

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Southern Plains Inventory & Monitoring Network
Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

Washita Battlefield National Historic Monument Bird Checklist



Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

preserves and protects the site of the Battle of the Washita when the 7th US Cavalry under Lt. Col. George A. Custer attacked the Southern Cheyenne village of Peace Chief Black Kettle along the Washita River on November 27, 1868. The historic site promotes public understanding of the attack and the importance of the diverse perspectives related to the struggles that transpired between the Southern Great Plains tribes and the US government. The site's natural landscape and cultural heritage are intertwined; both are managed to evoke a sense of place and reflect the setting of the Cheyenne encampment. The grasslands and river bottoms were home to native cultures, and the native flora and fauna were essential to the way of life for plains tribes.



Northern Cardinal

The park's landscape contains a diversity of bird habitats ranging from the riparian area along the Washita River to grasslands and shrublands on the floodplain and uplands. At least 132 different species of birds have been documented in the historic site.

Walking the park's trail is the best way to view birds in the historic site. The 1.5-mile trail passes through grassland with sand sage and yucca before dropping down to the floodplain and the Washita River and then returning to the parking lot. Most of the wildlife that inhabit the Washita area are secretive in their activities. The most noticeable are birds.



In open areas along the trail, look for Bewick's Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Cassin's Sparrow, meadowlarks, and kingbirds. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are sometimes seen sitting on fence posts. American Kestrels, the smallest falcon in North America and about the size of Mourning Doves, can sometimes be seen fluttering above the grasslands hunting insects. Northern Harriers, with their distinctive white bands above the base of their tail, may also be seen flying low over the ground while looking and listening for prey.

Cottonwood trees, willows, and riparian shrubs and grasses along the Washita River provide some of the best bird habitat in Washita Battlefield NHS. Look for Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, American Goldfinches, American Robins, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Yellow-rumped Warblers near the river. Great Blue Herons, Ospreys, and Belted Kingfishers are also sometimes found in this area.

Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures are often seen soaring above the historic site. Turkey Vultures have red heads, are lighter in color on the trailing edge of the underside of their wings, and have a V-shaped flight profile. Black Vultures have black heads, silver wing tips, and a flat flight profile.



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.



Checklist Key

Abundance

Abundance information is for suitable habitat and season.

- **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

Habitat

- **R – Riparian:** Habitats along the Washita River dominated by cottonwoods and willows with riparian shrubs and grasses
- **G – Grassland:** Grassland and upland habitats with mixed grass prairie, sand sage and other shrubs, and numerous forbs

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 Washita Battlefield NHS, and may not be a comprehensive list of all bird species in the historic site. 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.



Red-bellied Woodpeckers are common in Washita Battlefield NHS.
(NPS PHOTO)

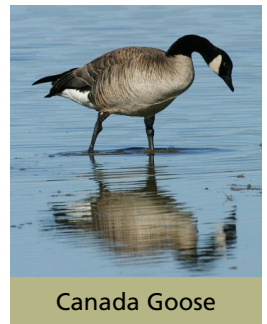
Front cover: Eastern Meadowlark (NPS PHOTO)

Previous page: Northern Harrier

Checklist

Waterfowl (Anatidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Occasional	R	Resident
Canada Goose	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Wood Duck	Rare	R	Resident
Blue-winged Teal	Rare	R	Migrant
Mallard	Rare	R	Resident



New World Quail (Odontophoridae)

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



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

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Ring-necked Pheasant	Rare	R, G	Resident
Wild Turkey	Uncommon	R, G	Resident

Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)

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



Cuckoos and Roadrunners (Cuculidae)

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



Nighthawks (Caprimulgidae)

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

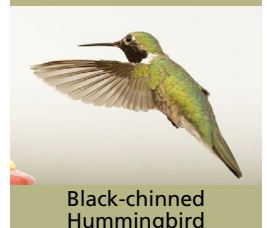


Swifts (Apodidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Chimney Swift	Rare	R, G	Migrant

Hummingbirds (Trochilidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Rare	R, G	Migrant





Sandhill Crane

Rails, Gallinules, and Coots (Rallidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
American Coot	Common	R	Resident

Crane (Gruidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Sandhill Crane	Occasional	R, G	Migrant



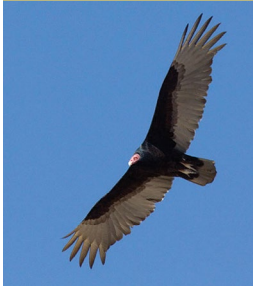
Great Blue Heron

Plovers (Charadriidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Killdeer	Uncommon	R, G	Resident

Sandpipers, Phalaropes, and Allies (Scolopacidae)

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



Turkey Vulture

Bitterns, Herons, and Allies (Ardeidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Great Blue Heron	Rare	R, G	Resident
Great Egret	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Cattle Egret	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Green Heron	Rare	R	Migrant

New World Vultures (Cathartidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Black Vulture	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
Turkey Vulture	Uncommon	R, G	Migrant



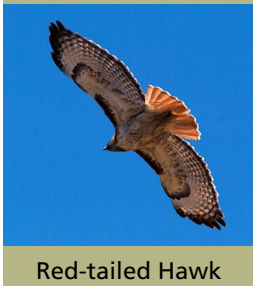
Mississippi Kite

Ospreys (Pandionidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Osprey	Occasional	R	Migrant

Hawks, Kites, Eagles and Allies (Accipitridae)

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



Red-tailed Hawk

Typical Owls (Strigidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Great Horned Owl	Rare	R, G	Resident
Barred Owl	Rare	R	Resident
Short-eared Owl	Occasional	G	Migrant

Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Belted Kingfisher	Rare	R	Summer

Woodpeckers and Allies (Picidae)

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

Falcons (Falconidae)

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

Tyrant Flycatchers (Tyrannidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Rare	R	Migrant
Great Crested Flycatcher	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Western Kingbird	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Eastern Kingbird	Rare	R, G	Summer
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Common	R, G	Summer
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Rare	R	Migrant
Least Flycatcher	Rare	R	Migrant
Eastern Phoebe	Uncommon	R	Resident

Shrikes (Laniidae)

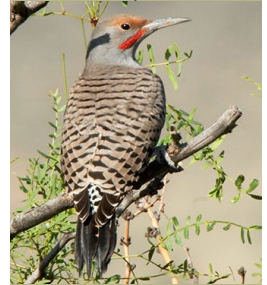
√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Loggerhead Shrike	Rare	G	Resident



Great Horned Owl



Ladder-backed Woodpecker



Northern Flicker



American Kestrel



Ash-throated Flycatcher



Western Kingbird



American Crow



Horned Lark



Barn Swallow



House Wren



Bewick's Wren



Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Vireos (Vireonidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
White-eyed Vireo	Rare	R	Summer
Bell's Vireo	Uncommon	R	Summer
Yellow-throated Vireo	Rare	R	Migrant
Warbling Vireo	Rare	R	Migrant
Red-eyed Vireo	Rare	R	Migrant

Crows, Jays and Ravens (Corvidae)

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

Larks (Alaudidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Horned Lark	Rare	G	Winter

Swallows (Hirundinidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Bank Swallow	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Tree Swallow	Uncommon	R, G	Migrant
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Rare	R, G	Summer
Purple Martin	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Barn Swallow	Common	R, G	Summer
Cliff Swallow	Uncommon	R, G	Summer

Chickadees and Titmice (Paridae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Carolina Chickadee	Common	R, G	Resident
Tufted Titmouse	Uncommon	R, G	Resident

Wrens (Troglodytidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
House Wren	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
Sedge Wren	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Carolina Wren	Common	R, G	Resident
Bewick's Wren	Uncommon	R, G	Resident

Gnatcatchers (Poliptilidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Uncommon	R, G	Summer

Kinglets (Regulidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Uncommon	R	Migrant

Thrushes (Turdidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Eastern Bluebird	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
American Robin	Common	R, G	Resident

Mockingbirds and Thrashers (Mimidae)

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

Starlings (Sturnidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
European Starling	Common	R, G	Resident

Waxwings (Bombycillidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Cedar Waxwing	Rare	R, G	Winter

Old World Sparrows (Passeridae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
House Sparrow	Rare	G	Resident

Finches (Fringillidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
House Finch	Rare	R, G	Resident
Pine Siskin	Rare	R	Winter
Lesser Goldfinch	Occasional	R, G	Migrant
American Goldfinch	Common	R, G	Resident

New World Sparrows and Towhees (Passerellidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Cassin's Sparrow	Common	R, G	Summer
Grasshopper Sparrow	Common	G	Summer
Lark Sparrow	Uncommon	R, G	Resident
Lark Bunting	Rare	G	Summer
Chipping Sparrow	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Clay-colored Sparrow	Uncommon	R, G	Migrant
Field Sparrow	Common	G	Resident
American Tree Sparrow	Occasional	R, G	Winter
Dark-eyed Junco	Uncommon	R, G	Winter
White-crowned Sparrow	Uncommon	R, G	Migrant
Harris's Sparrow	Rare	R, G	Migrant
White-throated Sparrow	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Vesper Sparrow	Uncommon	G	Winter
LeConte's Sparrow	Occasional	G	Migrant



Northern Mockingbird



Cedar Waxwing



House Finch



Lark Sparrow



Chipping Sparrow



White-crowned Sparrow



Western Meadowlark



Red-winged Blackbird



Yellow-rumped Warbler



Northern Cardinal



Blue Grosbeak



Dickcissel

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Savannah Sparrow	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Song Sparrow	Rare	R	Migrant
Lincoln's Sparrow	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Spotted Towhee	Occasional	R, G	Migrant

Yellow-breasted Chat (Icteriidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Yellow-breasted Chat	Rare	R	Summer

Blackbirds, Orioles, and Allies (Icteridae)

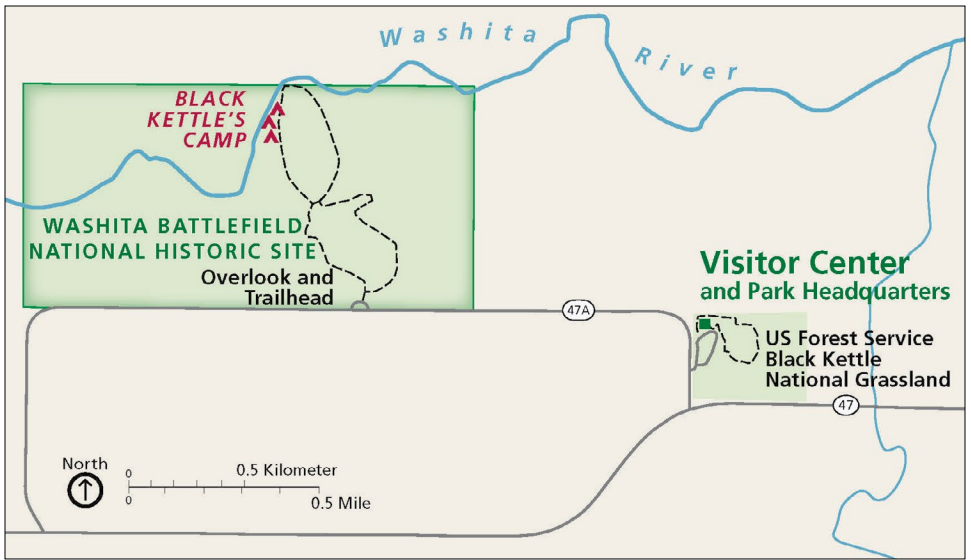
✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Rare	R, G	Migrant
Bobolink	Rare	G	Migrant
Eastern Meadowlark	Common	R, G	Resident
Western Meadowlark	Uncommon	G	Resident
Orchard Oriole	Rare	R	Summer
Bullock's Oriole	Rare	R, G	Summer
Red-winged Blackbird	Common	R, G	Resident
Brown-headed Cowbird	Common	R, G	Resident
Brewer's Blackbird	Uncommon	R, G	Winter
Common Grackle	Common	R, G	Resident
Great-tailed Grackle	Common	R, G	Resident

New World Warblers (Parulidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Northern Waterthrush	Rare	R	Migrant
Orange-crowned Warbler	Rare	R	Migrant
Nashville Warbler	Rare	R	Migrant
Common Yellowthroat	Rare	R, G	Summer
Yellow Warbler	Rare	R	Migrant
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Uncommon	R, G	Migrant

Piranga Tanagers, Cardinals and Allies (Cardinalidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Summer Tanager	Rare	R	Migrant
Northern Cardinal	Common	R, G	Resident
Blue Grosbeak	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Indigo Bunting	Rare	R, G	Summer
Painted Bunting	Common	R, G	Summer
Dickcissel	Common	R, G	Summer



Acknowledgments

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

The [Southern Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network \(https://www.nps.gov/im/sopn/\)](https://www.nps.gov/im/sopn/) 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.

Rear cover: Northern Harrier (NPS PHOTO)

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