



2016 Landbird Monitoring Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site



Above and below: Ring-billed gulls were recorded at Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site for the first time in 2016.

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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 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. Fort Union Trading Post is below the required acreage for the protocol's standard grid design. Instead,

a uniform layer of points was placed over the park and each of these points are sampled 3 times each year.

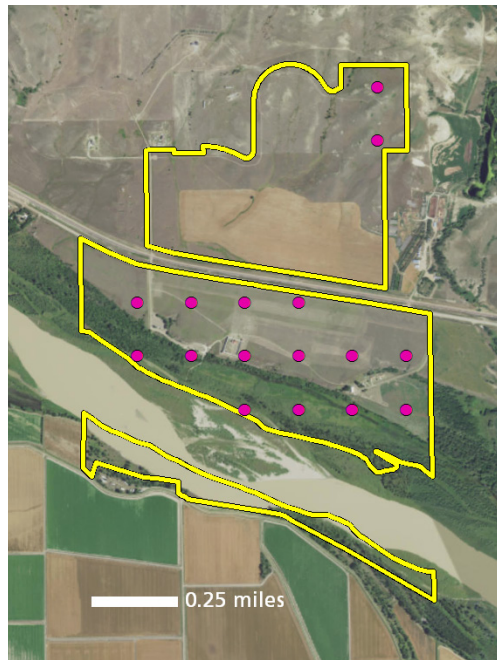
The 2016 breeding season was the fourth year of bird surveys at Fort Union Trading Post NHS. Technicians surveyed 16 points in June 2016, and recorded a total of 1,115 birds representing 65 species.

Highlights

The red-winged blackbird had the highest detection rate with 9% of the species composition. Other common species included the western meadowlark (8%), bank swallow (7%), yellow warbler (7%), and the non-native ring-necked pheasant (6%). Species that were recorded for the first time since surveys began were the downy woodpecker, mountain bluebird, Swainson's hawk, and the ring-billed gull.

Interesting Fact

Ring-billed gulls are seen inland more commonly than other gulls, which typically prefer coastal waters. The ring-billed gull can be found at reservoirs, lakes, ponds, streams, landfills, parking lots, and even shopping malls. They have an appetite for almost anything from insects, earthworms, rodents, and fruit to French fries and other foods left discarded by humans.



Left: Locations of the 16 points surveyed at Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site during the 2016 field season (purple circles).

Results of bird surveys at Fort Union Trading Post NHS

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

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
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

Common Name	2015	2016
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
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>

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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 NM • Niobrara NSR • Scotts Bluff NM • Theodore Roosevelt NP • Wind Cave NP