



FORT UNION TRADING POST NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE 2015 RESOURCE BRIEF

LANDBIRD MONITORING

Overview: Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site was the grandest fort on the Upper Missouri River in the 1800's. The National Park Service acquired the fort and 444 acres in 1966. Today's Fort Union has been reconstructed to its appearance in 1851, at the height of the Indian and fur trades.

The Northern Great Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network developed a bird monitoring protocol jointly with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (formerly the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory). This research is the beginning of a long-term effort to monitor species trends and densities. The 2015 breeding season was the third year of bird surveys at Fort Union Trading Post NHS.

Fort Union Trading Post was below the required acreage for the protocol's standard grid design; therefore, a uniform layer of points was placed over the park and each point is sampled 3 times each year. Techni-

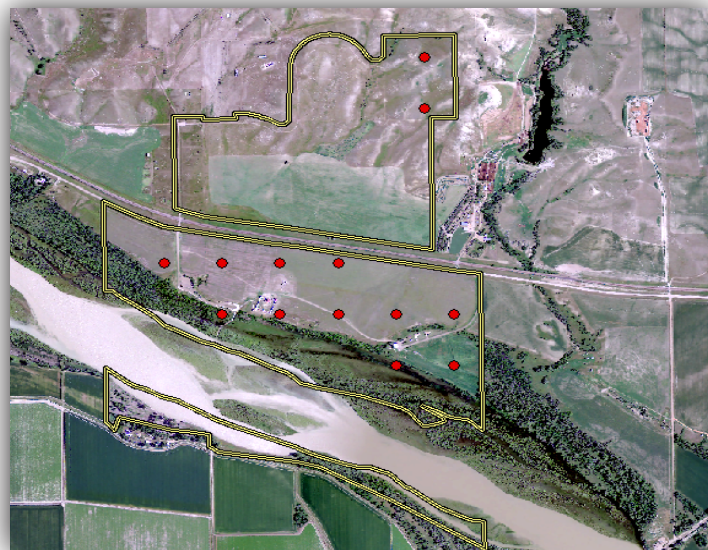
cians surveyed 13 points in June 2015, and a total of 830 birds representing 67 species were recorded.

Highlights: The western meadowlark had the highest detection rate with 14% of the species composition. Other common species included the red-winged blackbird (12%), the ring-necked pheasant (5%) and the grasshopper sparrow (5%).

Several species found at Fort Union Trading Post NHS are listed as species of importance by Partners in Flight and the state of North Dakota (page 2). One of these species, the northern harrier, is listed as a regional species of concern and on the US and Canada stewardship species list. Its population has declined by 47% since 1966 due to large-scale agriculture and habitat loss. The small mammals that harriers prey upon also have been reduced because of overgrazing, pesticides, and loss of shrub cover.



Above: The northern harrier hunts mostly small mammals and small birds, but they are also capable of taking bigger prey such as rabbit or ducks. [Photo Permission: Terry Sohl](#)



Right: Point locations surveyed during the 2015 field season.



BIRD SPECIES DETECTED AT FORT UNION TRADING POST NHS

Common Name	2014	2015	Common Name	2014	2015
American Coot	0	1	Killdeer	6	12
American Crow	1	1	Lark Sparrow	16	1
American Goldfinch	1	13	Lazuli Bunting	4	4
American Kestrel	0	1	Least Flycatcher	0	13
American Redstart	1	2	Mallard	6	9
American Robin	14	22	Mourning Dove	24	28
American White Pelican	2	9	Northern Flicker	3	12
Bald Eagle	1	0	Northern Harrier	0	1
Baltimore Oriole	1	1	Northern Pintail	0	3
Bank Swallow	34	28	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	0	2
Barn Swallow	11	22	Northern Shoveler	0	1
Belted Kingfisher	0	1	Ovenbird	1	0
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	6	Red-eyed Vireo	2	1
Black-billed Magpie	2	5	Red-headed Woodpecker	0	2
Black-capped Chickadee	0	1	Red-tailed Hawk	1	1
Black-headed Grosbeak	2	7	Red-winged Blackbird	54	102
Blue Jay	0	2	Ring-necked Pheasant	26	44
Blue-winged Teal	0	2	Rock Pigeon	2	4
Bobolink	0	1	Rock Wren	0	1
Brewer's Blackbird	0	12	Say's Phoebe	1	1
Brown Thrasher	1	0	Song Sparrow	1	21
Brown-headed Cowbird	22	37	Sora	0	14
Canada Goose	0	17	Spotted Towhee	1	2
Cedar Waxwing	2	30	Turkey Vulture	1	0
Chipping Sparrow	6	2	Upland Sandpiper	1	0
Clay-colored Sparrow	7	8	Veery	0	10
Cliff Swallow	7	0	Vesper Sparrow	11	12
Common Grackle	0	12	Warbling Vireo	0	18
Common Nighthawk	0	2	Western Kingbird	1	0
Common Yellowthroat	8	19	Western Meadowlark	45	119
Eastern Bluebird	0	1	Western Wood-Pewee	1	2
Eastern Kingbird	6	1	Wild Turkey	0	1
European Starling	0	1	Willet	0	1
Franklin's Gull	34	0	Wood Duck	7	0
Gadwall	0	2	Yellow Warbler	27	29
Grasshopper Sparrow	8	39	Yellow-breasted Chat	0	12
Gray Catbird	2	9	Yellow-headed Blackbird	0	2
House Wren	1	27	Yellow-rumped Warbler	0	1

***Species of Importance:**
Determined by Partners in
Flight priority species list and
State of North Dakota priority
list.

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