



2016 Landbird Monitoring Fort Laramie National Historical Site



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Cliff swallows collecting mud for their nests. These social birds often nest in large colonies near water and along cliffs, canyons, buildings and bridges. These swallows are nearly always found in large groups and can form nesting colonies in the thousands.

Locations of the 38 points surveyed at Fort Laramie National Historical Site during the 2016 (purple circles) field season. Park boundary is shown with a yellow line.

Overview

Fort Laramie National Historic Site was an outpost that played a crucial role in the transformation of the West, first as fur-trading center, then as military garrison. The site is located near the confluence of the Laramie River and Platte River. Despite its small acreage (886 acres), the bird community is diverse given the riparian areas along the rivers.

The Northern Great Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network developed a long-term bird monitoring protocol jointly with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (formerly Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory). The 2016 breeding season was the fourth year of surveys at Fort Laramie NHS. This research is the beginning of a long-term effort to monitor species trends and densities.

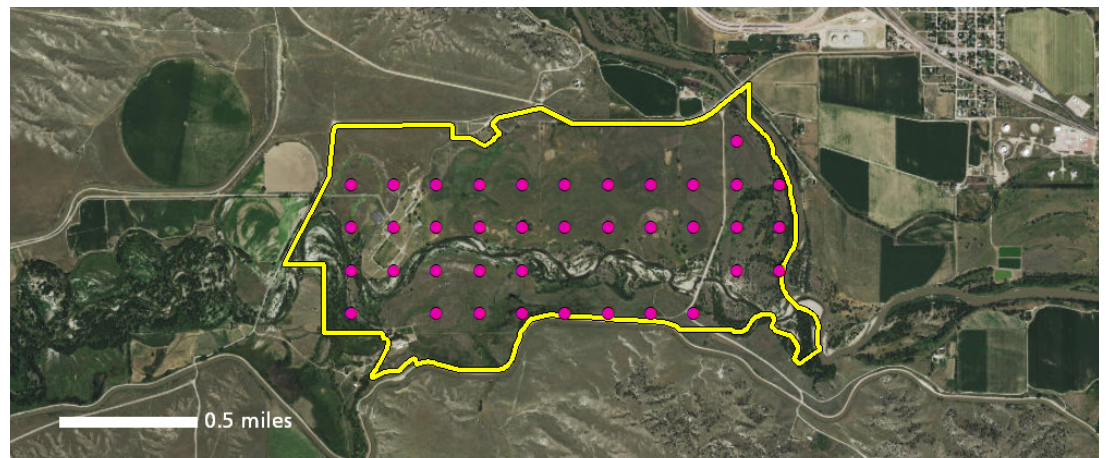
Bird Conservancy surveyed 38 points throughout the park and recorded a total of 2,333 birds from 63 species.

Highlights

The cliff swallow had the highest detection rate with 67% of the species composition. Other common species were the western meadowlark (5%), red-winged blackbird (3%), and the non-native European starling (3%). Other non-native species recorded were the Eurasian-collared dove and the rock pigeon. The savannah sparrow was detected for the first time at Fort Laramie and will be added to the park species list. Other species detected for the first time since sampling began included lazuli bunting, northern pintail, and turkey vulture.

Interesting Fact

Cliff swallow abundance substantially increased in 2016 with a total count of 1,571 birds compared to 16 birds in 2015. Interestingly, other parks in the region also had significant increases in cliff swallow abundance. Expert ornithologists with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies could not explain the increase.



Results of bird surveys at Fort Laramie National Historical Site

* **Names of species of Importance are bold.** These were determined using priority lists from Partners in Flight and the State of Wyoming.

Common Name	2015	2016
American Goldfinch	14	10
American Kestrel	0	6
American Redstart	2	0
American Robin	22	20
Bank Swallow*	5	0
Barn Swallow	6	20
Belted Kingfisher*	0	4
Black-billed Magpie*	2	4
Black-capped Chickadee	5	7
Black-headed Grosbeak	10	10
Blue Jay	22	25
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1	0
Blue-winged Teal	0	2
Brewer's Blackbird	4	3
Brown Thrasher	5	4
Brown-headed Cowbird	20	10
Bullock's Oriole	12	11
Canada Goose	8	25
Cedar Waxwing	1	0
Chipping Sparrow	3	1
Clay-colored Sparrow	1	1
Cliff Swallow	16	1571
Common Grackle	76	56
Common Merganser	2	0
Common Yellowthroat	15	16
Downy Woodpecker	4	3
Dusky Flycatcher	3	0
Eastern Bluebird	1	0

Common Name	2015	2016
Eastern Kingbird*	11	6
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	3
European Starling	54	61
Golden Eagle*	1	0
Grasshopper Sparrow*	9	3
Gray Catbird	2	0
Great Blue Heron	1	2
Great Horned Owl	1	0
Green-tailed Towhee	1	0
Green-winged Teal	0	2
Hairy Woodpecker	0	1
Hermit Thrush	1	0
House Wren	60	41
Killdeer	3	17
Lark Sparrow*	26	8
Lazuli Bunting	0	5
Least Flycatcher	5	2
Lincoln's Sparrow	1	0
Loggerhead Shrike*	1	0
Mallard	0	7
Mountain Bluebird	2	0
Mourning Dove	82	53
Northern Flicker*	7	11
Northern Pintail	0	2
N. Rough-winged Swallow	6	2
Orchard Oriole	4	2
Osprey*	3	0
Ovenbird	1	0

Common Name	2015	2016
Pine Siskin*	35	1
Red-headed Woodpecker*	1	0
Red-tailed Hawk	3	4
Red-winged Blackbird	56	71
Rock Pigeon	0	2
Sandhill Crane	1	3
Savannah Sparrow	0	2
Say's Phoebe	4	3
Song Sparrow	0	1
Spotted Sandpiper	0	1
Spotted Towhee	9	3
Swainson's Thrush	0	1
Tree Swallow	2	0
Turkey Vulture	0	1
Vesper Sparrow*	2	0
Violet-green Swallow	1	0
Warbling Vireo	3	4
Western Kingbird	41	30
Western Meadowlark*	129	116
Western Tanager	0	1
Western Wood-Pewee	3	10
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	1
Wild Turkey	2	10
Wood Duck	8	3
Yellow Warbler	35	23
Yellow-breasted Chat	3	5
Yellow-rumped Warbler	4	0

Protocol Contact

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For more bird data

Visit the Rocky Mountain
Avian Data Center online:
<http://adc.birdconservancy.org>

Northern Great Plains Network

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Network Parks: Agate Fossil Beds NM • Badlands NP • Devils Tower NM • Fort Laramie NHS • Fort Union Trading Post NHS • Jewel Cave NM • Knife River Indian Villages NHS • Missouri NRR • Mount Rushmore NMEM • Niobrara NSR • Scotts Bluff NM • Theodore Roosevelt NP • Wind Cave NP