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For Refuge Information
1 800 / 344 WILD

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Medicine Lake

*National Wildlife
Refuge Complex*

Bird List



A Premier Birding Area



This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Scores of wetlands intermixed with grasslands in the northeast corner of Montana provide critical breeding and migration habitat for many species of birds. The Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex, which includes the Northeast Montana Wetland Management District (WMD), is located in this premier birding area. The WMD covers three entire counties and is made up of 45 Waterfowl Production Areas (small protected wetland areas). The Refuge and the Waterfowl Production Areas encompass 44,000 acres and lie within the prairie pothole region that extends from southern Canada through northeastern Montana, the Dakotas, and western Minnesota.

Medicine Lake NWR has been designated as one of 500 Globally Important Bird Areas and as a National Natural Landmark because of the abundance and diversity of birds that are drawn to this gem of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Medicine Lake NWR Complex supports one of the largest breeding colonies of American white pelicans in the world and provides important nesting habitat for many other species of colonial nesting birds, as well as waterfowl, grassland birds, and the threatened piping plover. The Refuge and Wetland Management District also host hundreds of thousands of birds during their annual migration, including tundra swans, endangered whooping cranes, and bald and golden eagles.

Bird watchers will find that Medicine Lake NWR Complex is a premier destination for catching a glimpse of rare prairie birds such as Baird's sparrows, chestnut-collared longspurs, and Sprague's pipits, or colonial nesters like black-crowned night-herons and Franklin's gulls, or shorebirds, such as sandpipers, dowitchers, godwits, and willets.

This checklist includes the 283 bird species that have been documented on the Medicine Lake NWR Complex.

About this Checklist

Seasonal Occurrence

Sp Spring (March - May)
S Summer (June - August)
F Fall (September - November)
W Winter (December - February)

Abundance

a abundant - occurring in large numbers
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 at intervals of 2 - 5 years
• indicates confirmed nesting record

Accessibility

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. Dial 7-1-1 for a free connection to the State transfer relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from the speech and hearing impaired. For more information or to address accessibility needs, please contact the Refuge staff at 406 / 789 2305 or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Common Bird Name	Sp	S	F	W
Swans, Geese, and Ducks				
Greater White-fronted Goose	u		c	
Snow Goose	u	r	c	
Ross's Goose	u		u	
• Canada Goose	a	a	a	o
Tundra Swan	c		c	
Wood Duck	o	o	o	
• Gadwall	a	a	a	
• American Wigeon	c	c	c	
American Black Duck	r	r	r	
• Mallard	a	a	a	r
• Blue-winged Teal	a	a	c	
• Cinnamon Teal	o	r	r	
• Northern Shoveler	a	a	a	
• Northern Pintail	a	a	a	
• Green-winged Teal	a	c	a	
• Canvasback	c	c	c	
• Redhead	c	c	c	
• Ring-necked Duck	u	o	u	
Greater Scaup	r		r	
• Lesser Scaup	a	a	a	
Surf Scoter			r	
White-winged Scoter	r		r	
Long-tailed Duck			r	
• Bufflehead	c	u	c	
Common Goldeneye	u		u	
Barrow's Goldeneye	r		r	
Hooded Merganser	o	o	o	
Common Merganser	u		u	
Red-breasted Merganser	o		o	
• Ruddy Duck	a	c	a	
Gallinaceous Birds				
• Gray Partridge	u	u	u	u
• Ring-necked Pheasant	a	a	a	a
• Sharp-tailed Grouse	c	c	c	c
• Greater Prairie-Chicken (<i>extirpated</i>)				
Wild Turkey	o	o	o	o
Loons				
Common Loon	o	o	o	
Grebes				
• Pied-billed Grebe	c	c	c	
• Horned Grebe	c	c	u	
• Red-necked Grebe	r	r	r	
• Eared Grebe	a	a	c	
• Western Grebe	a	a	c	
• Clark's Grebe	o	u	o	

Common Bird Name	Sp	S	F	W
Pelicans				
• American White Pelican	a	a	a	
Cormorants				
• Double-crested Cormorant	a	a	a	
Bitterns, Herons, and Egrets				
• American Bittern	u	u	u	
• Great Blue Heron	c	c	c	
Great Egret	r		r	
Snowy Egret	o	r		
• Black-crowned Night-Heron	c	c	u	
Ibises and Spoonbills				
• White-faced Ibis	o	o	o	
New World Vultures				
Turkey Vulture	o	u	u	
Osprey, Kites, Hawks, and Eagles				
Osprey	r		r	
Bald Eagle	u		u	o
• Northern Harrier	c	c	c	o
Sharp-shinned Hawk	o		o	
Cooper's Hawk	o		o	
Northern Goshawk	o		o	o
Broad-winged Hawk	r		u	
• Swainson's Hawk	c	c	c	
• Red-tailed Hawk	u	u	u	r
• Ferruginous Hawk	u	u	u	
Rough-legged Hawk	u		u	u
• Golden Eagle	u	u	u	u
Falcons and Caracaras				
• American Kestrel	u	u	u	r
• Merlin	u	o	u	r
Gyrfalcon			r	o
Peregrine Falcon	o	o	o	
• Prairie Falcon	u	u	u	u
Rails				
• Yellow Rail	r	r	r	
• Virginia Rail	o	c	c	
• Sora	o	c	c	
• American Coot	a	a	a	
Cranes				
Sandhill Crane	c	r	c	
Whooping Crane	r		r	

Common Bird Name	Sp	S	F	W
Plovers				
Black-bellied Plover	o	o	o	
American Golden-Plover	r	o	o	
Semipalmated Plover	u	u	u	
• Piping Plover	u	u	r	
• Killdeer	a	a	c	
Stilts and Avocets				
Black-necked Stilt	r	r		
• American Avocet	c	a	c	
Sandpipers and Phalaropes				
Greater Yellowlegs	c	u	c	
Lesser Yellowlegs	c	u	c	
Solitary Sandpiper	u	u	u	
• Willet	c	c	c	
• Spotted Sandpiper	c	c	u	
• Upland Sandpiper	c	c	r	
Eskimo Curlew (<i>extirpated</i>)				
Whimbrel	r		r	
• Long-billed Curlew	u	u	o	
Hudsonian Godwit	r		r	
• Marbled Godwit	c	a	c	
Ruddy Turnstone	r	o	r	
Red Knot	r		r	
Sanderling	c	u	u	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	c	u	u	
Western Sandpiper	o	o	o	
Least Sandpiper	u	u	u	
White-rumped Sandpiper	u	u		
Baird's Sandpiper	c	u	c	
Pectoral Sandpiper	u	o	u	
Dunlin	o	o	o	
Stilt Sandpiper	u	u	u	
Buff-breasted Sandpiper		r	r	
Short-billed Dowitcher	o	o	o	
Long-billed Dowitcher	u	c	c	
• Wilson's Snipe	u	u	u	
• Wilson's Phalarope	c	c	c	
Red-necked Phalarope	u	o	u	

Common Bird Name	Sp	S	F	W
Skuas, Jaegers, Gulls, and Terns				
• Franklin's Gull	c	a	a	
Bonaparte's Gull	o	o	o	
• Ring-billed Gull	a	a	a	
• California Gull	a	a	u	
Herring Gull	r	r	o	
Glaucous Gull	r		r	
• Caspian Tern	o	o	o	
• Common Tern	c	c	u	
• Forster's Tern	c	c	u	
• Black Tern	u	u	u	
Pigeons and Doves				
• Rock Pigeon (<i>introduced</i>)	o	o	o	o
Band-tailed Pigeon		r	r	
European Collared-Dove (<i>introduced</i>)	r	r	r	
• Mourning Dove	a	a	a	
Passenger Pigeon (<i>extinct</i>)				
Cuckoos and Anis				
• Black-billed Cuckoo	r	r	r	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	r	r	r	
Typical Owls				
Eastern Screech-Owl	r		r	
• Great Horned Owl	u	u	u	u
Snowy Owl	o		o	u
• Burrowing Owl	u	u	o	
Long-eared Owl	r	r	r	r
• Short-eared Owl	o	o	o	o
Nightjars				
• Common Nighthawk	u	u	u	
Swifts				
Chimney Swift	r			
Hummingbirds				
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	u	r	u	
Kingfishers				
• Belted Kingfisher	u	u	u	
Woodpeckers				
• Red-headed Woodpecker	o	o	o	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	o		u	
Downy Woodpecker	o	o	o	o
Hairy Woodpecker	r	r	r	o
• Northern Flicker	c	c	c	r

Common Bird Name	Sp	S	F	W
Tyrant Flycatchers				
Olive-sided Flycatcher	r	o	o	
Western Wood-Pewee	o	o	u	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	r	r	r	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		r	o	
Alder Flycatcher	u	u	u	
Willow Flycatcher	o	u	o	
• Least Flycatcher	u	u	u	
Eastern Phoebe	r	r		
• Say's Phoebe	u	u	u	
Great Crested Flycatcher	r	r	r	
• Western Kingbird	a	a	o	
• Eastern Kingbird	a	a	o	
Shrikes				
• Loggerhead Shrike	o	u	o	
Northern Shrike	o		o	o
Vireos				
Blue-headed Vireo	o		o	
Warbling Vireo	u	u	u	
Philadelphia Vireo	r	r	r	
Red-eyed Vireo	u	u	u	
Crows, Jays, and Magpies				
Blue Jay	r	r	r	
• Black-billed Magpie	u	u	u	u
• American Crow	o	u	o	r
Common Raven	r	r	r	
Larks				
• Horned Lark	a	a	a	c
Swallows				
Purple Martin	o	r	o	
• Tree Swallow	u	u	u	
• Violet-green Swallow	u	u	u	
• Northern Rough-winged Swallow	u	o	u	
• Bank Swallow	c	c	u	
• Cliff Swallow	a	a	o	
• Barn Swallow	c	c	o	
Titmice and Chickadees				
• Black-capped Chickadee	o	o	o	o
Nuthatches				
Red-breasted Nuthatch	o	o	o	o
White-breasted Nuthatch	o	o	o	o

Common Bird Name	Sp	S	F	W
Creepers				
Brown Creeper	o	o	o	r
Wrens				
Rock Wren	u	u	o	
• House Wren	u	c	u	
• Sedge Wren	o	o	o	
• Marsh Wren	c	c	c	
Kinglets				
Golden-crowned Kinglet			o	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	o		o	
Old World Warblers				
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher				r
Thrushes				
Eastern Bluebird	o	o	o	
Western Bluebird	r		r	
• Mountain Bluebird	o	o	u	
Townsend's Solitaire	r		o	
Veery	o	o	o	
Gray-cheeked Thrush	o		u	
Swainson's Thrush	u	o	o	
Hermit Thrush	o		o	
• American Robin	c	c	c	r
Mimic Thrushes				
• Gray Catbird	c	c	u	
Northern Mockingbird	u			
• Brown Thrasher	c	c	u	
Starlings				
• European Starling	o	o	o	o
Wagtails and Pipits				
American (Water) Pipit	o	r	u	
• Sprague's Pipit	c	c	c	
Waxwings				
Bohemian Waxwing	o		o	u
• Cedar Waxwing	u	u	u	o
Wood Warblers				
Tennessee Warbler	u	u	u	
Orange-crowned Warbler	o	o		
Nashville Warbler	o	o		
• Yellow Warbler	u	c	o	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	o	o	o	

Wood Warblers *continued on next page*

Common Bird Name	Sp	S	F	W
Wood Warblers <i>continued</i>				
Magnolia Warbler	o	r	o	
Cape May Warbler	o	r	o	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	r	r	r	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	o	o	c	
Black-throated Green Warbler	r	o	o	
Townsend's Warbler		r	r	
Blackburnian Warbler	r	r	r	
Pine Warbler		r	r	
Prairie Warbler		r	r	
Palm Warbler		r	o	
Bay-breasted Warbler	r	o	o	
Blackpoll Warbler	o	o	u	
Black-and-white Warbler	u	u	u	
• American Redstart	u	u	u	
Ovenbird	o	u	u	
Northern Waterthrush	o	u	u	
Kentucky Warbler			r	
Connecticut Warbler		r	r	
MacGillivray's Warbler	o	o	u	
• Common Yellowthroat	c	c	u	
Wilson's Warbler	o	o	u	
Canada Warbler	o	o	o	
• Yellow-breasted Chat	o	u	o	

Tanagers

Scarlet Tanager		r		
Western Tanager			r	

Sparrows and Towhees

Spotted Towhee	o	o	u	
American Tree Sparrow	c		c	o
• Chipping Sparrow	u	u	u	o
• Clay-colored Sparrow	a	a	u	
• Brewer's Sparrow	o	o	o	
Field Sparrow	o	o	o	
• Vesper Sparrow	c	c	c	
• Lark Sparrow	o	o	o	
• Lark Bunting	c	c	u	
• Savannah Sparrow	a	a	c	
• Grasshopper Sparrow	c	a	u	
• Baird's Sparrow	c	a	u	
• Le Conte's Sparrow	u	u	o	
• Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow	u	u	o	
Fox Sparrow	o	o	o	
• Song Sparrow	c	c	c	
Lincoln's Sparrow	u	u	u	
Swamp Sparrow	o	o	o	
White-throated Sparrow	o	o	c	

Common Bird Name	Sp	S	F	W
Harris's Sparrow	u	o	u	
White-crowned Sparrow	o	u	o	
Dark-eyed Junco	c		c	u
• McCown's Longspur	o	o	o	
Lapland Longspur	o		o	o
Smith's Longspur			o	
• Chestnut-collared Longspur	a	a	c	
Snow Bunting	o		o	c

Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Allies

Northern Cardinal			r	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	u	o	u	
Black-headed Grosbeak	u	o	u	
Blue Grosbeak	r			
• Lazuli Bunting	o	o	o	
Indigo Bunting	r			
Dickcissel	r	r		

Blackbirds and Orioles

• Bobolink	u	c	o	
• Red-winged Blackbird	a	a	a	r
• Western Meadowlark	a	a	a	r
• Yellow-headed Blackbird	a	a	c	
Rusty Blackbird			u	
• Brewer's Blackbird	u	u	o	
• Common Grackle	c	c	u	
• Brown-headed Cowbird	c	c	o	
• Orchard Oriole	u	u	r	
Bullock's Oriole	o	u	u	
• Baltimore Oriole	o	u	u	

Finches

Pine Grosbeak			r	
Purple Finch	o	o	o	
• House Finch	c	c	c	u
Common Redpoll	u		u	u
Hoary Redpoll	o			o
Pine Siskin	u	r	u	r
• American Goldfinch	c	c	c	r
Evening Grosbeak	r		r	r

Old World Sparrows

• House Sparrow (<i>introduced</i>)	c	c	c	c
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Reference: *American Ornithologists' Union. 1998. Check-list of North American Birds, 7th ed. American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C. and the AOU (2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005) supplements*