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**SPRING AND SUMMER BIRDS OF THE
NIOBRARA VALLEY PRESERVE AREA, NEBRASKA:
AN ANNOTATED CHECKLIST**

Mark A. Brogie and Michael J. Mossman

The Niobrara Valley Preserve occupies an area of approximately 22,000 ha in north-central Nebraska and includes parts of Brown, Cherry, and Keya Paha counties. This area was purchased in 1980 by the Nature Conservancy because of the unique co-occurrence of habitat types such as ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forest, eastern deciduous forest, northern forest (represented by white birch, *Betula papyrifera*), mixed grass prairie, sandhills prairie, and tallgrass prairie all existing within a proximity of 1.5-3 km.

This confluence of habitat types, in conjunction with the area's central geographic setting, creates a significant zone of sympatry among eastern, western, northern, and southern bird species. Limited research on species' occurrence and hybridization has been conducted in the Niobrara Valley area (Johnsgard 1979; Short 1961, 1965a, 1965b, 1966; Sibley & Short 1964; Sibley and West 1959) although no detailed study of the region's avifauna has occurred.

The following list contains those species observed by Preserve personnel from 4 April to 15 August, 1982, with several pertinent records thereafter. The study area encompasses the 22,000 ha Preserve and an additional approximate 20,000 ha of adjacent land. The total area is bounded at the west by the eastern edge of the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge, 18 km east of Valentine, and extends eastward along the Niobrara River to a point three km east of the Meadville Bridge. The study area extends approximately three km north of the river and from 1-13 km south, including all of Plum Creek Canyon downstream from its crossing at the Johnstown Road.

Detailed records of nesting and other observations are kept at the Preserve headquarters. Mossman and Brogie (1983) discuss elsewhere the breeding of certain rare or unusual species in the study area.

Nomenclature follows the Thirty-fourth Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds 1982.

KEY:

Abundance

- a - abundant (a common species which is very numerous)
- c - common (certain to be seen in suitable habitat)
- u - uncommon (present, but not certain to be seen)
- o - occasional (seen only a few times during the season)
- r - rare (seen only once or twice; not out of normal range)
- x - accidental (rare and outside normal range)

Season

- Sp - Spring (4 April - 31 May)
- Su - Summer (1 June - 15 August)

Breeding Status

- * - a positive evidence of breeding (active nests or dependent young) in counties listed.

PIED-BILLED GREBE (r-Sp) One seen 14 April.

EARED GREBE (r-Sp) One found dead 7 May in Cherry County.

WESTERN GREBE (r-Sp, r-Su) Pair seen from 30 May - 5 June.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (o-Sp, o-Su) Several flocks of 11-55 seen from 3 May - 24 June.
One flock of 50 seen 4 August.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (o-Sp, o-Su) Several groups of one to eight birds seen from 13 April - 4 June.

AMERICAN BITTERN (r-Sp) One seen 20 May in Brown County.

LEAST BITTERN (r-Su) One seen 17 June in Brown County.

GREAT BLUE HERON (u-Sp, u-Su) Seen frequently along river and larger streams. One seen in May carrying nesting material. Probable nester.

GREEN-BACKED HERON (o-Su) Five seen from 1 June - 1 August. Probable nester.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (o-Sp) Four observations from 9 April-2 May. Heard again on 20-21 August.

CANADA GOOSE (o-Sp) Several flocks seen from 11-14 April.

WOOD DUCK* (c-Sp, u-Su; Brown) Two broods of five young each seen from 15 June-13 July.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (u-Sp) Seen from 4 April - 6 May.

MALLARD* (c-Sp, u-Su; Brown) Four broods with one to four young each seen from 15 June - 13 July.

NORTHERN PINTAIL (o-Sp) Four seen from 4-6 April.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (c-Sp, u-Su) Pairs seen throughout the summer. Probable nester.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (o-Sp) Seen from 4 April - 10 May.

GADWALL (r-Sp) One seen 4 April in Brown County.

AMERICAN WIGEON (o-Sp) Seen from 5-15 April.

- REDHEAD (r-Sp) Two seen 4 May.
 LESSER SCAUP (r-Sp) One seen 14 April in Brown County.
 COMMON MERGANSER (c-Sp) Seen from 4 April - 8 May.
 RUDDY DUCK (r-Sp) One seen 15 May in Brown County.
 TURKEY VULTURE* (c-Sp, c-Su; Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 5 April. Three breeding records (Mossman and Brogie 1983).
 OSPREY (o-Sp) Three sightings from 26 April - 7 May.
 BALD EAGLE (c-Sp, r-Su) Numerous sightings of both immatures and adults along river from 5-12 April. One seen 12 May; one seen 14 June.
 NORTHERN HARRIER (u-Sp, r-Su) Five sightings from 13 April - 7 June.
 SHARP-SHINNED HAWK * (u-Sp, r-Su; Brown) Seen frequently from 7 April - 23 May; less commonly thereafter. One breeding record: nest with four eggs on 6 June (Mossman and Brogie 1983).
 COOPER'S HAWK (u-Sp, u-Su) Seen occasionally throughout study period. Probable nester.
 NORTHERN GOSHAWK (r-Sp) Three sightings from 11-16 April; two of which probably represent the same bird.
 BROAD-WINGED HAWK (o-Sp) Five sightings from 26 April - 14 May.
 SWAINSON'S HAWK (o-Su) Several sightings from 16 June - 17 July.
 RED-TAILED HAWK * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) Three active nests, with one, two, and two nestlings respectively.
 FERRUGINOUS HAWK (r-Su) One seen 5 June in Brown County.
 ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK (r-Sp, r-Su) One seen 5 June; one seen 12 August.
 GOLDEN EAGLE (r-Sp) Two Brown County sightings; 14 April and 5 May.
 AMERICAN KESTREL * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) Four breeding records.
 PRAIRIE FALCON (r-Sp, r-Su) Three sightings from 11 May - 28 June.
 GRAY PARTRIDGE (x-Sp) One seen 11 May in Cherry County.
 RING-NECKED PHEASANT * (u-Sp, u-Su; Keya Paha) One breeding record: female with chicks seen in late June.
 GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN * (u-Sp, u-Su; Cherry) Eleven leks found from 13 April - 7 May. One breeding record: adult with three young seen 29 July.
 SHARP-TAILED GROUSE * (c-Sp, c-Su; Cherry) Fourteen leks found from 11 April - 27 May. One breeding record: six young seen with three adults 29 July.
 WILD TURKEY* (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Nine breeding records. Three egg dates from 6 May-16 June.
 NORTHERN BOBWHITE * (u-Sp, u-Su; Cherry, Keya Paha) Three breeding records.
 VIRGINIA RAIL (o-Sp, r-Su) Several observations from 14 April - 11 June. Probable nester.
 SORA (r-Sp) One seen 13 May in Brown County.
 AMERICAN COOT (o-Sp, r-Su) Five sightings from 10-14 April; one seen 24 July.
 SANDHILL CRANE (c-Sp) Hundreds seen in migration from 5-30 April.
 SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (o-Sp) Several seen from 27 April - 17 May.
 PIPING PLOVER * (r-Su; Brown) Active nest colony on river east of Meadville (Mossman and Brogie 1983).
 KILLDEER * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Nine breeding records; young first seen 26 May.
 AMERICAN AVOCET (r-Sp) Two seen: 28 and 29 April.
 GREATER YELLOWLEGS (o-Sp) Several sightings from 4 April-1 May.
 SOLITARY SANDPIPER (r-Sp) One seen 29 April.

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1. "... All through the spring migration and all through the nesting season we may hear the weird winnowing sound of the snipe's courtship flight, a tremulous humming sound, loud and penetrating, audible at a long distance. . . . The sound resembles the noise made by a duck's wings in rapid flight, a rapidly pulsating series of notes, **who, who, who, who, who, who, who, who**, increasing and then decreasing again in intensity. It has been termed the "bleating" of the snipe, but this does not seem to describe it so well as "winnowing"." A.C. Bent, *Life Histories of North American Shore Birds*, Part I, p. 82.

- WILLET (u-Sp) Several flocks of 1-37 birds seen from 20 April-10 May.
- SPOTTED SANDPIPER* (c-Sp, c-Su; Keya Paha) First seen 15 April. One breeding record: nest with two eggs on 17 June.
- UPLAND SANDPIPER* (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry) First seen 11 April. One breeding record: nest with two eggs on 5 May.
- LONG-BILLED CURLEW * (o-Sp, r-Su; Brown) First seen 11 April. One breeding record: nest with two eggs on 5 May.
- SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (o-Sp) Several sightings from 3-17 May.
- LEAST SANDPIPER (u-Sp) Several flocks seen from 3-10 May.
- BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (o-Sp, o-Su) Six seen from 4-6 April; several seen on 14 and 22 July.
- PECTORAL SANDPIPER (r-Sp, r-Su) One seen 6 May; two seen 22 July.
- STILT SANDPIPER (r-Sp) One seen 9 May.
- LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (r-Sp) Flock of six seen 3 May in Brown County.
- COMMON SNIBE (u-Sp, r-Su) Winnowing¹ heard and birds observed from 14 April - 5 June. One seen 13 km south of study area on 25 June. Probable breeder.
- RING-BILLED GULL (o-Sp, r-Su) Several sightings from 4 April - 6 June.
- COMMON TERN (r-Sp) One seen 14 May.
- FORSTER'S TERN (o-Sp) Several sightings from 29 April-17 May.
- LEAST TERN * (r-Su; Brown) Active nest colony on river east of Meadville (Mossman and Brogie 1983).
- BLACK TERN (r-Su) Two transients seen 5 June.
- ROCK DOVE * (o-Sp, o-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Several local farms contain resident birds.
- MOURNING DOVE * (a-Sp, a-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Sixty-one breeding records. Forty-two egg dates from 12 May - 30 August. Nest building as early as 25 April.
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO * (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown) First seen 29 May. One breeding record: territorial bird near freshly built nest on 11 June.
- YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO (u-Sp, u-Su) First seen 20 May. Food-carrying and territorial birds observed in June, July, and August. Probable nester.
- COMMON BARN-OWL (r-Su) Group of four individuals seen in Brown County in late August by local residents.
- EASTERN SCREECH-OWL * (u-Sp, u-Su; Cherry) One breeding record: adult and four fledglings observed 29 July.
- GREAT HORNED OWL* (c-Sp, c-Su; Cherry, Keya Paha) Two breeding records: both nests fledged two young.
- BURROWING OWL * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown) First seen 19 April. Nine individuals seen in prairie dog town on 23 August, of which at least four were immature birds.
- LONG-EARED OWL * (o-Sp, r-Su; Cherry) One breeding record: nest with four eggs on 12 May (Mossman and Brogie 1983).
- COMMON NIGHTHAWK * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 14 May. Eight breeding records. Seven egg dates from 4-23 June. First summer flock seen 25 August.
- COMMON POORWILL * (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown) First heard 2 May. One breeding record: nest with two young on 3 July.
- WHIP-POOR-WILL (o-Su) Three singing males found, one in each county: 3 and 14 June, 13 July. Probable nester.
- CHIMNEY SWIFT * (o-Sp, o-Su; Brown) First seen 14 May. One breeding record: nest with five eggs in chimney on 10 June.
- BELTED KINGFISHER * (c-Sp, u-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) Two breeding records. Several other nest burrows found without positive evidence of nesting.
- RED-HEADED WOODPECKER * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 6 May. Four breeding records. Fledged young first seen 24 July.
- RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (o-Sp, o-Su) Territorial and cavity-inspecting birds observed from April-July. Probable nester.
- DOWNY WOODPECKER * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown) Two breeding records: nestlings on 15 and 28 June.
- HAIRY WOODPECKER * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Eight breeding records. Six nestling dates from 30 May - 16 June.

- NORTHERN FLICKER * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Five breeding records. Four nestling dates from 4-20 June.
- EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (u-Sp, u-Su) First seen 19 May. Singing males observed in June and July; bird seen carrying nesting material in early June. Probable nester.
- WILLOW FLYCATCHER (r-Sp, r-Su) Singing males observed in June and July. Probable nester.
- LEAST FLYCATCHER (o-Sp, o-Su) Singing males observed in May and June. Probable nester.
- EASTERN PHOEBE * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 7 April. Twenty-seven breeding records. Ten egg dates from 27 April - 28 June.
- SAY'S PHOEBE (r-Sp) One seen 12 April in Brown County. One seen 13 April in Cherry County.
- GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 6 May. Four breeding records.
- WESTERN KINGBIRD * (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown) First seen 4 May. One breeding record. Adult feeding nestlings on 10 July.
- EASTERN KINGBIRD * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 4 May. Five breeding records. One egg date: 3 July.
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (x-Sp) One seen 13 May in Brown County.
- HORNED LARK * (a-Sp, a-Su; Brown, Cherry) Five breeding records. Four egg dates from 9 June - 8 July.
- TREE SWALLOW (o-Sp, o-Su) Birds inspecting cavities in early May. Probable nester.
- NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 27 April. Fifteen breeding records. Fledglings first seen 12 June.
- CLIFF SWALLOW * (r-Sp, r-Su; Keya Paha) First seen 14 May. One colony: birds seen nest building and occupying old nests on cliff on 4 June.
- BARN SWALLOW * (c-Sp, c-Su, Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 15 April. Thirty breeding records, with 16 egg dates from 31 May - 23 June. Nestlings seen as late as 6 September.
- BLUE JAY * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry) First seen 30 April. Six breeding records. Two egg dates: 6 and 20 June. Fledglings first seen 28 June.
- BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE * (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown, Cherry) Ten breeding records. Five nestling dates: 24 May - 11 June. Fledglings first seen 28 June.
- AMERICAN CROW * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown) Six breeding records; five of which represent family groups in which nest location is uncertain as to county.
- BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) Six breeding records. Fledglings first seen 12 June.
- RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH * (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) Three breeding records. Fledglings found 12 and 15 June (Mossman and Brogie 1983).
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH * (c-Sp, c-Su; Cherry, Keya Paha) Three breeding records. Nestlings found on 10 May and 4 June.
- BROWN CREEPER * (r-Su; Brown) One breeding record (Mossman and Brogie 1983).
- ROCK WREN (r-Sp) One seen 3 May in Brown County.
- BEWICK'S WREN (r-Sp) One seen 3 May in Brown County. One seen 4 May in Cherry County.
- HOUSE WREN* (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry Keya Paha) First seen 9 May. Nine breeding records. Six nesting dates from 16-28 June.
- MARSH WREN * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown) First seen 26 May. One breeding record: nest with two eggs found on 1 June. Many empty nests found.
- GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET (o-Sp) First seen 26 April.
- RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (u-Sp) First seen 14 April.
- EASTERN BLUEBIRD * (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown) First seen 11 April. Two breeding records. At least 30 territorial males recorded.
- TOWNSEND'S SOLITARE (o-Sp) Five sightings of seven birds from 13-29 April.
- WOOD THRUSH (o-Sp, o-Su) Three singing males heard in Brown County in June and July. Probable nester.
- AMERICAN ROBIN * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Twelve nesting records. Nest building as early as 25 April. Eggs found from 22 May - 3 July. Nestlings first seen on 13 May.
- GRAY CATBIRD (o-Sp, o-Su) First seen 28 May. Probable nester.

- NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (o-Sp, o-Su) Two pair and three singing males seen from 24 May through July. Probable nester.
- BROWN THRASHER * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) First seen 2 May, Four breeding records. One egg date: 4 June.
- CEDAR WAXWING (r-Sp) Flock of five seen 26 May.
- LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry) First seen 9 April. Seven breeding records. Three egg dates from 24 May - 1 June. Nestlings first seen 24 May.
- EUROPEAN STARLING* (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) Two breeding records.
- BELL'S VIREO * (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown) First seen 20 May. Three breeding records. One egg date: adult incubating four eggs on 21 June.
- SOLITARY VIREO (o-Sp) Five seen from 14-18 May.
- WARBLING VIREO * (o-Sp, o-Su; Brown) First seen 14 May. One breeding record: bird building nest on 5 June.
- PHILADELPHIA VIREO (r-Sp) One seen 20 May in Brown County.
- RED-EYED VIREO * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) First seen 17 May. Two breeding records.
- BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (r-Sp) One seen 15 May in Keya Paha County. Brewster's hybrid seen 19 May in Keya Paha County.
- Brewster's hybrid seen 19 May in Keya Paha County.
- TENNESSEE WARBLER (r-Sp) Two seen: 15 and 20 May.
- ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (c-Sp) Seen from 26 April - 15 May.
- YELLOW WARBLER (c-Sp, o-Su) First seen 10 May. Several singing males observed in June. Probable nester.
- YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (a-Sp) First seen 25 April.
- BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (r-Sp) Two seen: 16 and 17 May.
- PRAIRIE WARBLER (x-Sp, x-Su) One male singing repeatedly from a grove of 5-8 m tall bur oaks (*Quercus macrocarpa*) from 26 May - 1 June, in Brown County. Absent thereafter.
- PALM WARBLER (r-Sp) One seen 15 May in Keya Paha County.
- BLACKPOLL WARBLER (o-Sp) Seen from 10-16 May.
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (c-Sp, c-Su) First seen 25 April. Numerous singing males and territorial birds observed from May-August. Probable nester.
- AMERICAN REDSTART (u-Sp, u-Su) First seen 15 May. Singing males seen in May, June, and July. Probable nester.
- OVENBIRD (c-Sp, c-Su) First seen 6 May. Numerous singing males and territorial birds observed from May-August. Probable nester.
- NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (r-Sp) One seen 3 May in Brown County.
- COMMON YELLOWTHROAT * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown) First seen 3 May. One breeding record: nest with five young on 21 June.
- YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (u-Su) First seen 26 May. Territorial and food-carrying birds observed in June and July. Probable nester.
- SCARLET TANAGER * (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown) First seen 13 May. One breeding record: nest with four young on 22 June.
- NORTHERN CARDINAL (o-Sp, o-Su) Singing males and territorial birds seen in May and June. Probable nester.
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (c-Sp) Seen from 8-26 May. Evidently none stay to nest.
- BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 6 May. Four breeding records, including three observations of nest building from 28 May - 12 June.
- BLUE GROSBEAK (o-Sp, u-Su) First seen 15 May. Singing males observed throughout summer. Probable nester.
- LAZULI BUNTING (o-Sp, u-Su) First seen 15 May. Singing males seen in May and June. Probable nester.
- INDIGO BUNTING* (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) First seen 15 May. Four breeding records. One egg date: 20 June.
- DICKCISSEL (u-Su) First seen 11 June. Singing males seen in June and July. Probable nester.
- RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) Four breeding records. Two egg dates: 9 and 21 June.
- AMERICAN TREE SPARROW (c-Sp) Last seen 15 April.
- CHIPPING SPARROW * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) First seen 22 April. Three breeding records. One egg date: 23 May.

- CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (u-Sp, r-Su) First seen 3 May. Territorial birds seen in May and June. Probable nester.
- FIELD SPARROW* (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 13 April. Seven breeding records. Three egg dates from 1-23 June.
- VESPER SPARROW (o-Sp, r-Su) First seen 16 April. Singing males seen in May, June, and July. Probable nester.
- LARK SPARROW * (a-Sp, a-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 26 April. Sixteen breeding records, with 11 egg dates from 23 May - 21 June. First fledgling seen 11 June.
- LARK BUNTING * (o-Sp, o-Su; Cherry) First seen 4 May. One breeding record: downy fledgling seen 19 August.
- SAVANNAH SPARROW (o-Sp) Three seen from 3-14 May.
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW * (a-Sp, a-Su; Keya Paha) First seen 23 April. One breeding record: nest with eggs on 21 June.
- SONG SPARROW (c-Sp) Numerous sightings from 12 April - 9 May.
- LINCOLN'S SPARROW (u-Sp) Several seen from 27 April - 9 May.
- SWAMP SPARROW (r-Sp, r-Su) First seen 20 April. Territorial birds seen in June and July. Probable nester.
- WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (o-Sp) Three seen from 3-6 May.
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (u-Sp) Several groups seen from 3-5 May.
- HARRIS' SPARROW (r-Sp) One seen 16 May in Brown County.
- DARK-EYED JUNCO (c-Sp) Last seen 29 April.
- CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (o-Sp) Three observations from 11-14 May.
- BOBOLINK (o-Sp, o-Su) First seen 26 May. Singing males seen in June and July. Probable nester.
- RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) Males present at beginning of study. Females first seen 14 April. Twenty-seven nests found with eggs or young; numerous other nests found.
- WESTERN MEADOWLARK * (a-Sp, a-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Eleven breeding records. Seven egg dates from 9-24 May.
- YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (o-Sp) Seen from 27 April-3 May.
- COMMON GRACKLE * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Fourteen nests with eggs or young; 60 other nests not checked.
- BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) First seen 13 April. Ten nests found containing cowbird eggs or young (parasitized species include: Horned Lark, Orchard Oriole, Rufous-sided Towhee, Lark Sparrow, and Field Sparrow). Eight egg dates from 27 May - 21 June.
- ORCHARD ORIOLE * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown) First seen 20 May. Three breeding records and several empty nests.
- NORTHERN ORIOLE * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown, Keya Paha) First seen 9 May. Five active and 18 inactive nests found.
- PURPLE FINCH (r-Sp) One seen 29 April in Brown County.
- RED CROSSBILL (r-Su) One seen 7 June in Cherry County.
- PINE SISKIN (c-Sp) Last seen 17 May.
- AMERICAN GOLDFINCH * (c-Sp, c-Su; Brown) One breeding record: freshly built nest with both adults present on 24 July.
- EVENING GROSBEAK (r-Sp) Flock of 25 seen 29 April in Brown County.
- HOUSE SPARROW * (u-Sp, u-Su; Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha) Several local farms contain resident birds.

ADDENDUM:

Included here are those species which have been recorded on the study area previous to or since this work was completed, but which were not observed during the 1982 spring and summer field season.

- TUNDRA SWAN - Two seen on river 10 December, 1981.
- GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - Flock seen 21 October, 1981.
- SNOW GOOSE - Flock seen on river 20 October, 1981.
- MERLIN - One seen in Cherry County in September, 1981.

- PEREGRINE FALCON - Two 1982 Keya Paha County sightings: 14 and 25 September.
 WHOOPING CRANE - Four adults seen on river 1.5 km west of the Norden Bridge 29 and 30 October, 1982. Several other historic sightings.
 SHORT-EARED OWL - Historic nesting record in Brown County in late 1960's.
 RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - Observed in past years by local residents.
 MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD - Group of four seen 28 October, 1982 in Brown County.
 SWAINSON'S THRUSH - One seen in September, 1981 in Brown County.
 HERMIT THRUSH - One seen 28 September, 1982 in Brown County.
 YELLOW-THROATED VIREO - Four individuals seen in May and June, 1964 (Short 1965).
 NASHVILLE WARBLER - Several seen from 28 September - 13 October, 1982.
 NORTHERN PARULA - One seen 21 June, 1964 (Short 1964).
 FOX SPARROW - One seen in October, 1981 in Cherry County.

SUMMARY:

One hundred eighty-six bird species were recorded from the Niobrara Valley Preserve and adjacent areas from 4 April - 15 August 1982. Direct evidence of nesting was obtained for 75 species. An additional 30 species almost certainly nest, although definite evidence is lacking. This total of 105 species represents over half of the birds believed to currently breed or have bred in Nebraska (Johnsgard 1979).

The list of 1982 spring and summer birds includes one federally endangered species (Bald Eagle); one state threatened species (Interior Least Tern), seven species on the state "special concern list" (Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Cooper's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Piping Plover, Common Barn-Owl, Eastern Bluebird) many species which are at or near the edges of their breeding range (eg., Common Snipe, Least Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ovenbird), and three rarities that apparently wandered beyond their normal range (Gray Partridge, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Prairie Warbler). Additionally two other federally endangered species (Peregrine Falcon and Whooping Crane) were seen on the Preserve during the fall of 1982 (see Addendum).

Although this species list will undoubtedly be expanded in the future, the observations presented here demonstrate that the area is rich in avifauna and worthy of preservation efforts.

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