



AGATE FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT 2014 RESOURCE BRIEF



Above: The 2014 State of the Birds Report listed the Lark Bunting as a Common Bird in Steep Decline. This decline is due in part to conversion of native prairie to cropland, urbanization, and oil and gas extraction. Photo Credit: Dan Licht, NPS

Right: Point locations surveyed during the 2014 field season.

LANDBIRD MONITORING

Overview: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument consists of 3,000 acres of mixed grass prairie and a broad floodplain of the Niobrara River that has created a riparian area for water-loving plants and wetland birds.

The Northern Great Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network assisted with the development of a long-term bird monitoring protocol jointly with Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO). The 2014 breeding season was the second year of bird surveys at Agate Fossil Beds NM.

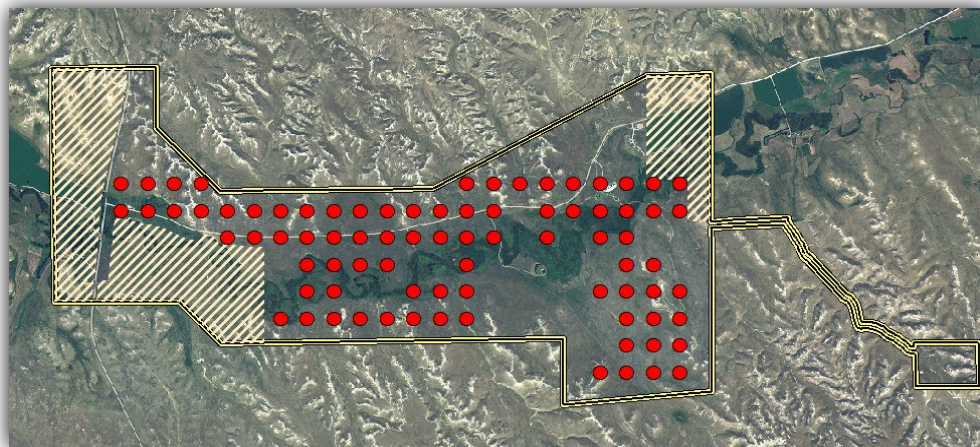
RMBO surveyed 82 points in June 2014. A total of 1,258 birds representing 40 species were recorded.

Highlights: The Red-winged Blackbird had the highest detection in the park with 22% of the species composition. Other common species included the Western Meadowlark (19%), Lark Bunting (11%), and Mourning Dove (9%).

Three species that were initially listed as Unconfirmed in NPSpecies were confirmed as Present in the Park: Brewer's Sparrow, Black-billed Cuckoo, and Bell's Vireo. In addition, the American Wigeon was also a new species recorded in 2014. These four species are considered Species of Importance by Partners in Flight and/or the state of Nebraska (page2).

Another Species of Importance is the Lark Bunting. According to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, its population declined by 89 percent between 1966 and 2010. This decline was due in part to conversion of native prairie to cropland, urbanization, and oil and gas extraction.

Lark Bunting numbers were much higher at Agate Fossil Beds NM in 2014 than 2013 (page2). Due to fluctuations in precipitation and food availability, Lark Buntings tend to be nomadic and populations may increase in one location while decreasing in others.





BIRD SPECIES DETECTED AT AGATE FOSSIL BEDS NM

Common Name	2013	2014	Common Name	2013	2014
American Bittern	1	0	House Wren	2	7
American Crow	0	5	Killdeer	22	30
American Goldfinch	29	12	Lark Bunting	18	139
American Robin	2	6	Lark Sparrow	34	27
American Wigeon*	0	1	Long-billed Curlew	1	0
Bank Swallow	7	0	Mallard	17	12
Barn Swallow	6	11	Mourning Dove	59	114
Bell's Vireo	0	1	Northern Flicker	8	4
Black-billed Cuckoo	0	1	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	13	0
Blue Grosbeak	5	0	Northern Shoveler	0	1
Blue Jay	1	0	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	0
Blue-winged Teal	0	1	Red-headed Woodpecker	3	0
Bobolink	0	1	Red-tailed Hawk	4	2
Brewer's Sparrow	0	1	Red-winged Blackbird	155	276
Brown Thrasher	5	4	Rock Pigeon	5	1
Brown-headed Cowbird	56	69	Rock Wren	31	35
Bullock's Oriole	2	0	Sandhill Crane	1	0
Canada Goose	3	0	Say's Phoebe	18	12
Cliff Swallow	18	71	Song Sparrow	1	0
Common Grackle	16	0	Townsend's Solitaire	0	1
Common Nighthawk	15	8	Turkey Vulture	0	1
Common Yellowthroat	24	46	Upland Sandpiper	12	10
Cooper's Hawk	0	1	Violet-green Swallow	3	0
Dickcissel	12	0	Warbling Vireo	1	0
Eastern Kingbird	12	6	Western Kingbird	15	6
Eurasian Collared-Dove	18	0	Western Meadowlark	156	243
European Starling	5	0	Western Wood-Pewee	4	0
Grasshopper Sparrow	50	33	Wilson's Phalarope	3	0
Great Blue Heron	6	3	Wilson's Snipe	22	26
Great Horned Owl	1	0	Wood Duck	7	0
Horned Lark	48	20	Yellow Warbler	8	10
House Finch	5	0			

* New Species for Park
*Species of Importance:
Determined by Partners in
Flight priority species list and
State of Nebraska priority list.

*Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. 2014. The Rocky Mountain Avian Data Center. { web app}. Brighton, CO. <http://adc.rmbo.org>. (Accessed December 4, 2014).

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