

Preliminary Checklist of the Birds of Oakland Plantation and the Cane River Creole National Historical Park, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana

Kreg D. Ellzey

Department of Social Sciences, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana 71457, USA

Introduction

Lying along the banks of Cane River in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, Oakland Plantation and the Cane River Creole National Historical Park are situated in an area rich in avian diversity. Varying landscapes, combining mixed bottomland hardwood forests, open agricultural areas, and abundant water features, draw a diverse number of resident and migratory birds to the area in search of life sustaining resources such as food, water and nesting sites. Since its inception, there have been only limited observations of bird species taken within the park’s boundaries. The aim of this project is to expand on the park’s current checklist by creating an updated checklist of bird species found on the grounds of Oakland Plantation and other sites within the Cane River Creole National Historical Park complex.

Methods

In a personal communication with Laura Gates (2005), superintendent of the park, I was informed that only one known avian survey has taken place in the park. It was undertaken in the mid-1990s by David Muth who is the current Chief of Planning and Resource Stewardship at Jean Lafitte NHP&P. I subsequently contacted Mr. Muth in March 2005 and he responded with four checklists that he had prepared between 1995 and 1998. He also sent two additional checklists of birds reported by Paul Conzelman while he was conducting the 2002-2003 herpetofaunal surveys of Oakland and Magnolia Plantations. The following list of species was compiled using data from these checklists as well as my own personal sightings taken during pedestrian surveys of the Oakland Plantation property in March and April 2005.

Results

Combining previous sightings by David Muth and Paul Conzelman, along with my own observations during March and April 2005, the park’s checklist of birds currently stands at 105 species. Of these, 35 species can typically be found year-round in the park, 25 species are winter residents, 24 species are summer residents, 11 species are spring and/or fall migrants through the area, and 9 species were deemed as likely occurring in multiple seasons. Of those species present during the summer, 1 species was recorded as a confirmed breeder, 27 species as probable breeders, and 26 species as possible breeders within the park. Additional surveys could easily expand the current park checklist, species breeding status, and basic knowledge of bird movements within the park.

List of Species

Key to Status

- R – Yearound: Species present all year at this location.
- W – Winter: Species present only in winter.
- S – Summer: Species present only in summer.
- M – Migrant: Species present as migrant during spring and/or fall.
- ? – Status Uncertain

Key to Breeding

- B – Breeder: Breeding confirmed (nest building, recently fledged young, etc.).
- P – Probable: Breeding probable but undocumented thus far.
- ? – Uncertain: Breeding possible due to proper habitat or other factor(s).

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Breeding</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Pied-billed Grebe	R	?	2
Wood Duck	R	P	

Double-crested Cormorant	W		
Great Blue Heron	R		
Great Egret	R		
Snowy Egret	S		
Little Blue Heron	S		
Cattle Egret	S		1
Green Heron	S		1
<i>Plegadis</i> sp.	S/R?		4
Black Vulture	R		2
Turkey Vulture	R		
Mississippi Kite	S	?	1
Northern Harrier	W		
Red-tailed Hawk	R	?	
American Kestrel	W/R?		1
Northern Bobwhite	R	?	2
American Coot	W		
Killdeer	R	?	
Solitary Sandpiper	M		1
Rock Dove	R	P	
Mourning Dove	R	P	
Eurasian Collared-Dove	R	?	2
Inca Dove	R	?	2
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	S	P	1
Barred Owl	R	?	
Chimney Swift	S	P	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	S	P	
Belted Kingfisher	R		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	R	P	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	W		
Downy Woodpecker	Y	P	
Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flicker	W		
Pileated Woodpecker	R	?	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	M		1
Least Flycatcher	M		1
Eastern Phoebe	W		
Great-crested Flycatcher	S	P	1
Loggerhead Shrike	R	?	
White-eyed Vireo	S	P	
Red-eyed Vireo	S/M?	?	1
Yellow-throated Vireo	S/M?	?	
Blue-headed Vireo	S	?	
Blue Jay	R	P	
American Crow	R	P	
Fish Crow	R	?	2
Purple Martin	S	?	
Cliff Swallow	S		1

Barn Swallow	S	P	1
Carolina Chickadee	R	P	
Tufted Titmouse	R	P	
Carolina Wren	R	P	
House Wren	W		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	W		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	W		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	S/M?		
Eastern Bluebird	R	P	
Hermit Thrush	W		
American Robin	R/W?	?	
Gray Catbird	M/S?	?	1
Northern Mockingbird	R	P	
Brown Thrasher	R	P	
Cedar Waxwing	W		
European Starling	R	P	1
Tennessee Warbler	M		1
Orange-crowned Warbler	W		
Northern Parula	S		
Yellow Warbler	M		1
Magnolia Warbler	M		1
Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler	W		
Black-throated Green Warbler	M		1
Blackburnian Warbler	M		1
Pine Warbler	W		1
Blackpoll Warbler	M		1
Cerulean Warbler	M		1
Black-and-white Warbler	S	?	
American Redstart	M		1
Prothonotary Warbler	S	P	
Common Yellowthroat	S/R?	?	1
Summer Tanager	S	?	1
Northern Cardinal	R	P	
Blue Grosbeak	S	?	
Indigo Bunting	S	P	1
Painted Bunting	S	?	1
Dickcissel	S	?	1
Eastern Towhee	W		
Chipping Sparrow	W		
Field Sparrow	W		
Vesper Sparrow	W		1
Lark Sparrow	S	B	1, 3
Savannah Sparrow	W		
Song Sparrow	W		
Swamp Sparrow	W		
White-throated Sparrow	W		

White-crowned Sparrow	W		
Dark-eyed 'Slate-colored" Junco	W		1
Red-winged Blackbird	R	P	
Eastern Meadowlark	R	?	
Common Grackle	R	P	
Brown-headed Cowbird	R	P	1
Orchard Oriole	S	P	1
Baltimore Oriole	M/S?	?	1
American Goldfinch	W		
House Finch	R		2
House Sparrow	R	?	

Sightings Comments

1 – From sightings by David Muth (1995-1998). Species not recorded during my survey period from Mar-Apr 2005.

2 – From sightings by Paul Conzelman during the 2002-2003 herpetofaunal surveys of Oakland and Magnolia Plantations. Not recorded during my survey period from Mar-Apr 2005.

3 – Breeding of Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) was confirmed in 1995 near the Seed House at Oakland Plantation. Reported to me by David Muth in a personal communication (2005).

4 – Sighting by Paul Conzelman of Glossy Ibis. Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) would be an extraordinary record for the area and is a species easily confused with the much more common and widespread White-faced Ibis (*P. chihi*). This sighting was changed to reflect only the genus *Plegadis* in order to rule out any possible confusion between the two species.

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