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Birds of the Great Plains: Appendix A -- A Guide to Bird-watching Localities in the Great Plains

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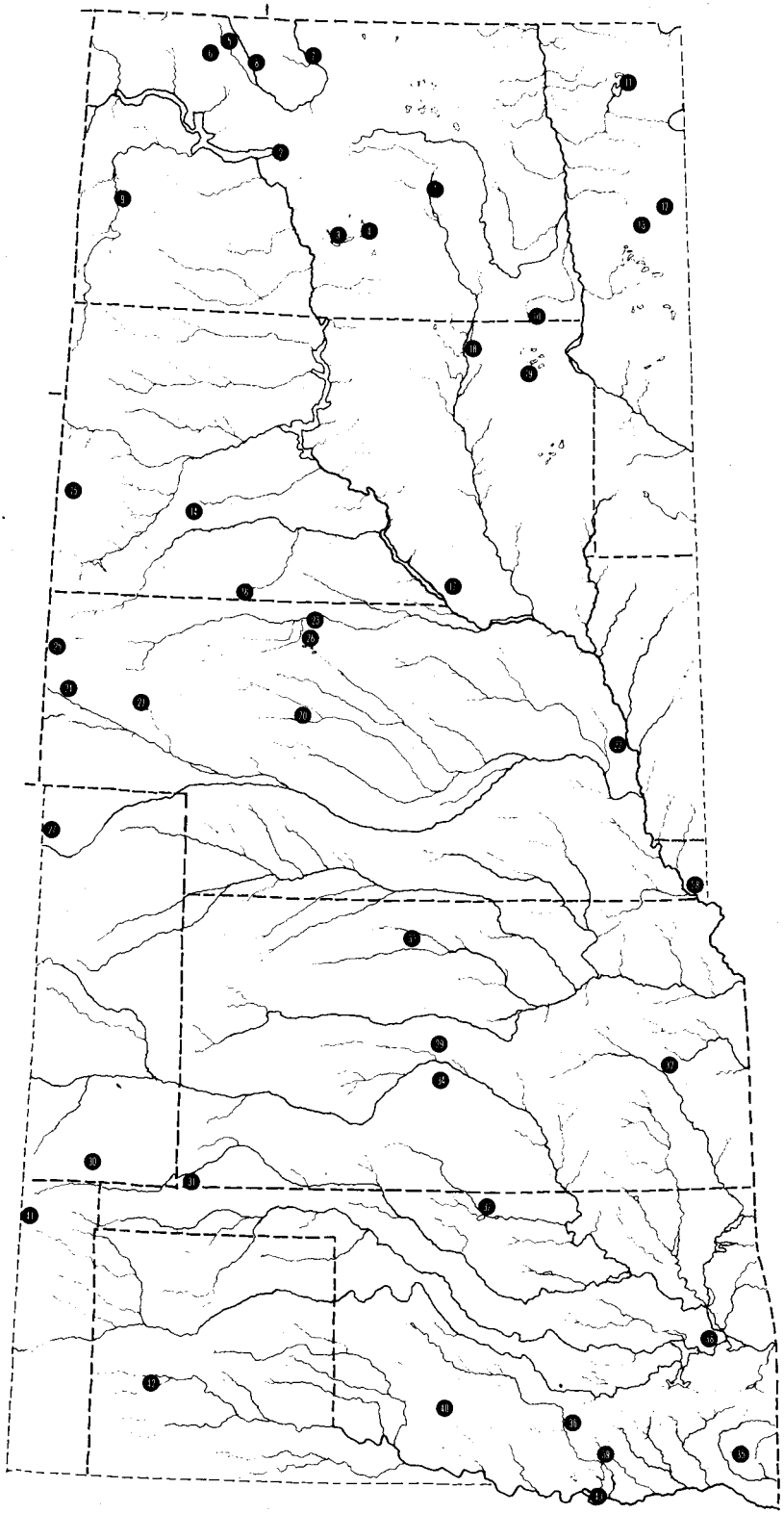

Fig. 8. Bird-watching localities in the Great Plains states.

APPENDIX A

A Guide to Bird-watching Localities in the Great Plains

Space does not allow for an extended description of all the excellent birding localities within this region; O. S. Pettingill's *Guide to Bird Finding West of the Mississippi* (Oxford, 1953), long out of print but being revised, is still the best such guide. A more recent and very useful guide is Jessie Kitching's *Birdwatcher's Guide to Wildlife Sanctuaries* (New York: Arco, 1976), which includes information on many federal, state, and local sanctuaries.

Partly on the basis of the availability of relatively complete bird lists available for the areas, I have included here forty-four state and federal parks, refuges, and other sanctuaries located within the region covered by this book. Nearly all the national wildlife refuges are included, except a number of smaller refuges for which bird lists are not available. Further, a group of four North Dakota national wildlife refuges in the Souris Valley is collectively considered in a "Souris Loop" category.

In the discussion that follows and the associated list of summer birds, the localities are grouped by states, and the states are organized in a general north-to-south sequence. The 236 species included in the associated bird list (Appendix B) are only those that are known to breed or to have bred in the region. Accidental species, introduced "pest species," and species not known to breed in the region though occasionally summering within it are excluded from the list.

North Dakota

1. Arrowwood National Wildlife Refuge. Situated about 14 miles north of Jamestown, North Dakota. Contains nearly 16,000 acres of lakes, marshes, grasslands, wooded areas, and fields. Bird checklist of 250 species, including 106 breeding species, available from refuge manager, Pingree, North Dakota 58476.

2. Audubon National Wildlife Refuge. Situated at the east end of Lake Sakakawea, North Dakota, between Minot and Bismarck. Contains about 13,500 acres administered by the federal government and 11,200 acres supervised by the state. Mostly consists of short-grass prairie and reservoir shoreline, as well as prairie potholes and marshes. Bird checklist of 260 species, including 75 breeders and 14

accidentals, is available from the refuge manager, R.R. 1, Coleharbor, North Dakota 58531.

3. Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Situated about four miles southeast of Moffitt, North Dakota. Contains more than 22,000 acres, mostly prairie grasslands, ravines, fields, trees and shrub plants, and marsh or lake areas. Bird checklist of 199 species, including 75 breeders and 6 accidentals, available from the refuge manager, Moffitt, North Dakota 58560.

4. Slade National Wildlife Refuge. Situated between Jamestown and Bismarck, North Dakota. Consists of 3,000 acres of prairie pothole habitat, with many marshes and small lakes. Bird checklist of 202 species, including 88 breeders and 5 accidentals, available from the refuge manager, Dawson, North Dakota 58428.

5–8. Souris Loop National Wildlife Refuges. These include four national wildlife refuges: Des Lac, Box 578, Kenmore, North Dakota 58746; Lostwood, Lostwood, North Dakota 58724; J. Clark Salyer (formerly Lower Souris), Upham, North Dakota 58799; and Upper Souris, R.R. 1, Foxholm, North Dakota 58738. Collectively they take in more than 100,000 acres of mixed prairie, marshland, and river-bottom habitat. A collective bird checklist of 262 species, including 138 breeders, is available from the manager of any of the four refuges. The breeders include all five species of grebes, as well as such grassland sparrows as Baird and Le Conte.

9. Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park. Situated near Medora, North Dakota, and administered by the U.S. National Park Service. Adjacent to the Missouri River National Grasslands; the area consists mostly of short-grass vegetation on uplands, brushy flats, and ravines, and wooded river valleys. A bird checklist titled "Birds of the Grasslands" and containing 188 species is available at small cost from the Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association. Medora, North Dakota 58645.

10. Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge. Situated in southeastern North Dakota near Cayuga, and consisting of nearly 8,000 acres of prairie grassland, marshes, and larger water areas. A bird checklist of 235 species, including 88 breeders, is available from the refuge manager, Cayuga, North Dakota 58103.

MINNESOTA

11. Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge. Situated 11 miles east of Holt, in Marshall County, Minnesota. This area, once a part of glacial Lake

Agassiz, contains 61,500 acres of grasslands with hardwood groves, potholes, and lakes. A bird checklist of 245 species reported on the refuge is available from the refuge manager, Middle River, Minnesota 56737. An annotated checklist has also been published (*Flicker* 27: 138-47).

12. Itasca State Park. Situated 22 miles north of Park Rapids, Minnesota, encompassing Lake Itasca and the headwaters of the Mississippi River. It includes more than 32,000 acres, with many dense forests of conifers and hardwood trees. A checklist of early summer birds (*Loon* 37:27-39) includes 111 probable breeding species and 30 additional probable nonbreeders. A recent complete checklist of 208 bird species in the park and surrounding areas has also been published (*Loon* 49:81-95), including 94 known breeders. Many boreal species, such as winter wrens, several warblers, and boreal chickadees are more likely to be found here than anywhere else in the region covered by this book.

13. Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. Situated 18 miles northeast of Detroit Lakes in Becker County, Minnesota. It consists of 42,000 acres, in the transition area between conifers and hardwood forests, and has 24 lakes within the refuge boundaries. A bird checklist of 221 species is available from the refuge manager, Rochert, Minnesota 56578.

South Dakota

14. Badlands National Monument. Situated 62 miles east of Rapid City, South Dakota. This area of more than 100,000 acres comprises mostly short-grass plains, buttes, ridges, and cliffs, in the White River drainage. There is no published checklist, but a mimeographed list of 208 species seen in the monument and its vicinity is available from the manager, P.O. Box 72, Interior, South Dakota 57750.

15. Black Hills. This general area of more than a million acres includes Wind Cave National Park, Black Hills National Forest, Custer State Park, and the adjacent 600,000-acre Buffalo Gap National Grassland. The comprehensive reference for the entire area is the booklet by Pettingill and Whitney (see South Dakota references). Additionally, there is a list of 186 species for the Black Hills National Forest (including Wind Cave and Custer State Park) and a separate list of 198 species for the Buffalo Gap National Grassland available from the district ranger, USFS, Hot Springs, South Dakota 57747. Last, a checklist of birds of Wind Cave National Park (28,000 acres) is available from park headquarters, Hot Springs, South Dakota 57747,

and a paper on summer bird watching at Wind Cave was published in 1969 in *South Dakota Bird Notes* 22:53-60.

16. Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge. Situated about 15 miles southeast of Martin, South Dakota. Consists of extensive marshes and shallow lakes in the valley of the South Fork of the White River, just north of the Nebraska Sandhills. A checklist of 235 species seen on the refuge since 1936 (including 91 breeding species) is available from the refuge manager, Martin, South Dakota 57551. The breeding trumpeter swans are of special interest and may be easily seen during most seasons.

17. Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge. Situated north of Fort Randall Dam in southeastern South Dakota. It consists of 5,450 acres, around the Lake Andes marsh. There is an outdated bird checklist of 200 species (70 breeders), and a new one is in preparation. Nearby is the recently established Karl E. Mundt National Wildlife Refuge below Fort Randall dam. It consists of less than 1,000 acres but is an important wintering area for bald eagles. For information, contact the manager, Box 391, Lake Andes, South Dakota 57356.

18. Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Situated 25 miles northeast of Aberdeen South Dakota, in the James River Valley, originally part of the shoreline of glacial Lake Dakota. In consists of more than 21,000 acres of grasslands, marshes, and shallow impoundments, as well as shelterbelts and fields. A checklist of 241 species, including 104 breeders and 15 accidentals, is available from the refuge manager, Columbia, South Dakota 57433.

19. Waubay National Wildlife Refuge. Situated 8 miles north of Waubay, South Dakota, in the glaciated Coteau Hills of northeastern South Dakota. It contains nearly 5,000 acres of marshlands, lakes, grasslands, brushy areas, and oak timber. A checklist of 246 species, including 103 breeding species and 14 accidentals, is available from the refuge manager, R.R. 1, Waubay, South Dakota 57273.

NEBRASKA

20. Bessey Division, Nebraska National Forest. This human-planted forest of various pine species, and the adjoining areas of sandhills, grasslands, and riverine woodlands, administered by the U.S. Forest Service, is situated near Thedford, Thomas County. A checklist of 95 summer bird species, of which 36 are known to breed within the forest, is available from the superintendent, Halsey, Nebraska 69142.

21. Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Situated 28 miles north of Oshkosh, Nebraska, in Garden County. This refuge consists of

46,000 acres of relatively pristine sandhills grasslands and contains numerous shallow lakes and marshes. A checklist of 218 species (64 breeders) observed on the refuge during the 1960s is available from the refuge manager, Ellsworth, Nebraska 69340. A survey of the nesting birds of the refuge was published in 1966 in the *Nebraska Bird Review* 34:31-35.

22. De Soto National Wildlife Refuge. Situated on the Nebraska-Iowa border, between Blair, Nebraska, and Missouri Valley, Iowa. The refuge consists of an oxbow cutoff (De Soto Lake) of the Missouri River and encompasses 7,800 acres of floodplain land including river-bottom forest and adjacent grasslands, marshes, and cultivated lands. A check list of 195 species, including 97 species known to have nested in the refuge, is available from the refuge manager, R.R. 1-B, Missouri Valley, Iowa 51555.

23. Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge. Situated 5 miles east of Valentine, Cherry County, Nebraska. This refuge contains 19,100 acres, and is largely concerned with the management of bison and other large mammals. About two-thirds of the refuge consists of sandhills prairie, and the rest is mostly of mixed hardwoods along the Niobrara river. A checklist of 201 species (76 breeders) is available from the refuge manager, Hidden Timber Star Route, Valentine, Nebraska 69201.

24-25. Scotts Bluff and Agate Fossil Beds National Monuments. Scotts Bluff National Monument is 5 miles southwest of the town of Scottsbluff, on the old Oregon Trail. It consists of short-grass plains, eroded rock slopes and cliffs, and a small amount of wooded vegetation. The address of the superintendent of Scotts Bluff and Agate Fossil Beds monuments is Box 427, Gering, Nebraska 69341. Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is in central Sioux County 20 miles south of Harrison and includes nearly 2,000 acres of short-grass plains and fossil-bearing rock outcrops. No checklists are available for these specific areas, but an annotated checklist of 266 species, covering most of northwestern Nebraska, has been privately printed by Richard Rosche, P.O. Box 482, Crawford, Nebraska 69339, and is available from him ($2).

26. Valentine National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is in the center of the Nebraska Sandhills, in Cherry County, about 20 miles south of Valentine. It covers more than 71,000 acres and includes 36 lakes plus numerous marshes, surrounded by sand dunes from 40 to 200 feet high. A checklist of 221 species (93 breeders) recorded on the refuge is available from the refuge manager, Hidden Timber Star Route, Valentine, Nebraska 69201. Many typical grassland species, such as long-

billed curlews and sharp-tailed grouse, are abundant on this enormous refuge.

Colorado

27. Pawnee National Grassland. Consists of 775,000 acres of grasslands in northeastern Colorado. Descriptions of the birdlife of this and other eastern Colorado areas can be found in *A Birder's Guide to Eastern Colorado*, available ($3.25) from L. & P. Press, Box 19401, Denver 80219. A checklist of the birds of the Pawnee Grassland is also available from the U.S. Forest Service, Bldg. 85, Denver Federal Center, Denver, Colorado 80225.

Missouri

28. Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is 5 miles south of Mound City, Holt County, in extreme northwestern Missouri. It consists of nearly 7,000 acres of marshes, Missouri River bottomlands, wooded bluffs, and farmlands. The checklist of 263 species includes 104 known breeders, and there are 27 additional accidentals reported only once or twice. It is available from the refuge manager, Box 101, Mound City, Missouri 64470.

Kansas

29. Cheyenne Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area. This state-controlled area is northeast of Great Bend, Barton County, Kansas. It consists of about 18,000 acres of marshlands, as well as adjacent bottomlands associated with the Arkansas River. A checklist of about 320 species, including 102 that have bred in the area, is available from the area manager, Route 1, Great Bend, Kansas 67530.

30–31. Comanche and Cimarron National Grasslands. These areas of Great Plains grasslands are in southwestern Kansas and adjacent southeastern Colorado. They include many semiarid grassland and sagebrush-dominated habitats, as well as some lakes, marshes, and ponds. A checklist of 235 bird species is available from the district ranger's office, U.S. Forest Service, Elkart, Kansas 67950; Springfield, Colorado 81073; or La Junta, Colorado 81050.

32. Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is on the John Redmond Reservoir of the Neosho River in Coffey County, Kansas. It includes 18,500 acres and is managed primarily for waterfowl. A checklist of 189 bird species (50 breeders) seen within the refuge area since it was established in 1963 is available from the refuge manager, P.O. Box 1306, Burlington, Kansas 66839.

33. Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is about 10 miles southeast of Phillipsburg, in Phillips County, Kansas. It consists of

10,800 acres, mostly marshes, grasslands, croplands, and reservoir acreage impounded by the North Fork of the Solomon River. A checklist of 186 species (38 breeders) is available from the refuge manager, Kirwin, Kansas 67644.

34. Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is 12 miles northeast of Stafford, in south-central Kansas. It consists of 21,800 acres, including 13,000 acres of grassland and 4,700 acres of marsh, as well as farmlands and some low sandhills. A checklist of 245 bird species (56 breeders) is available from the refuge manager, P.O. Box G, Stafford, Kansas 67578.

OKLAHOMA

35. McCurtain Game Preserve. This sanctuary is administered by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and consists of about 15,220 acres of virgin oak-pine forest in north-central McCurtain County. An unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by W. A. Carter ("Ecology of the summer nesting birds of the McCurtain Game Preserve," Oklahoma State University, Stillwater) lists 63 species of summer birds, including 56 known or probable nesters. Several southeastern species, such as the brown-headed nuthatch, Kentucky warbler, and pine warbler, are found only in this part of Oklahoma.

36. Platte National Park. (Chickasaw National Recreation Area). This small (900 acre) national park and associated recreation area around the Lake of the Arbuckles consists of hardwood forests along the stream valleys and prairie on hilltops and upper slopes. A mimeographed checklist of birds containing 137 species is available from the superintendent, P.O. Box 201, Sulphur, Oklahoma 73086.

37. Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is 3 miles southeast of Jet, Oklahoma, in Alfalfa County. It consists of nearly 20,000 acres associated with the Salt Plains Reservoir on the Salt Fork of the Arkansas River. Most of the area is covered by the Salt Plains Reservoir, but there are also extensive salt flats that provide a unique habitat as well as upland, forest, and rangeland. A checklist of 256 species, plus 18 very rare or accidental species, is available from the refuge manager, Jet, Oklahoma 73749.

38. Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is in east-central Oklahoma, around the western part of the Robert S. Kerr Reservoir. It was established in 1970 and includes 20,800 acres, about half of which is water. Most of the rest is steep shoreline or river bottomland, with many ponds and sloughs. A bird checklist of 245 species seen since 1970, including 93 species known to breed locally, is available from the refuge manager, Box 398, Sallisaw, Oklahoma 74955.

39. Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is 6 miles southeast of Tishomingo, on Lake Texoma in eastern Oklahoma. It consists of 16,600 acres, including about 4,000 acres of reservoir, as well as marshes, cropland, and grassland. A checklist of 252 species, including 76 species known to breed locally, is available from the refuge manager, P.O. Box 248, Tishomingo, Oklahoma 73460.

40. Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is 12 miles north of Cache, Oklahoma, in Comanche County. It consists of 59,000 acres of rugged topography, with many valleys, lakes, and ponds, and a predominance of oak vegetation. A bird checklist of 241 species, including 52 that have been known to breed locally, is available from the refuge manager, P.O. Box 448, Cache, Oklahoma 73527. A more complete analysis of the birds of this area appeared in the *Great Plains Journal* 16 (1977):135-62.

New Mexico

41. Capulin Mountain National Monument. This national monument is 3 miles north of Capulin, Union County, New Mexico. It consists of 775 acres, centered on an old volcanic crater that rises 8,215 feet above sea level. The area around the crater consists of grassland and various forest communities, such as pines, junipers, oaks, and scrub. A mimeographed checklist of birds, containing 104 species, is available from the superintendent, Capulin, New Mexico 88414.

Texas

42. Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Situated 30 miles southwest of Amarillo, Texas. This 7,700-acre refuge includes about 1,000 acres of surface water resulting from the impoundment of Tierra Blanca Creek, as well as adjoining grasslands. The bird checklist contains 275 species, of which 41 are known to have bred locally, and is available from the refuge manager, P.O. Box 228, Umbarger, Texas 79091.

43. Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. Situated 15 miles northwest of Sherman, Texas, around Lake Texoma, on the Texas-Oklahoma border. This 11,320-acre area is associated with Lake Texoma and includes habitats similar to those in the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma. A bird checklist containing 265 species, including 62 known to nest on the refuge, is available from the refuge manager, Route 3, Box 123, Sherman, Texas 75090.

44. Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge. Situated 20 miles south of Muleshoe, slightly outside the limits of this book's coverage. The

refuge contains 5,800 acres of lakes, marshes, short-grass plains, and other minor habitats. The sink-type lakes provide the most important wintering habitat in North America for lesser sandhill cranes, which sometimes number over 100,000. The bird checklist includes 263 species, of which 45 are reported to have nested on the refuge, and is available from the refuge manager, P.O. Box 549, Muleshoe, Texas 79347.