

Northeast District Meeting
5/12/2022
Calamus SRA

The meeting started with District Birding Day. Two parties went out at 6 a.m. birding access points around the reservoir and were joined by others at 9 a.m. to bird below the dam and at Mirdan Canal WMA and Kent Diversion Dam WMA. Windy conditions made birding difficult, but the group found a total of 94 species in the morning. A few incidental sightings in the area by staff returning to their home offices yielded a final tally of 102 species. See attached checklist.

Following the compilation of bird lists, president Josh Kounovsky called the meeting to order.

Roll Call/Introductions:

Josh Kounovsky, Grove Lake WMA	Sam West, Oak Valley WMA
Scott Oligmueller, Ponca SP	Tim Collins, George Syas WMA
Cogan Thompson, Niobrara SP	Jamie Bachmann, NPLT, Norfolk
Dan Vanderveen, Willow Creek SRA	Scott Wessel, Norfolk
Katie Leware, Ponca SP	Cassidy Wessel, Norfolk
Leslie Donner, Lewis & Clark SRA	Jen Corman, NPLT, Bassett
Lexi Pinkelman, Lewis & Clark SRA	Jim Domeier, Fort Hartsuff SHP
Jonathan Volker, Lewis & Clark SRA	Jackie Augustine, Audubon Hutton Sanctuary
Logan Epp, Calamus SRA	Allyson Frank, Bassett
John Irons, Calamus SRA	Lucas Negus, Norfolk
Kelly Corman, Bassett	Tommy Hicks, Central Region Parks
Matt Rahko, Bassett	Brian G., Myrtle Hall WMA
Jeff Borchers, George Syas WMA	Layne Bullock, Grove Lake WMA
Jeff Fields, Parks Division Administrator	Jason Thiele, Norfolk
Jim Swenson, Deputy Director	Kyle Schumacher, NPLT, Grove Lake
Tim McCoy, Director	Grant Wiemer, Oak Valley WMA

No individual updates were given. Time was given to administrators to give agency updates and allow staff to ask questions. Highlights are given below.

Tim McCoy, Director

- Thank you to all staff for your professionalism, passion, and collaboration with each other.

- As an agency, we hear a lot from unhappy people, but be assured that there are a lot of people out there who are please with the work we're doing, and they are a silent majority. Recent public surveys (e.g., SCORP, Wildlife Values in the West) have revealed very high levels of satisfaction with the NGPC and high levels of public trust.
- Keys to success going forward
 - Maintaining and developing relationships
 - Clear priorities
 - Investing in staff and developing leaders
 - Look at mistakes as learning opportunities
 - Look ahead and prepare for the future
 - Stewardship of resources / sustainability
 - "Forever mission" – realize the work is never done

Jim Swenson, Deputy Director

- Seek, find, and realize the rewards in your work
- Have determination and courage to take on challenges
- Know that NGPC administration wants to be available to staff
- Update on STAR WARS projects (see attached document); not much is certain yet, but plans are moving forward for some major improvements at Niobrara SP, Lewis & Clark SRA, and Lake McConaughy SRA and a study on a proposed lake in the metro area (DNR is lead agency and will be working through permitting)
- The NGPC's status with the state legislature was far better in this past session than in recent years

Jeff Fields, Parks Division Administrator

- Jeff appreciated the many well-wishes received on his new position. He wants everyone to know that his roots are still in the Northeast.
- Thanks to staff who helped with recent events like the Niobrara Rendezvous, the Outdoor Discovery program at Platte River SP, and the Fort Kearny Outdoor Expo
- Several key positions in the Parks Division to be filled in the near future: two Assistant Division Administrators, two Supervisor IV positions (Northeast and Lake Mac area)

Q&A / Other staff announcements

- Ponca/Missouri River Outdoor Expo will be the third weekend of September
- State senators were much more willing to spend General and Cash Reserve funds than they have been in recent years; recreation/tourism is a higher priority than it has been
- Some planning has begun for the possible passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) in Congress
- High prices for fuel have some staff concerned about operating budgets – there will be an opportunity to make requests for more funds if needed, by the cash funds are all currently in good shape
- The agency's land acquisition program will be reviewed in the next couple of years. No major acquisitions are in the works, but a few small ones may be explored. If RAWA passes, there may be additional opportunities.
- Recent wage increases for Parks seasonal staff seems to have helped retain some staff that were likely to leave for better pay elsewhere, but there will likely still be shortages at some parks that make mean scaling back on programs and amenities available to visitors.

- Avian influenza cases have slowed down as waterfowl migration has passed, but there will likely still be more as well as lots of questions from the public as visitation to parks and other public lands increases. Continue to follow protocols for handling and disposal of potentially infected birds.
- Field staff will be called upon later this year to assist the office support staff with issuing special landowner permits. The offices were overwhelmed last year.
- All staff are reminded to communicate updates with the district office and service center staff, especially with regards to topics that are likely to generate a lot of questions from the public (e.g., closures, regulations changes, wildlife disease, etc.)

Elections

- Russ Hamer was selected to be the President
- Jason Thiele will remain as Secretary

Next meeting date/location TBD; likely in late summer

Minutes submitted by Jason Thiele



1

LEGISLATIVE BILL 406

- Passed by One Hundred Seventh Legislature, signed by the governor May 25, 2021
- Established the Statewide Tourism and Recreational Water Access and Resource Sustainability (STAR WARS) Special Committee of the Legislature
- Authorized studies focusing on securing Nebraska's future water supply and strengthening Nebraska's flood control infrastructure, while also considering economic and recreational opportunities, including opportunities from increased tourism, in finding innovative solutions and winning opportunities for the State of Nebraska
- *Transformational projects that enhance economic development and catalyze private investment that benefits residents, the region, and the state.*

Plan. Preserve. Pla

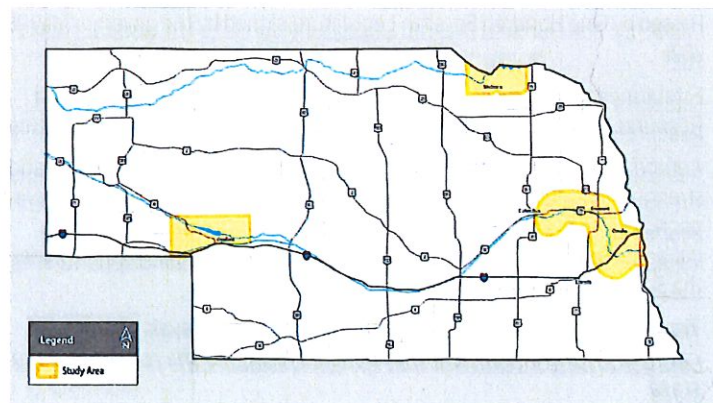
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LB 1023

- ☞ Passed during the 107th legislative second session and signed by Governor on April 18, 2022.
- ☞ Adopt the Jobs and Economic Development Initiative Act (JEDI) and the Water Recreation Enhancement Act and alter provisions related to the STAR WARS special committee.
- ☞ Identified \$100 million dollars (General Fund) for projects at Lewis and Clark SRA, Niobrara SP and Lake Mac SRA.
- ☞ Identified \$20 million dollars for study related to a 3,600+ acre reservoir in or near a county with population with population greater than 100,000 but less than 300,000 residents. Funding and responsibility for study assigned to Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

3

PROJECT OVERVIEW



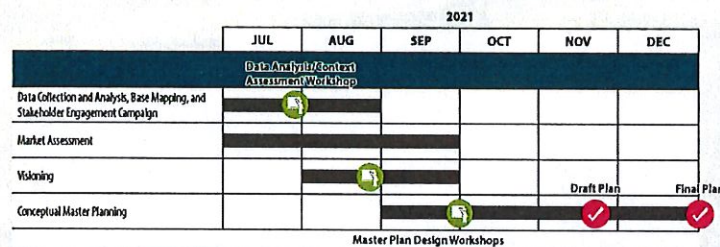
Plan. Preserve. Play.

4

STAR WARS Timeline

- HDR Consultant for Project
- Public Hearings Held Project Areas
- 4-day Stakeholder Planning Workshops
- Conceptual Designs Completed for Plan

SCHEDULE



5

2022 Legislative Session STAR WARS Funding Approved

- \$100 million approved for 3 NGPC Parks Division managed areas including:
 1. **Group Lodge Facility** – Niobrara State Park, Knox County
 2. **Expansion Weigand Marina**, Lewis and Clark SRA, Knox County
 3. **Marina and Other Improvements**, Lake McConaughy SRA, Keith County
- Lower Platte River Corridor – 4,000 acre lake, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources lead agency

6

Keith County |

Perspective view of Lake McConaughy Marina



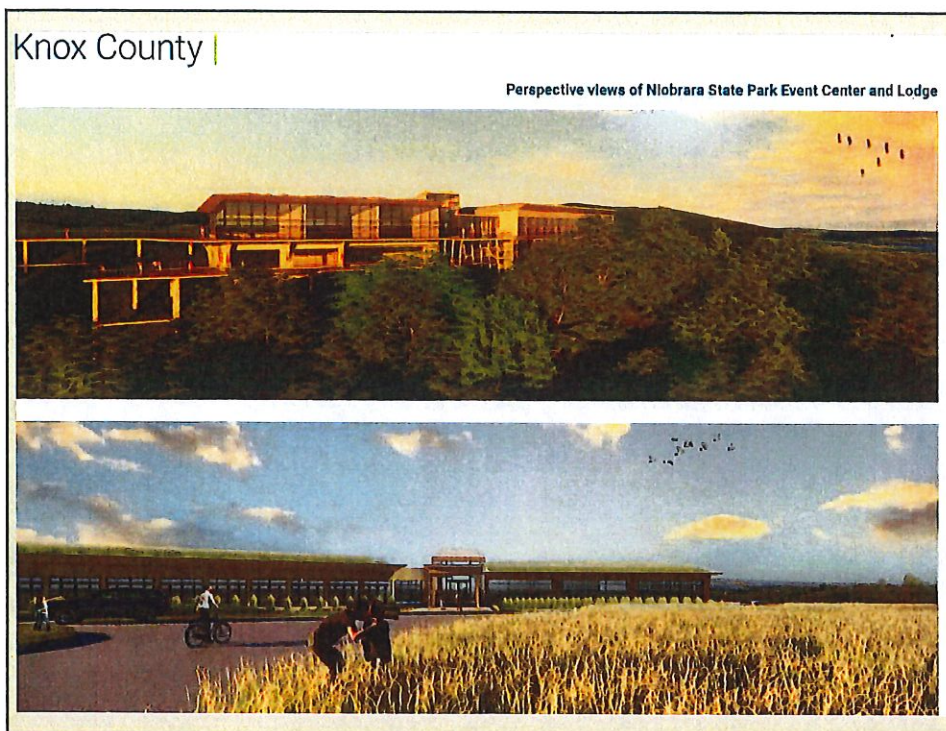
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Knox County |

Conceptual plan view of Niobrara State Park Event Center and Lodge



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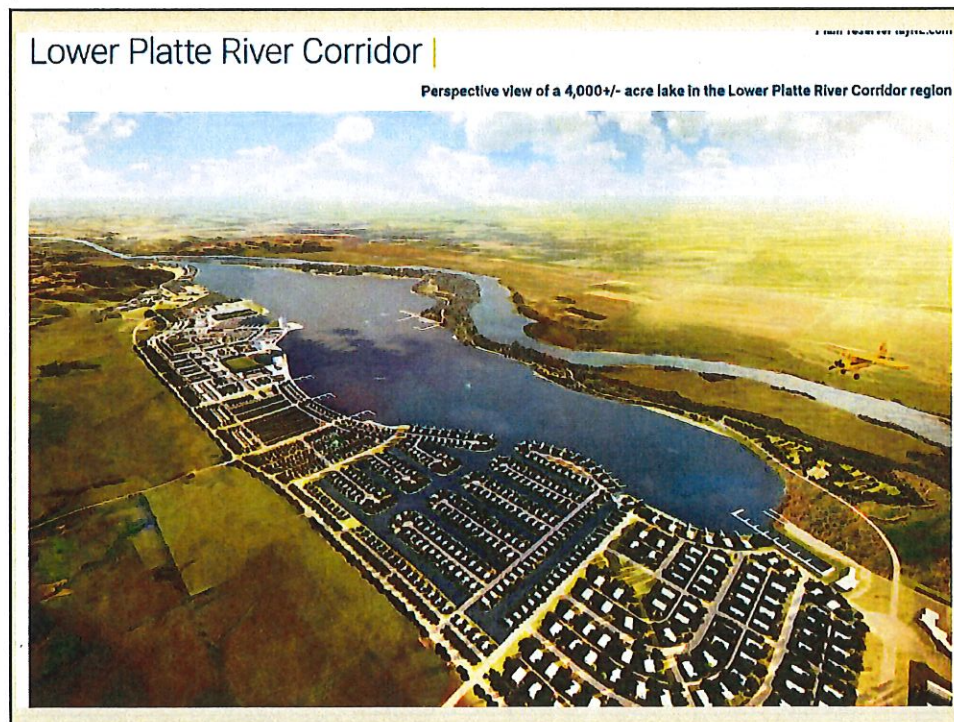
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10



11



12

Passeriformes/Turdidae, (cont)

- ☒ American Robin
☐ Varied Thrush

Passeriformes/Mimidae

- ☒ Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
☒ Sage Thrasher
☒ Brown Thrasher

Passeriformes/Sturnidae

- ☒ European Starling

Passeriformes/Motacillidae

- American Pipit
☐ Sprague's Pipit

Passeriformes/Bombycillidae

- Bohemian Waxwing
☒ Cedar Waxwing

Passeriformes/Parulidae

- Blue-winged Warbler
Golden-winged Warbler
☒ Tennessee Warbler
Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler
☒ Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler
☒ Black-throated Blue Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Townsend's Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
☐ Pine Warbler
Palm Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
☒ Cerulean Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
☒ American Redstart
Prothonotary Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Louisiana Waterthrush
Kentucky Warbler
Connecticut Warbler
Mourning Warbler
MacGillivray's Warbler

☒ Common Yellowthroat

- ☐ Hooded Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Canada Warbler

☒ Yellow-breasted Chat

- Passeriformes/Thraupidae
☒ Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager
☒ Western Tanager

Passeriformes/Emberizidae

- Green-tailed Towhee
☒ Spotted Towhee
Eastern Towhee
Cassin's Sparrow
American Tree Sparrow

- ☒ Chipping Sparrow
☒ Clay-colored Sparrow
Brewer's Sparrow
☒ Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
☒ Lark Sparrow
Lark Bunting
Savannah Sparrow
☒ Grasshopper Sparrow

☐ Baird's Sparrow

- ☒ Henslow's Sparrow
LeConte's Sparrow
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sp.
Fox Sparrow
☒ Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
☒ Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
☒ Harris's Sparrow
☒ White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
☒ McCown's Longspur
Lapland Longspur
☐ Smith's Longspur
☒ Chestnut-collared Longspur
Snow Bunting

Passeriformes/Cardinalidae

- ☒ Northern Cardinal
☒ Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Black-headed Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
☒ Lazuli Bunting
Indigo Bunting
Dickcissel

Passeriformes/Icteridae

- ☒ Bobolink
☒ Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
☒ Western Meadowlark
☒ Yellow-headed Blackbird
Rusty Blackbird
☒ Brewer's Blackbird
☒ Common Grackle
☒ Great-tailed Grackle
☒ Brown-headed Cowbird
☒ Orchard Oriole
☒ Baltimore Oriole
Bullock's Oriole

Passeriformes/Fringillidae

- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
☐ Pine Grosbeak
Purple Finch
Cassin's Finch
☒ House Finch

☒ Red Crossbill

- White-winged Crossbill
Common Redpoll
Pine Siskin
☒ American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak

Passeriformes/Passeridae

- ☒ House Sparrow

Additional Sightings

- ☐
☐

Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
(address on front page) also desires
birders' observations on the following
2 species:

- ☒ Mute Swan - Please report
sightings and nests of **FREE FLYING
BIRDS ONLY**.
☒ Eskimo Curlew - Report all
sightings.

NOTES:

* species added after lunch by
staff returning home

2022 NE District Birding Day
N.O.U. FIELD CARD OF NEBRASKA BIRDS

DATE: 5-12-22 TIME: to

WEATHER: Temp: - Sky:

Wind: - mph from

LOCATION(s): Calamus SRA/wMA

Minden Canal wMA Kent Diversion Dam wMA

OBSERVER(s):

TOTAL SPECIES: 102 INDIVIDUALS:

The 361 birds listed are those most commonly reported in Nebraska. Most
accidentals have been omitted. Species names are from the Seventh A.O.U.
Checklist (1998) and supplements through 2000.

REPORTING YOUR SIGHTINGS: Unusual sightings should always be
documented by notes taken at the time of observation and with photographs if
possible. Species which should be documented include:

- ☐ = Those marked with an open box on this card AND
accidental species not listed

Written documentation and photos, if available, should be forwarded to
Librarian, Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, University of Nebraska State
Museum, Lincoln, NE 68588-0514.

Please send information, including date and location of observation(s), for
species identified by the following symbols:

- ◆ = Sightings ● = Nests ■ = Nests and/or sightings

TO: The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Wildlife Division, 2200
North 33rd Street, Lincoln, NE 68503. Include your name, address and phone
number.

NEBRASKA BIRDLINE: Share your unusual sightings with others by
reporting them as soon as possible to the Nebraska Birdline (402)292-5325.

REPORTING ONLINE: To join NeBirds discussion group send e-mail to
autosshare@rip.physics.unk.edu — in the body of message type "subscribe
NeBirds (your name)" A welcome message and user information will follow.

INFORMATION: The Nebraska Ornithologists' Union (NOU) is a non-
profit organization committed to the study, appreciation and protection of birds.
Membership information, field cards and report forms may be obtained by
sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the NOU Librarian, University of
Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, NE 68588-0514. Info is also available at the
NOU INTERNET ADDRESS: <http://www.rip.physics.unk.edu/NOU/>

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Class - AVES
 Order/Family/Common Name
Gaviiformes/Gaviidae
☐ Red-throated Loon
☐ Pacific Loon
☐ Common Loon
Podicipediformes/Podicipedidae
☒ Pied-billed Grebe
☐ Horned Grebe
☐ Red-necked Grebe
☐ Eared Grebe
☐ Western Grebe
☐ Clark's Grebe
Pelecaniformes/Pelecanidae
☒ American White Pelican
Pelecaniformes/Phalacrocoracidae
☒ Double-crested Cormorant
Ciconiiformes/Ardeidae
☐ American Bittern
☐ Least Bittern
☒ Great Blue Heron
☐ Great Egret
☐ Snowy Egret
☐ Little Blue Heron
☐ Cattle Egret
☒ Green Heron
☐ Black-crowned Night-Heron
☐ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Ciconiiformes/Threskiornithidae
☒ White-faced Ibis
Ciconiiformes/Cathartidae
☒ Turkey Vulture
Anseriformes/Anatidae
☐ Greater White-fronted Goose
☐ Snow Goose
☐ Ross's Goose
☐ Canada Goose
☒ Trumpeter Swan
☐ Tundra Swan
☒ Wood Duck
☒ Gadwall
☐ Eurasian Wigeon
☐ American Wigeon
☐ American Black Duck
☒ Mallard
☒ Blue-winged Teal
☐ Cinnamon Teal
☒ Northern Shoveler

☒ Northern Pintail
☒ Green-winged Teal
☐ Canvasback
☐ Redhead
☐ Ring-necked Duck
☐ Greater Scaup
☐ Lesser Scaup
☐ Surf Scoter
☐ White-winged Scoter
☐ Black Scoter
☐ Long-tailed Duck
☐ Bufflehead
☐ Common Goldeneye
☐ Barrow's Goldeneye
☒ Hooded Merganser
☐ Common Merganser
☐ Red-breasted Merganser
☒ Ruddy Duck
Falconiformes/Accipitridae
☐ Osprey
☐ Mississippi Kite
☒ Bald Eagle
☐ Northern Harrier
☐ Sharp-shinned Hawk
☐ Cooper's Hawk
☐ Northern Goshawk
☐ Red-shouldered Hawk
☐ Broad-winged Hawk
☐ Swainson's Hawk
☒ Red-tailed Hawk
☐ Ferruginous Hawk
☐ Rough-legged Hawk
☐ Golden Eagle
Falconiformes/Falconidae
☒ American Kestrel
☐ Merlin
☒ Gyrfalcon
☐ Peregrine Falcon
☐ Prairie Falcon
Galliformes/Phasianidae
☐ Gray Partridge
☐ Ring-necked Pheasant
☐ Sharp-tailed Grouse
☐ Greater Prairie-Chicken
☒ Wild Turkey
Galliformes/Odontophoridae
☒ Northern Bobwhite

Gruiformes/Rallidae
☐ Yellow Rail
☐ Black Rail
☐ King Rail
☐ Virginia Rail
☒ Sora
☐ Common Moorhen
☒ American Coot
Gruiformes/Gruidae
☐ Sandhill Crane
☐ Whooping Crane
Charadriiformes/Charadriidae
☐ Black-bellied Plover
☐ American Golden-Plover
☐ Snowy Plover
☐ Semipalmated Plover
☐ Piping Plover
☒ Killdeer
☐ Mountain Plover
Charadriiformes/Recurvirostridae
☐ Black-necked Stilt
☐ American Avocet
Charadriiformes/Scolopacidae
☒ Greater Yellowlegs
☐ Lesser Yellowlegs
☐ Solitary Sandpiper
☒ Willet
☒ Spotted Sandpiper
☒ Upland Sandpiper
☐ Whimbrel
☐ Long-billed Curlew
☐ Hudsonian Godwit
☐ Marbled Godwit
☐ Ruddy Turnstone
☐ Red Knot
☐ Sanderling
☒ Semipalmated Sandpiper
☐ Western Sandpiper
☐ Least Sandpiper
☐ White-rumped Sandpiper
☐ Baird's Sandpiper
☐ Pectoral Sandpiper
☐ Dunlin
☐ Stilt Sandpiper
☐ Buff-breasted Sandpiper
☒ Short-billed Dowitcher
☒ Long-billed Dowitcher
☒ Common Snipe
 Wilson's

☒ American Woodcock
☒ Wilson's Phalarope
☐ Red-necked Phalarope
☐ Red Phalarope
Charadriiformes/Laridae
☐ Pomarine Jaeger
☐ Laughing Gull
☒ Franklin's Gull
☐ Little Gull
☐ Bonaparte's Gull
☒ Ring-billed Gull
☐ California Gull
☐ Herring Gull
☐ Thayer's Gull
☐ Iceland Gull
☐ Lesser Black-backed Gull
☐ Glaucous Gull
☐ Great Black-backed Gull
☐ Black-legged Kittiwake
☐ Sabine's Gull
☐ Caspian Tern
☐ Common Tern
☐ Forster's Tern
☐ Least Tern
☐ Black Tern
Columbiformes/Columbidae
☒ Rock Pigeon
☒ Eurasian Collared-Dove
☐ White-winged Dove
☒ Mourning Dove
Cuculiformes/Cuculidae
☐ Black-billed Cuckoo
☒ Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Strigiformes/Tytonidae
☐ Barn Owl
Strigiformes/Strigidae
☐ Eastern Screech-Owl
☐ Great Horned Owl
☐ Snowy Owl
☐ Burrowing Owl
☐ Barred Owl
☐ Long-eared Owl
☐ Short-eared Owl
☐ Northern Saw-whet Owl
Caprimulgiformes/Caprimulgidae
☒ Common Nighthawk
☐ Common Poorwill
☐ Chuck-will's-widow
☐ Whip-poor-will

Apodiformes/Apodidae
☒ Chimney Swift
☐ White-throated Swift
Apodiformes/Trochilidae
☐ Ruby-throated Hummingbird
☐ Broad-tailed Hummingbird
☐ Rufous Hummingbird
Coraciiformes/Alcedinidae
☒ Belted Kingfisher
Piciformes/Picidae
☐ Lewis's Woodpecker
☒ Red-headed Woodpecker
☐ Red-bellied Woodpecker
☐ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
☐ Red-naped Sapsucker
☒ Downy Woodpecker
☐ Hairy Woodpecker
☒ Northern Flicker
☐ Pileated Woodpecker
Passeriformes/Tyrannidae
☐ Olive-sided Flycatcher
☐ Western Wood-Pewee
☐ Eastern Wood-Pewee
☐ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
☐ Acadian Flycatcher
☐ Alder Flycatcher
☒ Willow Flycatcher
☒ Least Flycatcher
☐ Cordilleran Flycatcher
☐ Eastern Phoebe
☒ Say's Phoebe
☒ Great Crested Flycatcher
☐ Cassin's Kingbird
☒ Western Kingbird
☒ Eastern Kingbird
☐ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Passeriformes/Laniidae
☐ Loggerhead Shrike
☐ Northern Shrike
Passeriformes/Vireonidae
☐ White-eyed Vireo
☒ Bell's Vireo
☐ Yellow-throated Vireo
☐ Plumbeous Vireo
☐ Cassin's Vireo
☐ Blue-headed Vireo
☒ Warbling Vireo
☒ Philadelphia Vireo
☒ Red-eyed Vireo

Passeriformes/Corvidae
☐ Steller's Jay
☒ Blue Jay
☐ Pinyon Jay
☐ Clark's Nutcracker
☐ Black-billed Magpie
☒ American Crow
Passeriformes/Alaudidae
☒ Horned Lark
Passeriformes/Hirundinidae
☒ Purple Martin
☒ Tree Swallow
☐ Violet-green Swallow
☒ Northern Rough-winged Sw.
☒ Bank Swallow
☒ Cliff Swallow
☒ Barn Swallow
Passeriformes/Paridae
☒ Black-capped Chickadee
☐ Tufted Titmouse
Passeriformes/Sittidae
☐ Red-breasted Nuthatch
☒ White-breasted Nuthatch
☐ Pygmy Nuthatch
Passeriformes/Certhiidae
☐ Brown Creeper
Passeriformes/Troglodytidae
☐ Rock Wren
☐ Carolina Wren
☐ Bewick's Wren
☒ House Wren
☐ Winter Wren
☒ Sedge Wren
☐ Marsh Wren
Passeriformes/Regulidae
☐ Golden-crowned Kinglet
☐ Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Passeriformes/Sylviidae
☒ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Passeriformes/Turdidae
☐ Eastern Bluebird
☐ Mountain Bluebird
☐ Townsend's Solitaire
☐ Veery
☐ Gray-cheeked Thrush
☐ Swainson's Thrush
☐ Hermit Thrush
☐ Wood Thrush