

Hells Canyon

Bird Checklist



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A Checklist for the Birds of Hells Canyon

Welcome to the Hells Canyon Complex (HCC), an Idaho Power-owned and -operated, three-dam hydroelectric complex made up of Brownlee, completed in 1959; Oxbow, completed in 1961; and Hells Canyon, completed in 1968. These three dams have operated continually, supplying electricity to Idaho Power customers. The company also has built four beautiful parks in the canyon for public use and maintains a fish hatchery at Oxbow. Some of these facilities were built in response to federal requirements as part of the license Idaho Power received to build and operate the dams. Idaho Power also acquired approximately 24,000 acres of habitat mitigation lands for relicensing the HCC. Daly Creek, purchased in 2005 and located along the Powder River Arm of Brownlee Reservoir, functions as the headquarters for these lands. Other purchased lands include properties along Sturgill, Cottonwood and Wildhorse Creeks in Idaho and Eagle and Pine Creeks in Oregon. Idaho Power manages these areas to promote wildlife habitat and minimize operational impacts the HCC may have on wildlife habitat, particularly mule deer winter range.

While these lands were purchased to meet federal requirements, Idaho Power has embraced the philosophy of operating its projects for the benefit of the public, since its earliest days. We appreciate the public trust we have been given and recognize our role as one of the many stewards of the river in this area, which is why we have developed this booklet for your use and enjoyment.

Hells Canyon supports an abundance of bird species.

If you are interested in birding, you have come to a great place, as there are a variety of habitats in Hells Canyon that support a wide diversity of bird species. This booklet lists birds likely to be seen in Hells Canyon and where they may be located. The list was compiled using four years of avian surveys conducted along the Snake River from Farewell Bend to the confluence of the Snake and Salmon Rivers supplemented with information available in bird guides.

Brownlee Reservoir

Brownlee reservoir is approximately 50 miles long and encompasses several habitat types supporting many bird species. The upland communities surrounding this body of water provide an excellent opportunity to view raptors (eagles, hawks, and falcons) as they soar high above searching for prey. There also are numerous tributaries lined with riparian vegetation important for resident and migratory songbirds. There are many excellent public access areas to look for birds along this reservoir and its tributaries. For example, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) operates Brownlee Wildlife Management Area along the reservoir. Please contact the IDFG for more information at (208) 257-3363. Other opportunities exist in Woodhead Park (owned and operated by Idaho Power), Steck Park (Bureau of Land Management), Farewell Bend State Park (State of Oregon) and the Spring Recreation Site (BLM).

The Powder River Arm of Brownlee Reservoir provides an excellent and rare opportunity to view shore birds migrating through this area. Large numbers of wading birds congregate here, particularly in the fall as they move to their wintering grounds far to the south. The birds are attracted to the mud flats created by a fluctuations in the reservoir's water level. As many as 15 different species of wading birds have been observed in one day.

Oxbow Reservoir

Oxbow reservoir begins the rapid transition from the dry rolling hills of Brownlee to a steeper, wetter climate. Songbirds find this area particularly attractive. Oxbow's wetter climate enhances the presence of shrubs, which provide food, cover and nesting habitat for a variety of songbirds. Some of the most common species include spotted towhees, lazuli buntings and black-capped chickadees. Oxbow also provides a refuge for waterfowl during fall and spring migration. You could observe Harlequin ducks, hooded mergansers or even loons. Some suggested areas for finding birds include McCormick Park, Cottonwood Creek and the area around Oxbow Dam.

This booklet lists birds likely to be seen in Hells Canyon and where they may be located.

Hells Canyon Reservoir

Birding really becomes an adventure along Hells Canyon reservoir. The steep and rugged terrain is composed mostly of native bunchgrass that once covered much of the country. There are many excellent tributaries to look for birds along this reservoir. Kinney, Eckles and Allison Creeks all have trails for short hikes where you may observe raptors, sparrows and wrens in the uplands, as well as vireos, warblers and fly catchers in riparian and mountain shrub habitats. The reservoir and surrounding areas abound with game birds, songbirds and raptors. For some great hiking and birding, try the wilderness trail on the Oregon side of the reservoir to McGraw Creek. For more relaxed birding, try Idaho Power's Hells Canyon or Copperfield parks or visit the U.S. Forest Service information center below Hells Canyon Dam. In addition, the steep Kleinschmidt and Ballard roads, which scale the canyon walls, allow serious birders to reach higher elevations where a variety of jays, woodpeckers and forest grouse can be observed in the mixed conifer forests.

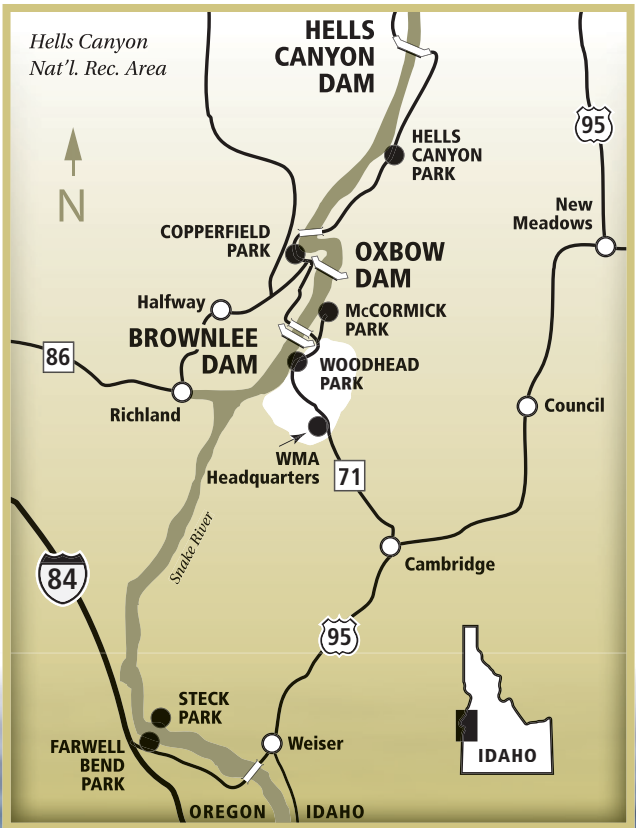


A word of caution:

Please be careful in all of your travels in Hells Canyon, particularly when hiking. There are many hazards including poison ivy, rattlesnakes and steep, rocky terrain.

This information is provided for your enjoyment

Hells Canyon Area Map



		Brownlee Oxbow Hells Canyon				
		Abundance			Habitat	
LOONS						
___	Common Loon	S, F, W	U	R	R	Wa
___	Yellow-billed Loon	W	R	R	R	Wa
Grebes						
___	Pied-billed Grebe	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Wa
___	Western Grebe	S, Su, F	C	U	U	Wa
___	Clark’s Grebe	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Wa
___	Eared Grebe	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Wa
Pelicans						
___	American White Pelican	S, Su	C	U	R	Wa
Cormorants						
___	Double-crested Cormorant	S, Su, F, W	C	U	R	Wa
Hérons, Egrets, Ibis, Bitterns						
___	Great Blue Heron	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Wa, Ri
___	Black-crowned Night-heron	Su, F	R	R	R	Wa, Ri
___	Snowy Egret	Su	U	R	R	Wa, Ri
___	Great Egret	S, Su	R	R		Wa, Ri
___	Cattle Egret	Su	R			Wa, Ri
___	White-faced Ibis	Su	R			Wa, Ri
Swans, Geese, Ducks						
___	Tundra Swan	S, F	R	R		Wa
___	Trumpeter Swan	W	R			Wa
___	Snow Goose	W	U			Wa
___	Canada Goose	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Wa, Ri
___	Greater White- fronted Goose	W	R			Wa
___	Ross’ Goose	S			R	Wa
___	Mallard	S, Su, F, W	A	C	C	Wa, Ri
___	Wood Duck	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Wa, Ri
___	Northern Shoveler	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Wa, Ri
___	Green-winged Teal	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Wa, Ri
___	Cinnamon Teal	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Wa, Ri
___	Blue-winged Teal	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Wa, Ri
___	American Wigeon	S, F, W	C	U	U	Wa, Ri
___	Northern Pintail	S, F, W	R	R	R	Wa, Ri
___	Gadwall	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Wa, Ri
___	Common Goldeneye	S, Su, F, W	A	A	A	Wa
___	Barrow’s Goldeneye	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Wa
___	Bufflehead	S, F, W	U	U	U	Wa
___	Common Merganser	S, Su, F, W	A	A	A	Wa
___	Hooded Merganser	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Wa
___	Red-breasted Merganser	S, W	R	R	R	Wa
___	Harlequin Duck	S, F, W	R	R	R	Wa
___	Oldsquaw	S, W	R	R	R	Wa
___	Greater Scaup	S, F, W	R	R	R	Wa
___	Lesser Scaup	S, F, W	R	R	R	Wa
___	Ring-necked Duck	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Wa
___	Canvasback	W	P	P	P	Wa
___	Redhead	S, F, W	R	R	R	Wa

		Brownlee Oxbow Hells Canyon			
	Season	Abundance			Habitat
Swans, Geese, Ducks (cont'd)					
__ Ruddy Duck	S, W	R	R	R	Wa
__ White-winged Scoter	S, F, W	R	R	R	Wa
Vultures					
__ Turkey Vulture	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Up, Ri
Eagles, Hawks, Falcons					
__ Bald Eagle	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Ri
__ Golden Eagle	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up, Ri
__ Red-tailed Hawk	S, Su, F, W	C	U	U	Up, Ri
__ Ferruginous Hawk	S, Su, F	R			Up, Ri
__ Swainson's Hawk	S, Su, F	U			Up, Ri
__ Rough-legged Hawk	W	U	U	U	Up, Ri
__ Sharp-shinned Hawk	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Up, Ri
__ Cooper's Hawk	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Up, Ri
__ Northern Goshawk	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Up, Ri
__ Northern Harrier	S, Su, F, W	U	R	R	Up, Ri
__ Osprey	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
__ American Kestrel	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up, Ri
__ Merlin	S, F, W	R	R	R	Up, Ri
__ Prairie Falcon	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Up, Ri
__ Peregrine Falcon	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Up, Ri
Quail, Grouse, Partridge					
__ California Quail	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up, Ri
__ Mountain Quail	S, Su, F, W			R	Ri
__ Ruffed Grouse	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Ri, Fo
__ Dusky/Blue Grouse	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Up, Fo
__ Spruce Grouse	S, Su, F, W	P	P	P	Fo
__ Greater Sage-Grouse	S, Su, F, W	R			Up
__ Sharp-tailed Grouse	S, Su, F, W	R			Up
__ Gray Partridge	S, Su, F, W	C	U	U	Up
__ Chukar	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up
Turkey, Pheasant					
__ Wild Turkey	S, Su, F, W	U			Ri
__ Ring-necked Pheasant	S, Su, F, W	U			Ag
Coots, Rails					
__ American Coot	S, Su, F, W	C	U	U	Ri
__ Sora	S, Su	P			Ri
__ Virginia Rail	S, Su	P	P	P	Ri
Avocets, Stilts					
__ American Avocet	S, Su, F	U			M
__ Black-necked Stilt	S, Su, F	P			M
Plovers					
__ Black-bellied Plover	S, F	R			M
__ Snowy Plover	S, F	P			M
__ Semipalmated Plover	S, F	R			M
__ Killdeer	S, Su, F	C	R	R	M
Sandpipers, Phalaropes					
__ Semipalmated Sandpiper	S, F	U			M

		Brownlee Oxbow Hells Canyon			
	Season	Abundance			Habitat
Sandpipers, Phalaropes (cont'd)					
___ Solitary Sandpiper	S, F	R			M
___ Least Sandpiper	S, F	U			M
___ Spotted Sandpiper	S, Su, F	U	U	U	M
___ Pectoral Sandpiper	S, F	R			M
___ Baird's Sandpiper	S, F	U			M
___ Wilson's Phalarope	S, F	R			M
___ Red-necked Phalarope	S, F	R			M
___ Greater Yellowlegs	S, F	R			M
___ Lesser Yellowlegs	S, F	R			M
___ Long-billed Curlew	S, F	R			Up
___ Common Snipe	S, F	R			M
___ Western Sandpiper	S, F	U			M
___ Willet	S, F	P			M
___ Dunlin	S, F	R			M
___ Long-billed Dowitcher	S, F	R			M
___ Marbled Godwit	S, F	P			M
___ Sanderling	S, F	R			M
Gulls, Terns					
___ California Gull	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Wa
___ Ring-billed Gull	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Wa
___ Franklin's Gull	Su	R	R	R	Wa
___ Bonaparte's Gull	Su	R	R	R	Wa
___ Mew Gull	Su	R			Wa
___ Common Tern	F	R			Wa
___ Forster's Tern	Su	U	R	R	Wa
___ Black Tern	Su	R	R	R	Wa
___ Caspian Tern	Su	R	R	R	Wa
___ Black-legged Kittiwake	W			R	Wa
Doves					
___ Rock Dove	S, Su, F, W	U	R	R	Ag
___ Mourning Dove	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Up, Ri
Owls					
___ Northern Pygmy Owl	S, F, W	U	U	U	Fo
___ Barn Owl	S, Su, F, W	U	R	R	Ri
___ Great Horned Owl	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Ri
___ Western Screech-Owl	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Ri
___ Barred Owl	S, Su, F, W		R	R	Ri
___ Long-eared Owl	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Ri
___ Short-eared Owl	S, Su, F, W	R			Up
___ Northern Saw-whet Owl	S, Su, W		R	R	Ri
___ Burrowing Owl	S, Su	U			Up
___ Flammulated Owl	S, Su	R	R	R	Ri, Fo
Nighthawks, Poorwills					
___ Common Nighthawk	Su, F	C	C	C	Up, Ri
___ Common Poorwill	Su, F	R	R		Up, Ri
Swifts					
___ Vaux's Swift	Su, F	R	R	R	Wa
___ White-throated Swift	Su, F	U	U	U	Wa

		Brownlee Oxbow Hells Canyon			
	Season	Abundance			Habitat
Hummingbirds					
___ Rufous Hummingbird	S, Su, F	U	U	C	Ri
___ Calliope Hummingbird	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
___ Black-chinned Hummingbird	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Ri
___ Broad-tailed Hummingbird	S, Su, F	P	P	P	Ri
Kingfishers					
___ Belted Kingfisher	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Wa, Ri
Woodpeckers					
___ Downy Woodpecker	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Ri, Fo
___ Hairy Woodpecker	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Ri, Fo
___ Northern Flicker	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up, Ri
___ Lewis’ Woodpecker	S, Su, F, W	U	R	R	Ri
___ Williamson’s Sapsucker	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Ri
___ Red-naped Sapsucker	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Ri
___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	F		R		Ri
___ Pileated Woodpecker	S, Su, F, W		R	R	Fo
___ White-headed Woodpecker	S, Su, F, W		R	R	Fo
Kingbirds, Flycatchers					
___ Cordilleran Flycatcher	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Ri
___ Olive-sided Flycatcher	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Ri
___ Dusky Flycatcher	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Ri
___ Willow Flycatcher	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Ri
___ Gray Flycatcher	S, Su, F	P			Up
___ Ash-throated Flycatcher	S, Su, F	P			Up
___ Say’s Phoebe	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Up, Ri
___ Western Wood-pewee	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Up, Ri
___ Western Kingbird	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Up, Ri
___ Eastern Kingbird	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Up, Ri
Larks					
___ Horned Lark	S, Su, F, W	C	R		Up
Swallows					
___ Violet-green Swallow	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Wa
___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow	S, Su, F	C	U	U	Wa
___ Tree Swallow	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Wa
___ Cliff Swallow	S, Su, F	A	A	A	Wa
___ Barn Swallow	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Wa
___ Bank Swallow	S, Su, F	C			Wa
Ravens, Crows, Jays					
___ Common Raven	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Up, Ri
___ American Crow	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up, Ri
___ Clark’s Nutcracker	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Fo
___ Black-billed Magpie	S, Su, F, W	A	A	A	Up, Ri
___ Gray Jay	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Fo
___ Blue Jay	S, F		R	R	Ri
___ Steller’s Jay	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Fo

		Brownlee Oxbow Hells Canyon			
	Season	Abundance			Habitat
Chickadees, Bushtits					
___ Black-capped Chickadee	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Ri
___ Mountain Chickadee	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Fo
___ Bushtit	S, Su	R	R	R	Ri
Nuthatches, Creepers					
___ White-breasted Nuthatch	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Fo
___ Red-breasted Nuthatch	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Fo
___ Brown Creeper	S, Su, F, W	R	R	R	Ri
Wrens					
___ Winter Wren	S, Su, F, W	R	U	U	Ri
___ Canyon Wren	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up
___ Rock Wren	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up
___ Marsh Wren	S, Su	R			E
___ House Wren	S, Su	U	U	U	Ri
Dippers					
___ American Dipper	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Wa
Thrushes					
___ Hermit Thrush	S	R	R	R	Ri
___ Swainson’s Thrush	S, Su	R	U	U	Ri
___ Varied Thrush	S, Su		R	R	Ri
___ Veery	S, Su		R	R	Ri
___ American Robin	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Ri
___ Townsend’s Solitaire	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Ri
___ Golden-crowned Kinglet	S, F	U	U	U	Ri
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Ri
___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	S, Su	P	P	P	Ri, Fo
___ Western Bluebird	S, Su	U	U	U	Ri
___ Mountain Bluebird	S, Su	R	R	R	Ri
Thrashers					
___ Gray Catbird	S, Su	R	R	R	Ri
___ Sage Thrasher	S, Su	R	R	R	Up
Pipits					
___ American Pipit	S, F	R	R	R	Up
Waxwings					
___ Bohemian Waxwing	W	R	R	R	Ri
___ Cedar Waxwing	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
Shrikes					
___ Loggerhead Shrike	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Up, Ri
___ Northern Shrike	W	R	R	R	Up, Ri
Starlings					
___ European Starling	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Ag, Ri
Vireos					
___ Solitary Vireo	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Ri
___ Warbling Vireo	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
___ Red-eyed Vireo	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri

	Season	Abundance			Habitat
Warblers					
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	S, F	C	C	C	Up, Ri
___ Yellow Warbler	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
___ Wilson’s Warbler	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Ri
___ Orange-crowned Warbler	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
___ Nashville Warbler	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
___ MacGillivray’s Warbler	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
___ Townsend’s Warbler	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Fo
___ Common Yellowthroat	S, Su, F	R			E
___ American Redstart	S, Su, F	P	P	P	Ri, Fo
___ Yellow-breasted Chat	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Ri
Tanagers					
___ Western Tanager	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Up, Ri
Buntings, Grosbeaks					
___ Lazuli Bunting	S, Su, F	A	A	A	Up, Ri
___ Black-headed Grosbeak	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
Sparrows, Towhees					
___ Song Sparrow	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Ri
___ American Tree Sparrow	S, Su, F			R	Ri
___ Black-throated Sparrow	S, Su	R	R	R	Up
___ Sage Sparrow	S, Su	R			Up
___ Vesper Sparrow	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Up
___ Savannah Sparrow	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Up
___ White-crowned Sparrow	S, Su, F, W	U	U	U	Up, Ri
___ Chipping Sparrow	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up, Ri
___ Lark Sparrow	S, Su, F	C	U	U	Up
___ Brewer’s Sparrow	S, Su, F	U	R	R	Up
___ Lincoln’s Sparrow	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Up
___ Fox Sparrow	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Up, Ri
___ Golden-crowned Sparrow	S, F			R	Ri
___ Grasshopper Sparrow	S, Su, F	R			Up
___ Lapland Longspur	W	P	P	P	Up
___ Snow Bunting	W	P	P	P	Up
___ Dark-eyed Junco	S, F, W	C	C	C	Up, Ri
___ Spotted Towhee	S, Su, F	A	A	A	Ri
___ Green-tailed Towhee	S, Su	R	R	R	Ri
Blackbirds, Orioles					
___ Red-winged Blackbird	S, Su, F	C	U	U	E, Ri
___ Yellow-headed Blackbird	S, Su, F	R	R	R	E, Ri
___ Brewer’s Blackbird	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Ag, Ri
___ Brown-headed Cowbird	S, Su, F	C	C	U	Ag, Ri
___ Bobolink	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Up, Ri
___ Western Meadowlark	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Up
___ Bullock’s Oriole	S, Su, F	C	C	C	Ri
___ Common Grackle	S		R		Ag, Ri
Finches					
___ American Goldfinch	S, Su, F	A	A	A	Ri
___ Cassin’s Finch	S, Su, W	R	R	R	Ri
___ Black Rosy-finch	W	R	R	R	Fo
___ Gray-crowned Rosy-finch	W	R	R	R	Fo
___ House Finch	S, Su, F, W	U	U	R	Ri



		Brownlee Oxbow Hells Canyon			
	Season	Abundance			Habitat
Finches (cont'd)					
___ Purple Finch	S, F	R	R	R	Ri
___ Lesser Goldfinch	S	R	R		Ri
___ Pine Siskin	S, Su, F, W	C	C	C	Ri
___ Pine Grosbeak	S, Su, F	P	P	P	Fo
___ Evening Grosbeak	S, Su, F	U	U	U	Ri
___ Red Crossbil	S, Su, F	R	R	R	Fo
___ White-winged Crossbill	S, F, W	P	P	P	Fo
___ Common Redpoll	S	P	P	P	Fo
Weaver Finch					
___ House Sparrow	S, Su, F, W	U	R	R	Up

Legend

Seasons: S = Spring, Su = Summer, F = Fall, W = Winter

Abundance: R = Rare, U = Uncommon, C = Common, A = Abundant, Blank = Not Observed, P = Potential

Habitat: Ag = Agricultural, E = Emergent, M = Mudflats, Ri = Riparian, Up = Uplands, Fo = Forest, Ur = Urban, Wa = Water (Reservoir or Stream)

Bird Checklist Notes

