

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Southern Plains Inventory & Monitoring Network  
Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

# Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site Bird Checklist



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

# Checklist Key

## Abundance

- **Abundant** – May be seen daily and counted in relatively large numbers
- **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:** Habitats dominated by cottonwoods and herbaceous vegetation along Big Sandy Creek
- **G – Grassland:** Habitats in the historic site dominated by grassland such as blue grama and buffalo grass
- **W – Wetlands:** Marshy edges in the historic site where vegetation is adapted to or tolerant of regularly-saturated soils

## 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)

*The information in this list is based on NPSpecies, Natural Resource Condition Assessments, and Southern Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network Landbird Monitoring surveys at Sand Creek Massacre NHS, and may not be a comprehensive list of all bird species at the historic site. The list is arranged by family and uses common names following the American Ornithological Society's Checklist of North American Birds 7<sup>th</sup> 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 national historic sites.
- » Stay on designated trails at all times.

# Checklist

## Waterfowl (Anatidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Blue-winged Teal	Rare	W	Migrant
Mallard	Rare	W	Migrant

## New World Quail (Odontophoridae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Northern Bobwhite	Occasional	R, G	Resident
Scaled Quail	Occasional	R, G	Resident

## Partridges, Grouse, and Turkeys (Phasianidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Ring-necked Pheasant	Common	R, G, W	Resident
Lesser Prairie-Chicken	Occasional	G	Resident
Wild Turkey	Occasional	R, G	Resident

## Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)

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

## Cuckoos and Roadrunners (Cuculidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Greater Roadrunner	Rare	G	Resident
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Rare	R	Migrant

## Nighthawks (Caprimulgidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Common Nighthawk	Common	R, G, W	Summer

## Plovers (Charadriidae)

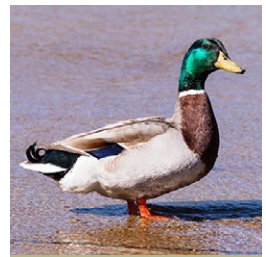
√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Killdeer	Uncommon	R, G, W	Resident
Mountain Plover	Rare	G, W	Migrant

## Sandpipers, Phalaropes, and Allies (Scolopacidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Long-billed Curlew	Occasional	G	Migrant

## Bitterns, Herons, and Allies (Ardeidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Great Blue Heron	Rare	R, G, W	Resident



Mallard



Scaled Quail



Wild Turkey



Mourning Dove



Greater Roadrunner



Killdeer





Turkey Vulture



Red-tailed Hawk



American Kestrel



Western Kingbird



Say's Phoebe

### Ibises and Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
White-faced Ibis	Occasional	G	Migrant

### New World Vultures (Cathartidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Turkey Vulture	Rare	R, G, W	Summer

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

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Northern Harrier	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant
Swainson's Hawk	Uncommon	R, G, W	Summer
Red-tailed Hawk	Uncommon	R, G, W	Resident
Ferruginous Hawk	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant

### Barn Owls (Tytonidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Barn Owl	Rare	R, G, W	Resident

### Typical Owls (Strigidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Great Horned Owl	Uncommon	R, G, W	Resident
Burrowing Owl	Rare	G	Resident
Short-eared Owl	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant

### Woodpeckers and Allies (Picidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Red-headed Woodpecker	Common	R	Resident
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Occasional	R	Resident
Downy Woodpecker	Uncommon	R	Resident
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	Occasional	R	Resident
Hairy Woodpecker	Occasional	R	Migrant
Northern Flicker	Common	R	Resident

### Falcons (Falconidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
American Kestrel	Uncommon	R, G, W	Resident

### Tyrant Flycatchers (Tyrannidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Cassin's Kingbird	Rare	R, G	Summer
Western Kingbird	Common	R, G, W	Summer
Eastern Kingbird	Common	R, G, W	Summer
Western Wood-Pewee	Uncommon	R	Migrant
Hammond's Flycatcher	Occasional	R	Migrant
Dusky Flycatcher	Rare	R	Migrant
Say's Phoebe	Rare	R, G, W	Resident

### Shrikes (Laniidae)

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

### Vireos (Vireonidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Warbling Vireo	Uncommon	R	Migrant
Red-eyed Vireo	Rare	R	Migrant

### Crows, Jays, and Ravens (Corvidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Blue Jay	Rare	R	Resident
American Crow	Rare	R, G	Resident
Chihuahuan Raven	Rare	R	Resident

### Larks (Alaudidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Horned Lark	Common	R, G, W	Resident

### Swallows (Hirundinidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Rare	G	Migrant
Barn Swallow	Common	R, G, W	Summer
Cliff Swallow	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant

### Nuthatches (Sittidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
White-breasted Nuthatch	Occasional	R	Resident

### Wrens (Troglodytidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Rock Wren	Occasional	G	Migrant
House Wren	Common	R, G	Resident
Bewick's Wren	Rare	R	Resident

### Thrushes (Turdidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Eastern Bluebird	Rare	R, G, W	Resident
Swainson's Thrush	Occasional	R	Migrant
Hermit Thrush	Occasional	R	Migrant
American Robin	Rare	R, W	Migrant

### Mockingbirds and Thrashers (Mimidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Brown Thrasher	Rare	R	Resident
Northern Mockingbird	Common	R, G, W	Resident



Loggerhead Shrike



Horned Lark



Barn Swallow



Rock Wren



Eastern Bluebird



Northern Mockingbird



Cedar Waxwing

### Starlings (Sturnidae)

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

### Waxwings (Bombycillidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Cedar Waxwing	Occasional	R	Migrant



House Finch

### Finches (Fringillidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
House Finch	Uncommon	R, G, W	Resident
Pine Siskin	Occasional	R	Migrant
Lesser Goldfinch	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant
American Goldfinch	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant



Lark Sparrow

### New World Sparrows and Towhees (Passerellidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Cassin's Sparrow	Common	R, G, W	Summer
Grasshopper Sparrow	Common	R, G, W	Summer
Lark Sparrow	Common	R, G, W	Resident
Lark Bunting	Uncommon	R, G, W	Migrant
Chipping Sparrow	Uncommon	R, G, W	Migrant
Clay-colored Sparrow	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant
Brewer's Sparrow	Uncommon	G	Migrant
White-crowned Sparrow	Uncommon	R, G, W	Migrant
Vesper Sparrow	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant
Lincoln's Sparrow	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant
Spotted Towhee	Occasional	R, G	Migrant



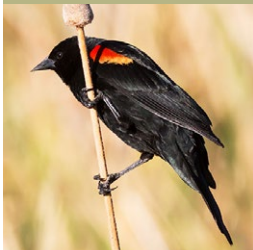
Spotted Towhee

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

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Western Meadowlark	Abundant	R, G, W	Resident
Orchard Oriole	Uncommon	R, G, W	Summer
Bullock's Oriole	Common	R, G, W	Summer
Baltimore Oriole	Uncommon	R	Migrant
Red-winged Blackbird	Common	R, G, W	Summer
Brown-headed Cowbird	Uncommon	R, G, W	Summer
Brewer's Blackbird	Rare	R, G, W	Migrant
Common Grackle	Uncommon	R, G, W	Resident



Yellow-headed Blackbird



Red-winged Blackbird

## New World Warblers (Parulidae)

√	Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
	Orange-crowned Warbler	Rare	R	Migrant
	Common Yellowthroat	Rare	R, W	Migrant
	American Redstart	Accidental	R	Migrant
	Yellow Warbler	Common	R	Summer
	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Accidental	R	Migrant
	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Uncommon	R	Migrant



Common Yellowthroat



Yellow Warbler



Blue Grosbeak

## Piranga Tanagers, Cardinals and Allies (Cardinalidae)

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

**Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site** protects the area along Big Sandy Creek where a peaceful village of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, including Chief Black Kettle, was attacked in 1864 by approximately 700 members of the 1st and 3rd regiments, Colorado (U.S.) Volunteer Cavalry, led by Colonel John M. Chivington.

Big Sandy Creek, an intermittent tributary of the Arkansas River, flows diagonally across the historic site providing a strip of riparian vegetation within a mosaic of sand sagebrush shrubland and shortgrass prairie. The riparian habitat along Big Sandy Creek is relatively uncommon in the shortgrass prairie ecosystem, and provides important stopover habitat for migratory bird species.

The best place to observe birds in the park is the visitor use area, where riparian species such as Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and Yellow Warbler are found in the cottonwood trees. Grassland and shrubland bird species like Western Meadowlark, Horned Lark, Burrowing Owl, Northern Harrier, and Dickcissel may sometimes be seen along the Monument Hill and Bluff Trails.



Great Blue Heron in the visitor use area

## Acknowledgments

All bird identification photos, unless otherwise noted, were generously provided courtesy of [Robert Shantz \(rshantz.com\)](http://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.





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