

Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge Valentine, Nebraska

Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge, located 4 miles east of Valentine, Nebraska, is 19,131 acres in size and was established in 1912. The Niobrara River meanders through the Refuge and has cut a deep canyon through the prairie. The canyon and central location of the Refuge in the continent bring parts of five ecosystems together, the northern boreal forest, Rocky Mountain forest, eastern deciduous forest, tall grass and short grass prairies.

Many birds are attracted to the Refuge by the varied habitats. Many neotropical migrants are found in wooded breaks along the river. Additionally, many species of sparrows, a challenge for the bird watcher to identify, can be found in the rolling prairie. Raptors soar above the hills and canyon edges.

Following are five recommended areas to observe birds on the Refuge. You may also want to stop at the visitor center to check on recent sightings or tips.

1. Bur Oak Picnic Area. A year-round hot spot for viewing songbirds and raptors.
2. Fort Falls Trail. A great way to enter the Niobrara canyon without bushwhacking through dense vegetation.
3. Niobrara Wilderness. A place for the adventurous bird watcher. Plan on four hours of hiking to the best spots for neotropical migrants.
4. Exhibition Pasture Ponds. Look for waterfowl, geese, and grebes. Visit the nearby prairie dog town for a look at the burrowing owl.
5. Cornell Canoe Launch. Go directly west of the launch to find an oasis for songbirds. Watch for warblers, blue and black-headed grosbeaks, Lazuli buntings, eastern bluebirds, and many more.

This folder lists 225 species that have been sighted on the Refuge.

Species known to nest on the Refuge are marked with an "*".

The relative abundance of each species at each season is coded as follows:

Sp - March-May

S - June-August

F - September-November

W - December-February

a - abundant: common species, very abundant

c - common: likely to be seen in suitable habitat

u - uncommon: present, but not certain to be seen

o - occasional: seen only a few times during a season

r - rare: seen at intervals of 2 to 5 years

GREBES	Sp	S	F	W
___ Horned Grebe	o	r	o	-
___ Eared Grebe	o	-	o	-
___ Western Grebe	r	-	r	-
___ Clark's Grebe	r	-	r	-
___ Pied-billed Grebe	o	r	r	-
PELICANS AND CORMORANTS	Sp	S	F	W
___ American White Pelican	o	o	o	-
___ Double-crested Cormorant	o	c	o	-
WADING BIRDS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Great Blue Heron	c	c	c	u
___ Green Heron	r	r	r	-
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron	u	o	u	-
___ American Bittern	o	o	o	-
IBIS	Sp	S	F	W
___ White-faced Ibis*	-	u	-	-
SWANS, GEESE AND DUCKS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Trumpeter Swan	r	-	r	-
___ Canada Goose*	c	c	c	c
___ Greater White-fronted Goose	o	-	o	-
___ Snow Goose	o	-	o	-
___ Mallard*	c	u	c	c
___ Gadwall*	u	o	u	-
___ Northern Pintail*	u	o	u	-
___ Green-winged Teal	u	o	u	-
___ Blue-winged Teal*	c	u	c	-
___ Cinnamon Teal	r	-	r	-
___ American Wigeon	u	o	u	-
___ Northern Shoveler*	c	o	c	-
___ Wood Duck*	u	u	u	-
___ Redhead*	c	o	c	-
___ Ring-necked Duck	c	r	c	-
___ Canvasback	u	o	o	-
___ Lesser Scaup	c	-	c	-
___ Common Goldeneye	u	-	u	u
___ Bufflehead	u	-	u	-
___ Ruddy Duck	u	-	u	-
___ Hooded Merganser	o	-	o	-
___ Common Merganser	c	-	c	-
___ Red-breasted Merganser	r	-	r	-
VULTURES, HAWKS, EAGLES AND FALCONS	Sp	S	F	W

___ Turkey Vulture	c	c	c	-
___ Northern Goshawk	-	-	-	r
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk	u	o	u	u
___ Cooper's Hawk	o	o	o	o
___ Red-tailed Hawk*	c	c	c	r
___ Red-shouldered Hawk	r	-	r	-
___ Broad-winged Hawk	r	-	r	-
___ Swainson's Hawk*	u	u	u	-
___ Rough-legged Hawk	c	-	c	u
___ Ferruginous Hawk	r	-	r	r
___ Northern Harrier (Marsh Hawk)	c	u	c	r
___ Golden Eagle	u	r	u	u
___ Bald Eagle	u	-	u	c
___ Osprey	o	r	o	-
___ Prairie Falcon	u	-	u	-
___ Peregrine Falcon	r	-	r	-
___ Merlin	o	o	o	-
___ American Kestrel*	c	c	c	o
GAME BIRDS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Ruffed Grouse	r	r	r	r
___ Greater Prairie-Chicken*	u	u	u	u
___ Sharp-tailed Grouse*	u	u	u	u
___ Northern Bobwhite*	r	r	r	r
___ Ring-necked Pheasant*	c	c	c	c
___ Gray Partridge	r	r	r	r
___ Wild Turkey*	c	c	c	u
CRANES	Sp	S	F	W
___ Whooping Crane	r	-	r	-
___ Sandhill Crane	u	-	u	-
RAILS AND COOTS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Virginia Rail	r	r	r	-
___ Sora	r	r	r	-
___ American Coot	o	o	o	-
SHOREBIRDS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Semipalmated Plover	o	-	o	-
___ Piping Plover	o	-	o	-
___ Killdeer*	c	c	c	-
___ Common Snipe	u	o	u	-
___ Long-billed Curlew*	c	c	u	-
___ Upland Sandpiper*	c	c	u	-
___ Spotted Sandpiper	u	u	u	-
___ Solitary Sandpiper	o	o	o	-

___ Willet	u	o	u	-
___ Greater Yellowlegs	u	o	o	-
___ Lesser Yellowlegs	u	o	u	-
___ Pectoral Sandpiper	o	o	o	-
___ White-rumped Sandpiper	o	-	o	-
___ Baird's Sandpiper	u	o	u	-
___ Least Sandpiper	u	o	u	-
___ Dunlin	r	-	r	-
___ Long-billed Dowitcher	u	o	u	-
___ Western Sandpiper	u	o	u	-
___ Marbled Godwit	o	-	r	-
___ American Avocet	o	r	o	-
___ Wilson's Phalarope	u	-	u	-
GULLS AND TERNS	Sp	S	F	W
___ California Gull	r	-	-	-
___ Ring-billed Gull	u	o	c	-
___ Franklin's Gull	u	o	u	-
___ Forster's Tern	u	o	u	-
___ Common Tern	u	o	u	-
___ Black Tern	u	o	u	-
DOVES	Sp	S	F	W
___ Mourning Dove*	c	c	c	-
CUCKOOS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Yellow-billed Cuckoo	o	u	-	-
___ Black-billed Cuckoo*	o	o	-	-
OWLS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Eastern Screech-Owl*	u	u	u	u
___ Great Horned Owl*	u	u	u	u
___ Snowy Owl	-	-	-	r
___ Burrowing Owl*	c	c	c	-
___ Long-eared Owl	o	o	o	-
___ Short-eared Owl	u	u	u	u
NIGHTJARS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Common Poorwill	-	r	-	-
___ Common Nighthawk*	o	c	-	-
SWIFTS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Chimney Swift	o	o	o	-
HUMMINGBIRDS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Ruby-throated Hummingbird	-	r	-	-

KINGFISHERS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Belted Kingfisher*	c	c	c	-
FLICKERS AND WOODPECKERS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Northern Flicker*	c	c	c	-
___ Red-headed Woodpecker*	u	c	u	-
___ Hairy Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
___ Downy Woodpecker*	u	c	u	u
TYRANT FLYCATCHERS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Eastern Kingbird*	c	c	c	-
___ Western Kingbird*	c	c	c	-
___ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	-	r	-	-
___ Great Crested Flycatcher*	c	c	u	-
___ Olive-sided Flycatcher	o	o	o	-
___ Eastern Wood-Pewee	o	u	o	-
___ Western Wood-Pewee*	o	o	o	-
___ Eastern Phoebe*	u	u	u	-
___ Say's Phoebe*	u	r	u	-
___ Cordillaran Flycatcher	r	-	-	-
___ Willow Flycatcher	o	o	o	-
___ Alder Flycatcher	o	o	o	-
LARKS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Horned Lark*	c	c	c	c
SWALLOWS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Tree Swallow*	u	u	u	-
___ Purple Martin	r	r	-	-
___ Bank Swallow	u	o	u	-
___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow*	u	c	u	-
___ Barn Swallow*	c	c	c	-
___ Cliff Swallow*	c	c	c	-
JAYS, MAGPIES AND CROWS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Blue Jay*	c	c	c	c
___ Steller's Jay	-	-	-	r
___ Clark's Nutcracker	r	-	-	-
___ Black-billed Magpie*	r	r	r	r
___ American Crow*	c	c	c	c
CHICKADEES, NUTHATCHES AND CREEPERS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Black-capped Chickadee*	c	c	c	c
___ White-breasted Nuthatch*	u	u	u	u
___ Red-breasted Nuthatch	r	r	r	o

___ Brown Creeper	r	r	r	u
WRENS	Sp	S	F	W
___ House Wren*	c	c	c	-
___ Marsh Wren	o	o	o	-
___ Sedge Wren	o	o	o	-
___ Rock Wren*	u	u	u	-
MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Northern Mockingbird*	o	o	-	-
___ Gray Catbird*	u	o	u	-
___ Brown Thrasher*	c	c	c	-
THRUSHES	Sp	S	F	W
___ American Robin*	c	c	c	o
___ Wood Thrush	o	-	o	-
___ Swainson's Thrush	o	-	o	-
___ Gray-cheeked Thrush	o	-	o	-
___ Eastern Bluebird*	c	u	u	-
___ Mountain Bluebird	o	o	o	-
___ Townsend's Solitaire	o	o	o	-
KINGLETS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	u	-	u	-
PIPITS	Sp	S	F	W
___ American Pipit (Water Pipit)	u	-	u	-
WAXWINGS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Bohemian Waxwing	u	-	u	u
___ Cedar Waxwing	u	u	u	u
SHRIKES	Sp	S	F	W
___ Northern Shrike	-	-	o	-
___ Loggerhead Shrike	c	c	c	-
STARLINGS	Sp	S	F	W
___ European Starling*	c	c	c	o
VIREOS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Bell's Vireo*	u	u	u	-
___ Red-eyed Vireo*	u	u	u	-
___ Warbling Vireo*	u	u	u	-
WARBLERS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Black-and-white Warbler*	u	u	u	-

___ Prothonotary Warbler	o	o	o	-
___ Golden-winged Warbler	o	o	o	-
___ Tennessee Warbler	o	-	o	-
___ Orange-crowned Warbler	c	o	c	-
___ Yellow Warbler*	c	c	c	-
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	c	-	c	-
___ Blackburnian Warbler	r	-	-	-
___ Blackpoll Warbler	o	-	o	-
___ Palm Warbler	r	r	r	-
___ Ovenbird*	u	u	u	-
___ Connecticut Warbler	r	-	r	-
___ Common Yellowthroat*	c	c	c	-
___ Yellow-breasted Chat*	c	c	c	-
___ Wilson's Warbler	u	-	u	-
___ American Redstart*	u	u	u	-

WEAVER FINCHES	Sp	S	F	W
___ House Sparrow*	c	c	c	c

MEADOWLARKS, BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES	Sp	S	F	W
___ Bobolink	u	-	u	-
___ Eastern Meadowlark*	o	o	o	-
___ Western Meadowlark*	c	c	c	o
___ Yellow-headed Blackbird	u	u	u	-
___ Red-winged Blackbird*	u	u	u	r
___ Orchard Oriole*	c	c	c	-
___ Northern Oriole*	u	u	u	-
___ Rusty Blackbird	o	-	o	-
___ Brewer's Blackbird*	u	u	u	-
___ Common Grackle*	c	c	c	-
___ Brown-headed Cowbird*	c	c	c	-

TANAGERS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Scarlet Tanager*	u	u	u	-
___ Western Tanager	o	o	o	-

GROSBEAKS, FINCHES, SPARROWS AND BUNTINGS	Sp	S	F	W
___ Northern Cardinal	u	u	u	u
___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak	o	o	o	-
___ Black-headed Grosbeak*	u	c	u	-
___ Blue Grosbeak*	u	u	u	-
___ Indigo Bunting	u	u	u	-
___ Lazuli Bunting	u	-	u	-
___ Evening Grosbeak	-	-	-	u
___ Dickcissel	u	u	u	-
___ Common Redpoll	-	-	-	u

___ Pine Siskin*	c	u	c	o
___ American Goldfinch	c	c	c	c
___ Red Crossbill	o	o	o	o
___ House Finch	o	o	o	o
___ Rufous-sided Towhee*	c	c	c	-
___ Lark Bunting	u	u	u	-
___ Savannah Sparrow*	u	o	u	-
___ Grasshopper Sparrow*	c	c	c	-
___ Baird's Sparrow	r	-	r	-
___ Vesper Sparrow*	u	o	u	u
___ Lark Sparrow*	c	c	c	-
___ Dark-eyed Junco	c	-	c	c
___ American Tree Sparrow	u	-	u	u
___ Chipping Sparrow*	c	c	c	-
___ Clay-colored Sparrow	u	o	u	-
___ Field Sparrow*	u	u	u	-
___ Harris' Sparrow	u	o	u	o
___ White-crowned Sparrow	c	o	c	-
___ White-throated Sparrow	u	-	u	-
___ Fox Sparrow	r	-	r	-
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	u	-	u	-
___ Song Sparrow	u	o	u	-
___ McCown's Longspur	u	-	u	-
___ Lapland Longspur	u	-	u	u
___ Chestnut-collared Longspur	o	-	o	-

For more information contact:

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Page. <http://www.npwr.usgs.gov/resource/othrdata/chekbird/r6/niobrara.htm>
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