow Warbler - 4
 Common Yellowthroat - many
 Bobolink - many
 Western Meadowlark - many
 Red-winged Blackbird - many
 Brewer's Blackbird - 2
 Common Grackle - 9
 Brown-headed Cowbird - many
 American Goldfinch - many
 Savannah Sparrow - many
 Grasshopper Sparrow - many

Le Conte's Sparrow - many
Clay-colored Sparrow - many

- 5) Since the weather June 24 was marginal to poor, and since this tract clearly had the best prairie habitat in the county, portions of two extra mornings were spent here. Absence of Marbled Godwit probably due to this species' tendency to leave its nesting areas early, usually by the end of June. The DNR, and any other interested agency, should make this tract top priority for protection, management and further acquisition. I was more impressed with this area than any of the TNC prairie tracts in Polk Co. The tract is in immediate need of burning to eliminate the sweet clover and planted grasses from the ridge mentioned above, and to keep the aspens from taking over in S. 33 (one of the best ridges with an excellent variety of prairie plants lies immediately east of these aspens). Finally, I would definitely recommend acquisition of the 80 acres in the west half of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 33, which also is excellent prairie adjacent to the tract (it would also be worth looking at the pasture north of the tract - S $\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 21 - to see if this drier grassland can be restored from its current heavily grazed condition).

- 1) Pembina Trail TNC Prairie (E $\frac{1}{2}$ S. 25 & S. 36 of Kertsonville Twp., and portion of W $\frac{1}{2}$ S. 30 & W $\frac{1}{2}$ S. 31 of Tilden Twp.)
- 2) July 2; 5:45-9:30 a.m.; mostly overcast, moderate SE winds, warm
 July 3; 5:30-9:15 a.m.; clear, light & variable winds, warm
 July 4; 5:30-7:30 a.m.; cloudy, wind calm, warm
- 3) a typical Polk Co. "prairie": mostly low, wet grasslands with several sedge marshes; large aspen stands along east side of S. 30 & 31 portions of tract, and in the middle of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 36; the S. 25 portion aspen-free, but too wet along the east side, too brushy up the middle, and the drier grasslands on the west side appeared to be previously cultivated
- 4) Great Blue Heron - 1
 Blue-winged Teal - 4
 Northern Shoveler - 2
 Red-tailed Hawk - 2
 Swainson's Hawk - 1
 Marsh Hawk - 10 ind. *ind.*
Greater Prairie Chicken - 1 flushed NW $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 36 (others heard west in plowed field)
Sharp-tailed Grouse - 1 ad. & 5-6 young flushed NW $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 30 (only ones on survey)
Virginia Rail - 1 (only survey record)
 Sora - 7
Yellow Rail - 1 flushed from dry sedge (!), SE $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 36 (snails present here)
 Killdeer - 1
 Common Snipe - 5
Upland Sandpiper - 8 ind.
 Mourning Dove - many
 Black-billed Cuckoo - 2
 Great Horned Owl - 1 ad. & 2 juv.
Short-eared Owl - 1 pr. (seen all three days near jct. of 4 section lines)
 Common Flicker - 5
 Hairy Woodpecker - 1
 Eastern Kingbird - many
 Willow Flycatcher - 8 (largest number on survey; no Alders heard)
 Least Flycatcher - many
 Eastern Wood Pewee - 1
 Horned Lark - 1
 Tree Swallow - many
 Barn Swallow - 3
 Black-billed Magpie - 2 ind. (in s.w. corner of S. 36)
 Common Crow - 6
 House Wren - many
 Long-billed Marsh Wren - many
 Short-billed Marsh Wren - many
 Brown Thrasher - 5
 American Robin - 1
 Veery - 3
 Starling - 2
 Warbling Vireo - 5
 Yellow Warbler - many
 Common Yellowthroat - many
 Bobolink - many
 Western Meadowlark - many

Red-winged Blackbird - many

Common Grackle - 1

Brown-headed Cowbird - many

American Goldfinch - many

SAVANNAH Sparrow - many

Grasshopper Sparrow - 3 (low no. indicative of wet nature of tract)

Le Conte's Sparrow - many

Clay-colored Sparrow - many

Song Sparrow - 6

→ Sharp-tailed Sparrow - 5 (heard all 3 days in 4 locations)

- 5) Missing from tract: American Bittern (?), Sandhill Crane (?), Marbled Godwit (probably due to late date), Wilson's Phalarope (?), Alder Flycatcher (probably just silent). Undoubtedly, more Yellow Rails and Sharp-tailed Sparrows would be found with night coverage. Three Moose in S. 36 on July 2 & 4.

- 1) Malmberg TNC Prairie (portion of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 16, Roome Twp.)
- 2) July 6; 5:30-6:30 a.m.; clear, wind calm, normal temp.
- 3) grass generally long and wet; no aspens present, but several scattered bushes
- 4) Common Snipe - 1
Mourning Dove - 3
Short-billed Marsh Wren - many
Common Yellowthroat - 7
Bobolink - 7
Western Meadowlark - 4
Yellow-headed Blackbird - 1
Red-winged Blackbird - many
Common Grackle - 1
Brown-headed Cowbird - many
American Goldfinch - 1
Savannah Sparrow - many
Grasshopper Sparrow - 1 (in drier n.e. part)
Le Conte's Sparrow - 4
- 5) Although nothing all that interesting found here (probably because of the tract's small size), this is still a significant and isolated "oasis" in the vast wasteland of the Red River Valley. It was somewhat of a surprise, however, to find a snipe here; perhaps if the tract is large and wet enough for this species, perhaps something like a Yellow Rail or Sharp-tailed Sparrow could be found here. But if nothing else, this tract can probably claim to have the most westerly Le Conte's Sparrow population in the state.

- 1) N. Liberty & S. Chicog W.M.A.s, plus other misc. prairie areas in Polk Co.
(see enclosed map)
- 2) Liberty: July 7; 5:00-7:00 a.m.; low overcast, strong NW winds, cool
Chicog: July 7; 7:00-8:00 a.m.; " " " " " "
other areas scouted and superficially birded at various times and on various days
- 3) Liberty: approx. 240 acres open sedge-type grasslands in center of Section 9;
most of east and south sides of S. 9 aspens and alder-type thickets
(approx. 240 acres — not censused); most of west side of S. 9 wet
marsh (approx. 160 acres — not censused); rest of W.M.A. to the south
mostly aspens, thickets and marsh (not censused)
Chicog: approx. 160 acres open sedge-type grasslands in s.c. part of Section
33, with a narrow dry ridge in the east portion (a small area with
encroaching aspens, but leadplant, scarlet gaura and needle-and-thread
grass present); rest of W.M.A. to the east, north and west primarily
aspens, thickets and wet marshes (not censused)
Also see comments for descriptions of other misc. prairie areas

4) Liberty (240 acres)

Marsh Hawk - 1
Killdeer - 1
Upland Sandpiper - 2 ind.
(yellowlegs, sp. - 8 ind.)
Mourning Dove - 8
Black-billed Cuckoo - 1
Eastern Kingbird - 3
House Wren - 1
Long-billed Marsh Wren - 6
Short-billed Marsh Wren - many
Brown Thrasher - 1
Veery - 1
Yellow Warbler - 2
Common Yellowthroat - 8
Bobolink - 5
Western Meadowlark - 8
Yellow-headed Blackbird - many
Red-winged Blackbird - 8
Common Grackle - 1
Brown-headed Cowbird - 7
American Goldfinch - 3
Savannah Sparrow - many
Le Conte's Sparrow - many
Clay-colored Sparrow - 3

Chicog (160 acres)

Red-tailed Hawk - 1
American Kestrel - 1
Common Snipe - 1
(Rock Dove - 2)
Mourning Dove - 5
Common Flicker - 2
Eastern Kingbird - 2
Least Flycatcher - 2
Common Crow - 1
House Wren - 2
Long-billed Marsh Wren - 2
Short-billed Marsh Wren - many
Common Yellowthroat - 5
Bobolink - 6
Western Meadowlark - 7
Red-winged Blackbird - 8
Brown-headed Cowbird - 1
American Goldfinch - 2
Savannah Sparrow - many
Le Conte's Sparrow - many
Clay-colored Sparrow - 4

- 5) Although little of interest found at Liberty or Chicog, the potential on these tracts is as good as anywhere else, and the plants on the prairie ridge at Chicog are especially noteworthy.
Other Polk County tracts marked on enclosed map: 2) Gentilly 27 — too brushy; 3) Gentilly 33-34 — houses now present, remaining grasslands too small; 4) Gentilly 36 — part of Crookston Cattle Co.; 5) Tilden 2 — dry grasslands, approx. 160 acres, not covered but may have possibilities; 8) Kertsonville 34 - Onstad 5, 8 — NW $\frac{1}{4}$ S. 5 lightly grazed dry grassland, but fenced and thus not covered; rest of area mostly wooded, brushy, plowed

or overgrown with sweet clover; 10) Ryan's Prairie - aspens and brush; 11) Floan Prairie - dry grasslands, but only about 80 acres; 13) Liberty 7-8 - only 40 acres left of grasslands; 14) Gredvig Dunes - everything visible from roads looked heavily wooded; 15) Agassiz Dunes - not covered; 16) Tilden aspens, brush and marsh; 18) Onstad 16 - 40 acres of grasslands (small but leadplant found); 19) Onstad 13-14-24 - mostly aspens and brush, but SE¼ of S. 14 is mostly sedge-type grasslands with some drier grass (leadplant found) and wet marsh (Sharp-tailed Sparrow found July 7); 20) Godfrey 7 - aspens and marsh; 21) Godfrey 19-20 - aspens and brush; 22) Godfrey 15-16 - aspens and brush; 23) Maple Meadows WMA - mostly aspens and brush; 24) Godfrey 31 & Onstad 36 - aspens and brush; 25) Liberty 10 - couldn't find; sold and plowed up?

1) Pennington Co. School Trust Land (120 acre portion of S. 28, Numedal Twp. — see map)

2) July 8; 5:30-6:30 a.m.; clear, wind calm, normal temp.

3) most of n. 40 acres with aspens and thickets; w.c. portion of tract dry grassland with some leadplant (but formerly cultivated?); rest of tract mostly sedge-type grass with up to 1" water

4) (Sandhill Crane - at least 2 ind. heard south of tract)

Killdeer - 1

Upland Sandpiper - 2 ind.

Mourning Dove - 3

Black-billed Cuckoo - 1

Great Crested Flycatcher - 1

Least Flycatcher - 2

Horned Lark - 1

Cliff Swallow - 6

(Black-billed Magpie - 1 heard s.w. of tract)

House Wren - 1

Gray Catbird - 1

Veery - 1

Warbling Vireo - 2

Yellow Warbler - 2

Common Yellowthroat - 3

Bobolink - 2

Western Meadowlark - 4

Brown-headed Cowbird - many

American Goldfinch - 3

Savannah Sparrow - many

Le Conte's Sparrow - many

Clay-colored Sparrow - 9

Song Sparrow - 2

5) Tract probably too narrow to attract much more in the way of prairie birds. This area lies toward the northern end of the Pembina Trail/Goose Lake prairie area censused in 1980 for the MNHP, and is a fairly typical part of it.

- 1) Marshall Co. Conservation Land (Section 8, Excel Twp. - see map)
- 2) July 8; 7:00-9:30 a.m.; clear, light S winds, normal temp.
- 3) primarily a sedge marsh; see map for habitat description
- 4) Mallard - 1
Marsh Hawk - 2 ind.
Sora - 3
Killdeer - 2
Common Snipe - 5
Upland Sandpiper - 6 ind.
(yellowlegs, sp. - 4 ind.)
Wilson's Phalarope - 1
Mourning Dove - 2
Black-billed Cuckoo - 1
Eastern Kingbird - 2
Great Crested Flycatcher - 1
Alder Flycatcher - 1
Horned Lark - 1
Tree Swallow - 1
Short-billed Marsh Wren - many
Gray Catbird - 4
Brown Thrasher - 1
Yellow Warbler - many
Common Yellowthroat - many
Bobolink - 6
Western Meadowlark - 7
Red-winged Blackbird - many
Brown-headed Cowbird - many
American Goldfinch - 7
Savannah Sparrow - many
Le Conte's Sparrow - many
Sharp-tailed Sparrow - 2 (in w.c. part of marsh)
Clay-colored Sparrow - many
Song Sparrow - 1
- 5) Hiking (or rather wading) limited to the marsh in the w.c. part of the section; other parts of area covered from roadsides. More birds would probably have been found if more had been done on foot and if I had started at dawn. No American Bittern or Sandhill Crane found - both could be found here. Yellow Rails and more Sharp-tailed Sparrows would probably be found with coverage at night.

- 1) Norway Dunes (portion of S. 10, Norway Twp., Kittson Co. — see map)
- 2) July 9; 5:30-8:30 a.m.; overcast w/ occ. light rain, wind calm, normal temp.
- 3) primarily oak savannah; see map for habitat description; also see comments
- 4) Red-tailed Hawk - 1
Sandhill Crane - 2 ind. dlying over (others heard n. and e. of tract)
 (Sora - 1 heard n. of tract)
 Killdeer - 2
 Common Snipe - 2
Upland Sandpiper - 1 ind. (pair seen June 18 by J. Green)
 (yellowlegs, sp. - 4)
 (Franklin's Gull - 1 flying over)
 Rock Dove - 1
 Mourning Dove - many
 Common Flicker - 2
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 4
 Downy Woodpecker - 1
 Eastern Kingbird - many
 Great Crested Flycatcher - 3
 Alder Flycatcher - 2 (in alders on n. side)
 Least Flycatcher - 5
 Eastern Wood Pewee - 1
 Blue Jay - 2
 Black-billed Magpie - 1
 Black-capped Chickadee - 4
 White-breasted Nuthatch - 1
 House Wren - many
 Gray Catbird - 5
 American Robin - many
 Veery - 6
 Eastern Bluebird - 2 prs. (1 male with food, and pr. with 3 juvenals)
 Starling - 1
 Yellow-throated Vireo - 1
 Warbling Vireo - 4
 Yellow Warbler - 2
 Ovenbird - 1
 Common Yellowthroat - 2
 Red-winged Blackbird - 4
 Northern Oriole - 3
 Brown-headed Cowbird - many
 American Goldfinch - 6
 Rufous-sided Towhee - 1
 Savannah Sparrow - 1
 Vesper Sparrow - many
 Clay-colored Sparrow - many
 Song Sparrow - 1
- 5) On June 18, Janet Green also had Tree and Barn Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-and-white and Chestnut-sided Warblers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Many of the woods birds were recorded only in the surrounding aspens. The rain and late date of my visit probably resulted in my missing some birds. Lark Sparrow was the only possibility of any consequence which might be expected here. Note the differences between my and Maxson's descriptions of the area — you're going to need a third opinion.