

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Southern Plains Inventory & Monitoring Network  
Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

# Fort Union National Monument Bird Checklist



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

# Checklist Key

## Abundance

Abundance information is for suitable habitat and season. Abundance may vary depending on season for species that are residents.

- **Common** – May be seen daily but not in large numbers
- **Uncommon** – Likely to be seen monthly; may be locally common
- **Rare** – Present, but usually seen only a few times each year
- **Occasional** – Seen in the park at least once every few years, but not necessarily every year
- **Accidental** – Seen no more than a few times; birds that have strayed out of their normal range/habitat

## Habitat

- **R – Riparian and Woodland:** Habitats dominated by willow and cottonwood near Wolf Creek and pinyon pine and juniper near low mesas to the west
- **G – Grassland:** Habitats in the monument dominated by blue grama grassland

## Season

- **Resident** – Found year-round
- **Summer** – Found predominantly in the summer months (June–August)
- **Winter** – Found predominantly in the winter months (November–February)
- **Migrant** – Found predominantly during spring and/or fall migratory periods (March–May, September–October)

This checklist reports species information within the boundaries of Fort Union NM. Species abundance may be different outside of the monument, especially in different habitats, such as along Wolf Creek or in the Sangre de Cristo foothills.

*The information in this list is based on NPSpecies, Natural Resource Condition Assessments, and Southern Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network Landbird Monitoring surveys at Fort Union NM, and may not be a comprehensive list of all bird species in the monument. The list is arranged by family and uses common names following the American Ornithological Society's Checklist of North American Birds 7th edition and its supplements through 2019.*

## Birding Ethics

Be mindful by following ethical birding guidelines that protect birds and enhance everyone's birding experience:

- » Keep your distance and avoid disturbing bird nesting sites; move away from alarmed pairs.
- » Report bird observations to park rangers at the visitor center. This helps other birders and supports research.
- » Do not use broadcasting calls to attract birds; calls interfere with nesting activity and may frustrate other birders.
- » Report rare species nesting sites to appropriate park officials only. Use caution when posting bird sightings over social media.
- » Do not set up bird feeding stations or feed birds in NPS-managed areas.

## Checklist

### Waterfowl (Anatidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Canada Goose	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
Blue-winged Teal	Rare	R	Migrant
Northern Shoveler	Rare	R	Migrant
Gadwall	Rare	R	Migrant
Mallard	Rare	R	Migrant
Northern Pintail	Rare	R	Migrant
Green-winged Teal	Rare	R	Migrant
Canvasback	Occasional	R	Migrant
Redhead	Occasional	R	Migrant
Ruddy Duck	Rare	R	Migrant

### New World Quail (Odontophoridae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Scaled Quail	Occasional	G	Resident

### Partridges, Grouse, Turkeys, and Old World Quail (Phasianidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Wild Turkey	Rare	R, G	Resident

### Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Rare	R, G	Resident
Mourning Dove	Common	R, G	Resident

### Cuckoos and Roadrunners (Cuculidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Greater Roadrunner	Rare	R, G	Resident

### Nighthawks (Caprimulgidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Common Nighthawk	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Common Poorwill	Occasional	R	Migrant

### Hummingbirds (Trochilidae)

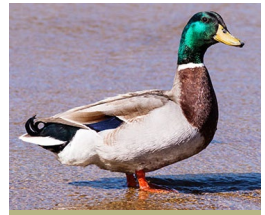
√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Rare	R, G	Summer
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Rare	R, G	Migrant

### Rails, Gallinules, and Coots (Rallidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
American Coot	Rare	R	Migrant

### Avocets and Stilts (Recurvirostridae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
American Avocet	Occasional	R	Migrant



Mallard



Scaled Quail



Wild Turkey



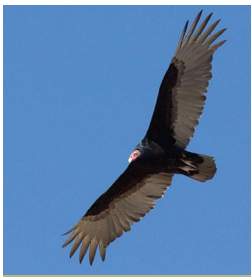
Mourning Dove



Black-chinned Hummingbird



Broad-tailed Hummingbird



Turkey Vulture



Northern Harrier



Red-tailed Hawk



Great Horned Owl



Acorn Woodpecker



American Kestrel

### Plovers (Charadriidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Killdeer	Rare	R, G	Resident
Mountain Plover	Occasional	G	Summer

### Sandpipers, Phalaropes, and Allies (Scolopacidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Long-billed Curlew	Occasional	G	Migrant
Spotted Sandpiper	Rare	R	Migrant

### Bitterns, Herons and Allies (Ardeidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Great Blue Heron	Rare	R, G	Resident
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Occasional	R	Migrant

### New World Vultures (Cathartidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Turkey Vulture	Uncommon	R, G	Summer

### Hawks, Kites, Eagles and Allies (Accipitridae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Golden Eagle	Occasional	R, G	Migrant
Northern Harrier	Rare	G	Migrant
Cooper's Hawk	Rare	R, G	Resident
Bald Eagle	Occasional	R	Summer
Swainson's Hawk	Rare	R, G	Summer
Red-tailed Hawk	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
Ferruginous Hawk	Rare	R, G	Migrant

### Typical Owls (Strigidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Great Horned Owl	Rare	R, G	Resident
Burrowing Owl	Occasional	G	Migrant

### Woodpeckers and Allies (Picidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Acorn Woodpecker	Rare	R	Resident
Downy Woodpecker	Occasional	R	Resident
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	Rare	R	Resident
Hairy Woodpecker	Rare	R	Resident
Northern Flicker	Uncommon	R	Resident

### Falcons (Falconidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
American Kestrel	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
Prairie Falcon	Rare	R, G	Resident

## Tyrant Flycatchers (Tyrannidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Cassin's Kingbird	Common	R, G	Summer
Western Kingbird	Common	R, G	Summer
Eastern Kingbird	Rare	R, G	Summer
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Rare	R	Migrant
Western Wood-Pewee	Uncommon	R	Summer
Eastern Phoebe	Accidental	R	Migrant
Say's Phoebe	Uncommon	R, G	Resident



Cassin's Kingbird

## Shrikes (Laniidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Loggerhead Shrike	Rare	R, G	Resident



Western Kingbird

## Vireos (Vireonidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Plumbeous Vireo	Rare	R	Summer

## Jays and Ravens (Corvidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Pinyon Jay	Uncommon	R	Resident
Steller's Jay	Occasional	R	Resident
Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	Rare	R	Resident
Black-billed Magpie	Common	R, G	Resident
American Crow	Rare	R, G	Resident
Common Raven	Common	R, G	Resident



Say's Phoebe

## Larks (Alaudidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Horned Lark	Uncommon	G	Resident



Common Raven

## Swallows (Hirundinidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Violet-green Swallow	Rare	R, G	Summer
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Rare	R, G	Summer
Barn Swallow	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Cliff Swallow	Common	R, G	Summer



American Crow

## Chickadees and Titmice (Paridae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Mountain Chickadee	Rare	R	Resident
Juniper Titmouse	Rare	R	Resident

## Bushtits (Aegithalidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Bushtit	Rare	R	Resident



Horned Lark



Bewick's Wren



Mountain Bluebird



Northern Mockingbird



House Finch



Pine Siskin



Lark Bunting



Chipping Sparrow

### Wrens (Troglodytidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Rock Wren	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
Canyon Wren	Rare	R	Resident
House Wren	Rare	R	Summer
Carolina Wren	Uncommon	G	Resident
Bewick's Wren	Uncommon	R	Resident

### Gnatcatchers (Poliotilidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Rare	R	Summer

### Thrushes (Turdidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Western Bluebird	Uncommon	R	Resident
Mountain Bluebird	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
American Robin	Uncommon	R	Summer

### Mockingbirds and Thrashers (Mimidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Curve-billed Thrasher	Rare	R, G	Resident
Sage Thrasher	Occasional	R	Summer
Northern Mockingbird	Common	R, G	Resident

### Starlings (Sturnidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
European Starling	Rare	R, G	Resident

### Old World Sparrows (Passeridae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
House Sparrow	Occasional	G	Resident

### Finches (Fringillidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
House Finch	Rare	R, G	Resident
Pine Siskin	Rare	R	Winter
Lesser Goldfinch	Uncommon	R, G	Resident

### New World Sparrows and Towhees (Passerellidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Cassin's Sparrow	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Grasshopper Sparrow	Rare	G	Migrant
Lark Sparrow	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
Lark Bunting	Rare	G	Migrant
Chipping Sparrow	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
Brewer's Sparrow	Rare	R, G	Migrant
White-crowned Sparrow	Rare	R, G	Migrant

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Vesper Sparrow	Common	R, G	Summer
Canyon Towhee	Rare	R, G	Resident
Green-tailed Towhee	Rare	R	Migrant
Spotted Towhee	Uncommon	R	Resident

### Yellow-breasted Chat (Icteriidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Yellow-breasted Chat	Rare	R	Migrant

### Blackbirds, Orioles, and Allies (Icteridae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Western Meadowlark	Common	R, G	Resident
Bullock's Oriole	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Red-winged Blackbird	Common	R, G	Summer
Brown-headed Cowbird	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Brewer's Blackbird	Rare	R, G	Resident
Common Grackle	Occasional	R, G	Migrant
Great-tailed Grackle	Rare	R, G	Resident

### New World Warblers (Parulidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Virginia's Warbler	Rare	R	Summer
Common Yellowthroat	Rare	R	Summer
Yellow Warbler	Rare	R	Migrant
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Rare	R	Migrant
Wilson's Warbler	Rare	R	Migrant

### Piranga Tanagers, Cardinals and Allies (Cardinalidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Hepatic Tanager	Rare	R	Summer
Western Tanager	Uncommon	R	Summer
Black-headed Grosbeak	Uncommon	R	Summer
Blue Grosbeak	Rare	R, G	Summer
Lazuli Bunting	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Dickcissel	Rare	G	Migrant

### Acknowledgments

All bird identification photos were generously provided courtesy of [Robert Shantz \(rshantz.com\)](https://www.rshantz.com).

The [Southern Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network](#) is one of 32 National Park Service inventory and monitoring networks that assess the condition of park ecosystems and develop a stronger scientific basis for stewardship of natural resources.



Western Meadowlark



Bullock's Oriole



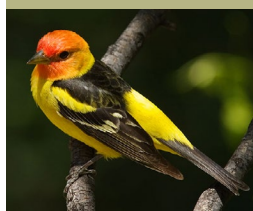
Red-winged Blackbird



Common Yellowthroat



Yellow Warbler



Western Tanager



**Southern Plains Inventory & Monitoring Network**  
**Natural Resource Stewardship and Science**

**Fort Union National Monument**

preserves the site of one of the largest and most important forts in the American Southwest. Fort Union was active between 1851 and 1891 and was a main guardian of the Santa Fe Trail. The fort sits on the edge of the shortgrass prairie in northeastern New Mexico near where the Great Plains meet the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the west.

At least 112 species of birds have been identified in the monument. The approximately 1.25-mile self-guided trail touring the fort is the best place to observe birds at Fort Union as it passes through shortgrass prairie habitat.

Western Meadowlarks, Cassin's Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Northern Mockingbird, Mourning Dove, and Vesper Sparrow are common in the monument. Flocks of Horned Larks may be seen foraging on the ground, and Barn Swallows visit the fort to search for insects and collect mud and grass for their nests.

Red-tailed Hawks are the most-commonly seen raptor near Fort Union, but Northern Harriers, Cooper's Hawks, and American Kestrels are also present.

Turkey Vultures also soar over Fort Union on six-foot wingspans, rocking side to side on the wind currents. They sometimes may be seen resting on fence posts.

