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1993

BIRDS OF THE NEBRASKA SANDHILLS

Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest
and

Nebraska National Forest
(Bessey Ranger District)

FIELD CHECKLIST

This checklist includes 235 bird species found in the 116,000-acre Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest and adjacent portions of the Niobrara River, as well as Merritt Reservoir in Cherry County, and the 90,000-acre Nebraska National Forest near Halsey and the adjacent portions of the Dismal and Middle Loup Rivers in Thomas County and Blaine County. Both units are located in the sandhill grasslands of north central Nebraska and both contain large areas of planted coniferous forest.

The 20,000 acres of planted trees on the Bessey District is the largest man-made forest in the United States and some natural riparian woodlands occur in both units, as do shrubs in "sandhills thickets" but still, the dominant vegetation of these areas is typical of sandhill prairie. Land uses include a variety of outdoor and wildlife related recreation as well as livestock grazing.

Many people have provided the observations that have been used to compile this checklist, and the Nebraska National Forest wishes to thank all contributors. Special thanks go to Wayne Mollhoff and James E. Ducey for their comments, and to Richard A. Peterson who was responsible for compiling the completed list.

Observers are encouraged to report observations of species listed as rare or uncertain occurrence status, and species not listed to:

Bessey Ranger District Office near Halsey (Phone: 308-533-2257) or the Ranger Station, 19 miles south of Nenzel (Phone: 402-823-4154).

CHECKLIST SYMBOLS

NEOTROPICAL MIGRANTS:

This term describes species that breed in North America and spend their nonbreeding period primarily south of the United States. It is limited to species that use terrestrial habitats. These species are designated with an (N) after the species name. The populations of some of these species are declining, and studies are underway to determine the causes.

19 JUL 1993

RELATIVE ABUNDANCE:

Most species listed in this checklist occur regularly within the area described above, however, some species are designated as rare (*) because they occur irregularly, and/or in very low numbers. A few species are thought to be regular, but are listed as uncertain (?) because of few reports and/or the difficulty of identification.

MANAGEMENT DIVISIONS

Species that primarily occur in the area of the Nebraska National Forest (Bessey Ranger District) = (b).

Species that primarily occur in the area of the Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest = (m).

SEASONAL OCCURRENCE

M = Migrant (primarily spring and fall or transient anytime)

W = Winter Visitor (primarily Dec., Jan., Feb. occurrence)

S = Summer Resident (indicates nesting, June, July occurrence)

R = Permanent Resident (found year round)

MAJOR HABITATS USED

TERRESTRIAL HABITATS

1. **Trees:** Ponderosa pine, red cedar and jack pine in the planted coniferous forest; green ash, box-elder, elm, hackberry in the planted deciduous and the few natural woodlands, and cottonwood and peachleaf willow in riparian areas. Some hackberry occurs in the "sandhills thickets".
2. **Riparian Shrubs:** Willow.
3. **Other Shrubs:** Snowberry, wild rose, choke-cherry and American plum.
4. **Short Grass:** Hairy grama, blue grama and bluegrass.
5. **Mild and Tall Grasses:** Prairie sandreed, sand bluestem, little bluestem, switchgrass, and porcupine grass.

AQUATIC HABITATS

6. **Open Water:** Occurs in streams, stockponds and reservoirs (mostly frozen December to March).
7. **Marsh:** Primarily sedge, rush, cattails and bulrushes.
8. **Shorelines:** Bare ground around reservoirs, lakes, and along streams.
9. **Prairie Dog Colonies:** Limited to Nebraska National Forest.
10. Cliffs, steep banks, cutbanks, blowouts, gullies.
11. Cropland (very limited), weed patches and ditches.
12. Buildings, bridges and various structures.
13. Burned areas with standing dead trees.
14. **Woodland/Forest Edge:** Trees with adjacent grasslands.

SPECIES	HABITAT USED	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE
• GAVIIDAE: LOONS •		
☐ Common Loon	6	M * (m)
• PODICIPEDIDAE: GREBES •		
☐ Pied-billed Grebe	6,7	S (m)
☐ Horned Grebe	6	M
☐ Eared Grebe	6,7	M (m), S ?
☐ Western Grebe	6	M (m)
☐ Clark's Grebe	6	M ?
• PELICANIDAE: PELICANS •		
☐ American White Pelican	6,8	M (m)
• PHALACORACIDAE: CORMORANTS •		
☐ Double-crested Cormorant	6,8,1	M (m), S ?
• ARDEIDAE: BITTERNS AND HERONS •		
☐ American Bittern	7	M, S *
☐ Great Blue Heron	7, 8,1	S
☐ Green-backed Heron	7, 8, 1	S (b)
☐ Black-crowned Night Heron	7, 8, 1	M, S ?
• ANATIDAE: SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS •		
☐ Trumpeter Swan	6, 7	M *
☐ Greater White-fronted Goose	6, 8, 11	M *
☐ Snow Goose	6, 8, 11	M
☐ Ross' Goose	6, 8, 11	M ?
☐ Canada Goose	5, 6,8,11	M, S *
☐ Wood Duck	6, 7, 1	S
☐ Green-winged Teal	5, 6, 7, 8	M
☐ Mallard	5, 6, 7, 8	S, R *
☐ Northern Pintail	5, 6,7, 8	S (m)
☐ Blue-winged Teal	5, 6, 7, 8	S (m)
☐ Cinnamon Teal	5, 6, 7, 8	S ?
☐ Northern Shoveler	5, 6, 7, 8	S (m)
☐ Gadwall	5, 6, 7, 8	S (m)
☐ American Wigeon	5, 6, 7, 8	S * (m)
☐ Canvasback	6, 7	M (m)
☐ Redhead	6, 7	M, S ? (m)
☐ Ring-necked Duck	6, 7	M (m)
☐ Lesser Scaup	6, 7	M (m)
☐ Common Goldeneye	6	M, W *
☐ Bufflehead	6	M *
☐ Hooded Merganser	6	M *
☐ Common Merganser	6	M, W *
☐ Ruddy Duck	6, 7	S (m)
• CATHARTIDAE: VULTURES •		
☐ Turkey Vulture	10, 12, 1, 3, 4, 5	S
• ACCIPITRIDAE: KITES, EAGLES, HAWKS •		
☐ Osprey	6, 1	M
☐ Bald Eagle	6, 1, 9, ALL	W
☐ Northern Harrier	3, 5, 7	R
☐ Sharp-shinned Hawk	1, 3	M, S *
☐ Cooper's Hawk	1, 3	M, R ?
☐ Northern Goshawk	1, 3	W *
☐ Broad-winged Hawk (N)	1, 3, 5, 8	M *
☐ Swainson's Hawk (N)	14, 5, 9, 11	S

SPECIES	HABITAT USED	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE
ACCIPITRIDAE: KITES, EAGLES, HAWKS, CONT.		
☐ Red-tailed Hawk	14, 5, 9	R
☐ Ferruginous Hawk	4, 5, 9, 11, 14	M, W *
☐ Rough-legged Hawk	5, 14	W
☐ Golden Eagle	10, 14, 9, ALL	W, R ? (m)
* FALCONIDAE: FALCONS *		
☐ American Kestrel	13, 14, 11	R
☐ Merlin (N)	13, 11, 8	M, W *
☐ Peregrine Falcon (N)	4, 5, 8, 9, 11	M *
☐ Prairie Falcon	10, 4, 5, 9, 11	M, R ? (m)
* PHASIINIDAE: PHEASANT, GROUSE, TURKEY, QUAIL *		
☐ Ring-necked Pheasant	3, 5, 7, 11	R
☐ Greater Prairie Chicken	5, 11	R (b)
☐ Sharp-tailed Grouse	3, 5, 11	R
☐ Wild Turkey	3, 11, 14	R
☐ Northern Bobwhite	1, 3, 11, 14	R (b)
* RALLIDAE: RAILS AND COOTS *		
☐ Virginia Rail	7	S *
☐ Sora	7	S *
☐ American Coot	6, 7	S
* GRUIDAE: CRANES *		
☐ Sandhill Crane	8, 11	M
☐ Whooping Crane	8, 11	M *
* CHARADRIIDAE: PLOVERS *		
☐ Black-bellied Plover	8	M ?
☐ Semi-palmated Plover	8	M * (m)
☐ Piping Plover	8	M ?
☐ Killdeer	4, 8, 9	S
☐ American Avocet	6, 7 (short), 8	M, S *
* SCOLOPACIDAE: SANDPIPERS AND PHALAROPES *		
☐ Greater Yellowlegs	8	M (m)
☐ Lesser Yellowlegs	8	M (m)
☐ Solitary Sandpiper	8	M
☐ Willet	5, 7 (short), 8	M, S *
☐ Spotted Sandpiper	8	S
☐ Upland Sandpiper (N)	5	S
☐ Long-billed Curlew (N)	4, 5 (wet meadow), 8, 9	S
☐ Marbled Godwit	5, 7 (short), 8	M ?
☐ Sanderling	8	M ?
☐ Semipalmated Sandpiper	8	M (m)
☐ Western Sandpiper	8	M ?
☐ Least Sandpiper	8	M (m)
☐ White-rumped Sandpiper	8	M (m)
☐ Baird's Sandpiper	8	M (m)
☐ Pectoral Sandpiper	8	M (m)
☐ Stilt Sandpiper	8	M ?
☐ Buff-breasted Sandpiper	4, 8	M ?
☐ Short-billed Dowitcher	8	M ?
☐ Long-billed Dowitcher	8	M (m)
☐ Common Snipe	5 (wet meadow), 7, 8	M, S ?
☐ Wilson's Phalarope	6, 7 (short), 8	M, S ?
* LARIDAE: GULLS AND TERNS *		
☐ Franklin's Gull	6, 7, 8	M

SPECIES	HABITAT USED	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE
LARIDAE: GULLS AND TERNS CONT.		
☐ Ring-billed Gull	6, 8	M (m)
☐ Herring Gull	6, 8	M (m)
☐ Common Tern	6, 8	M ?
☐ Forster's Tern	6, 7, 8	M, S ?
☐ Least Tern	6, 8	M * (b)
☐ Black Tern	6, 7, 8	M, S ?
* COLUMBIDAE: PIGEONS AND DOVES *		
☐ Rock Dove	10, 11, 12	R (b)
☐ Mourning Dove	14, 3, 5	S
* CUCULIDAE: CUCKOOS *		
☐ Black-billed Cuckoo (N)	1, 3	S
☐ Yellow-billed Cuckoo (N)	1, 3	S
* TYTONIDAE: BARN OWL *		
☐ Barn Owl	10, 11, 12, 14	S *
* STRIGIDAE: TYPICAL OWLS *		
☐ Eastern Screech Owl	1, 3	R
☐ Great Horned Owl	14, ALL	R
☐ Burrowing Owl (N)	4, 9	S
☐ Long-eared Owl	14	R *
☐ Short-eared Owl	5, 7, 1	R *
☐ Northern Saw-whet Owl	1, 3	M *, R ?
* CAPRIMULGIDAE: GOATSUCKERS *		
☐ Common Nighthawk (N)	4, 5, 11, 1	S
☐ Common Poorwill	10, 1	S
* APODIDAE: SWIFTS *		
☐ Chimney Swift (N)	12	S (b)
* TROCHILIDAE: HUMMINGBIRDS *		
☐ Ruby-throated Hummingbird (N)	12 (feeders)	M * (b)
* ALCEDINADAE: KINGFISHERS *		
☐ Belted Kingfisher	6, 10	R
* PICIDAE: WOODPECKERS *		
☐ Red-headed Woodpecker	13, 14	S
☐ Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	M, R ?
☐ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	M * (b)
☐ Downy Woodpecker	1	R
☐ Hairy Woodpecker	1, 13	R
☐ Northern Flicker	13, 14	R
* TYRANNIDAE: TYRANT FLYCATCHERS *		
☐ Western Wood Pewee (N)	1	S
☐ Eastern Wood Pewee (N)	1	M, S ?
☐ Willow Flycatcher (N)	2, 3	S (b)
☐ Least Flycatcher (N)	1, 3	M
☐ Eastern Phoebe	1, 12	S *
☐ Say's Phoebe	5, 10, 12	S *
☐ Great Crested Flycatcher (N)	1	S *
☐ Western Kingbird (N)	14	S
☐ Eastern Kingbird (N)	14	S

SPECIES	HABITATS USED	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE
* ALAUDIDAE: LARKS *		
☐ Horned Lark	4, 9, 11	R
* HIRUNINIDAE: SWALLOWS *		
☐ Tree Swallow	14, 6	M
☐ N. Rough-winged Swallow (N)	10, 6	S
☐ Bank Swallow (N)	10, 6	M, S ?
☐ Cliff Swallow (N)	10, 6	S
☐ Barn Swallow (N)	12, 6	S
* CORVIDAE: JAYS AND CROWS *		
☐ Blue Jay	1, 14	R
☐ Black-billed Magpie	14	R
☐ American Crow	14	R
* PARIDAE: TITMICE *		
☐ Black-capped Chickadee	1, 12 (feeders)	R
* SITTIDAE: NUTHATCHES *		
☐ Red-breasted Nuthatch	1, 12 (feeders)	R
☐ White-breasted Nuthatch	1, 12 (feeders)	R
* CERTHIDAE: CREEPERS *		
☐ Brown Creeper	1, 13	W
* TROGLODYTIDAE: WRENS *		
☐ Rock Wren	10	M *, S ? (m)
☐ House Wren (N)	1, 12	S
☐ Winter Wren	2, 3	M *
☐ Marsh Wren	7 (tall)	S *
☐ Sedge Wren	7 (short)	2 ? (b)
* MUSCICAPIDAE: KINGLETS AND THRUSHES *		
☐ Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	M, W *
☐ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1, 3	M
☐ Eastern Bluebird	13, 14	M, S *
☐ Mountain Bluebird	13, 14	M, W *
☐ Townsend's Solitaire	1, 3	W
☐ Veery (N)	2, 3	M *
☐ Gray-cheeked Thrush (N)	1, 3	M *
☐ Swainson's Thrush (N)	1, 3	M
☐ Hermit Thrush	1, 3	M *
☐ Wood Thrush (N)	1, 3	M *, S ? (b)
☐ American Robin	14, 1, 3	R
* MIMIDAE: MOCKERS AND THRASHERS *		
☐ Gray Catbird (N)	1, 3	S
☐ Northern Mockingbird	14, 3	S ?
☐ Brown Thrasher	1, 3	S
* MOTACILLIDAE: PIPITS *		
☐ American Pipit	4, 5, 8, 11	M
☐ Sprague's Pipit	5, 11	M *

SPECIES	HABITATS USED	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE
*BOMBYCILLIDAE: WAXWINGS *		
☐ Bohemian Waxwing	1, 3	W *
☐ Cedar Waxwing	1,3	M, R*
* LANIIDAE: SHRIKES *		
☐ Northern Shrike	1, 3, 14	W *
☐ Loggerhead Shrike	1, 3, 14	S
* STURNIDAE: STARLINGS *		
☐ European Starling	14, 12, 11	R
* VIREONIDAE: VIREOS *		
☐ Bell's Vireo (N)	2, 3	S (b)
☐ Solitary Vireo (N)	1, 3	M, S ?
☐ Yellow-throated Vireo (N)	1	S ? (b)
☐ Warbling Vireo (N)	1	S
☐ Red-eyed Vireo (N)	1, 3	S
* EMBERIZIDAE: WARBLERS, SPARROWS, BLACKBIRDS, ETC. *		
(SUB-FAMILY PARULINAE: WOOD WARBLERS)		
☐ Tennessee Warbler (N)	1	M
☐ Orange-crowned Warbler (N)	1, 3	M
☐ Nashville Warbler (N)	1,3	M
☐ Yellow Warbler (N)	1, 2, 3	S
☐ Chestnut-sided Warbler (N)	2, 3	M *
☐ Cape May Warbler (N)	1	M *
☐ Yellow-rumped Warbler	1, 3	M
☐ Black-throated Green Warbler (N)	1, 3	M *
☐ Bay-breasted Warbler (N)	1, 3	M *
☐ Blackpoll Warbler (N)	1	M
☐ Black and White Warbler (N)	1, 3	S *
☐ American Redstart (N)	1	S
☐ Ovenbird (N)	1,3	M, S *
☐ Northern Waterthrush (N)	2, 3	M
☐ Mourning Warbler (N)	3	M *
☐ Common Yellowthroat	2, 3, 7	S
☐ Wilson's Warbler (N)	1,3	M
☐ Yellow-breasted Chat (N)	3	S
(THRAUPINAE: TANAGERS)		
☐ Western Tanager (N)	1	M *
☐ Scarlet Tanager (N)	1	S * (b)
(CARDINALINAE: CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND BUNTINGS)		
☐ Northern Cardinal	1, 3	R *
☐ Rose-breasted Grosbeak (N)	1, 3	M, S ? (b)
☐ Black-headed Grosbeak (N)	1, 3	S
☐ Blue Grosbeak (N)	3	S
☐ Lazuli Bunting (N)	1, 3	M
☐ Indigo Bunting (N)	1, 3	S
☐ Dickcissel (N)	3, 5, 11	S *
(EMBERIZINAE: TOWHEES, SPARROWS, JUNCOS, LONGSPURS)		
☐ Rufous-sided Towhee	3	S
☐ American Tree Sparrow	3, 11	W
☐ Chipping Sparrow (N)	3, 11, 14	S

SPECIES	HABITATS USED	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE
(EMBERIZINAE: TOWHEES, SPARROWS, JUNCOS, LONGSPURS, CONT.)		
☐ Clay-colored Sparrow (N)	3, 11	M
☐ Field Sparrow	3, 11, 14	S
☐ Vesper Sparrow	3, 5, 11, 14	S
☐ Lark Sparrow (N)	3, 11, 14	S
☐ Lark Bunting (N)	5, 11	S
☐ Savannah Sparrow	2, 5 (wet meadow), 8, 11	M, S ?
☐ Grasshopper Sparrow (N)	5, 11	S
☐ LeConte's Sparrow	5, 7 (wet meadow +short)	M ?
☐ Song Sparrow	2, 3, 7	M, R ?
☐ Lincoln's Sparrow (N)	2, 3	M
☐ White-throated Sparrow	2, 3, 11	M
☐ White-crowned Sparrow	2, 3, 11	M
☐ Fox Sparrow	3, 11	M *
☐ Harris' Sparrow	3, 11	M, W *
☐ Dark-eyed Junco	3, 11, 14	W
☐ Lapland Longspur	4, 5, 9, 11	M, W *
☐ Chestnut-collared Longspur	4, 5, 9, 11	M

(ICTERINAE: MEADOWLARKS, BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES)

☐ Bobolink (N)	5 (wet meadow), 11	M, S ?
☐ Red-winged Blackbird	3, 7, 11	S
☐ Eastern Meadowlark	5 (wet meadow), 11	M, S ?
☐ Western Meadowlark	4, 5, 9, 11	S
☐ Yellow-headed Blackbird (N)	7, 11	M, S
☐ Rusty Blackbird	2, 3, 11	M *
☐ Common Grackle	14, 11	S
☐ Brown-headed Cowbird	ALL	S
☐ Orchard Oriole (N)	1, 3	S
☐ Northern Oriole (N)	1, 3	S

* FRINGILLIDAE: FINCHES *

☐ Purple Finch	1, 3, 12 (feeders)	W *
☐ Red Crossbill	1, 12 (feeders)	M, R *
☐ White-winged Crossbill	1, 12 (feeders)	W *
☐ Common Redpoll	3, 11, 12 (feeders)	W *
☐ Pine Siskin	1, 3, 11, 12 (feeders)	R
☐ American Goldfinch	1, 2, 3, 11, 12 (feeders)	R
☐ Evening Grosbeak	1, 12 (feeders)	W *

* PASSERIDAE: WEAVER FINCHES *

☐ House Sparrow	11, 12 (feeders)	R
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