



Lark Sparrow

Chondestes grammacus

Size: L: 6.0 - 7.6 in., WS: 11 in.
Description: Chestnut and cream head, streaked brown above, pale below, black "mustache" and spot on chest, long tail with white corners.
Diet: Seeds
Habitat: Grasslands
Viewing: Spring-fall, statewide



Grasshopper Sparrow

Ammodramus saviannarum

Size: L: 4.3 - 4.7 in., WS: 8.0 - 8.5 in.
Description: Streaky sparrow with brown above, buff below, white eye ring, yellow lore, short tail.
Diet: Insects
Habitat: Grasslands
Viewing: Spring-fall, statewide



Dark-eyed Junco

Junco hyemalis

Size: L: 5.5 - 6.3 in., WS: 7 - 9.8 in.
Description: Variable, gray-brown back, head and chest, white belly, dark eyes, pink bill, and white outer tail feathers.
Diet: Seeds and insects
Habitat: Rural to urban
Viewing: Fall-spring, statewide

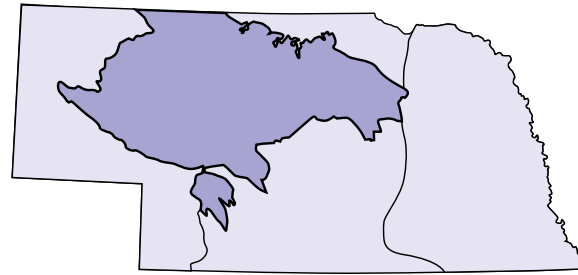


Loggerhead Shrike

Lanius ludovicianus

Size: L: 8 - 9 in., WS: 11 - 12.6 in.
Description: Songbird with a gray head/neck, hooked bill, white underside and wing-patch, black wing, tail and mask.
Diet: Insects and small animals
Habitat: Grasslands with scrub or hedgerows
Viewing: Spring-fall, statewide; winter, SE corner

Sandhills Region



The Sandhills region in Nebraska contains the largest area of stabilized grass covered dunes in the western hemisphere. Of the 13 million acres, over a million of these are wetlands. There are 1,600 Sandhill lakes, comprising around 80,000 surface acres of water. These wetland areas are important for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl, providing much-needed habitat. This area also sits directly atop the Ogallala aquifer, for which the wetlands play an important role in retaining and filtering the water.

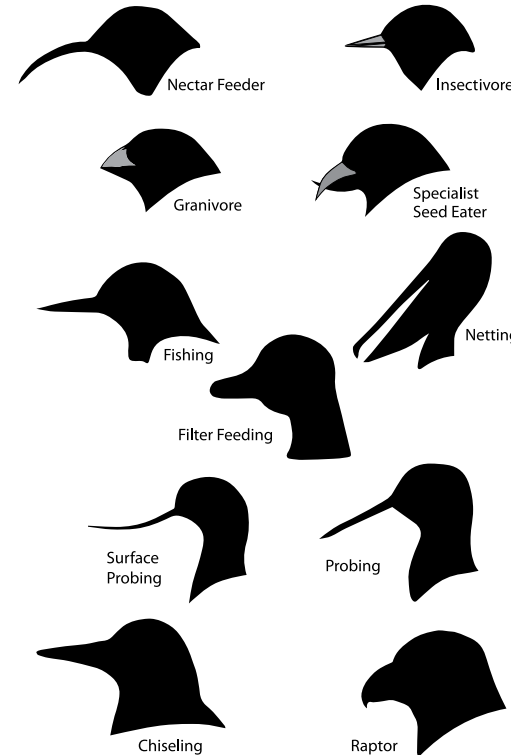
This area receives 17 - 23 inches of water annually. The sandy soil of the area makes farming difficult, so this area contains one of the largest tracts of unplowed prairie in North America. People primarily use the Sandhills region for cattle grazing. With few lights from buildings and infrastructure across the Sandhills, there is low light pollution, making the area ideal for stargazing.



Bird Viewing Tips

1. **Stay quiet and calm.**
2. **Be discreet** — wear muted clothing and limit fragrances.
3. **Use your ears!** Listen for bird songs and calls.
4. **Use binoculars** to get a closer look, always keep a respectful distance from wildlife.
5. **Be patient.**
6. **Go to where the habitat is** — visit state parks and other public lands.
7. **Do your homework** — learn what species of birds live in the area.

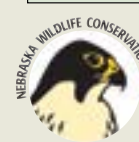
Beaks as Tools



NOT TO SCALE



Birds of the Nebraska Sandhills



Identification Guide

NEBRASKA
— GAME PARKS —

OutdoorNebraska.org



Greater Prairie-chicken

Tympanuchus cupido
Size: L: 17 - 18 in., WS: 24 - 28 in.
Description: Large grouse with barred brown plumage, males have orange air sacs on their neck used in display.
Diet: Seeds and insects
Habitat: Open grasslands
Viewing: Year-round, central and limited southeast



Great Blue Heron

Ardea herodias
Size: L: 38 - 54 in., WS: 65.8 - 79 in.
Description: Tall with long legs and neck, dagger-like bill, gray body, lighter face with black stripe above eye.
Diet: Fish, frogs, small birds
Habitat: Wetlands
Viewing: Spring/fall, statewide; summer, northeast



Trumpeter Swan

Cygnus buccinator
Size: L: 54 - 62 in., WS: 80 in.
Description: Large white bird with long neck, black on legs and bill, extending onto face.
Diet: Aquatic plants, some insects/fish
Habitat: Open areas near shallow water
Viewing: Summer, northern Sandhills



Swainson's Hawk

Buteo swainsoni
Size: L: 19 - 22 in., WS: 46 - 54 in.
Description: Brown/gray above, white below, brown-red chest, dark beak and yellow legs.
Diet: Mammals and insects
Habitat: Grasslands
Viewing: Spring/fall, statewide; summer, west



Sharp-tailed Grouse

Tympanuchus phasianellus
Size: L: 16 - 18.5 in., WS: 20 - 24 in.
Description: Chicken-like bird, spotted white and brown with short pointed tail with white at base.
Diet: Plants and grains
Habitat: Open grasslands
Viewing: Year-round, Sandhills



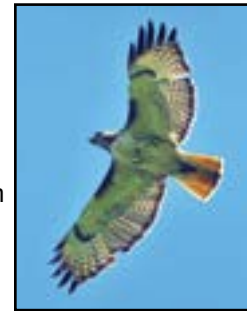
Long-billed Curlew

Numenius americanus
Size: L: 19.7 - 25.5 in., WS: 24 - 35 in.
Description: Cinnamon colored plumage that is speckled brown, long neck, long curved black bill and legs.
Diet: Worms, crabs, insects
Habitat: Wetlands and shortgrass prairie
Viewing: Summer, northwest



Green-winged Teal

Anas carolinensis
Size: L: 12 - 15 in., WS: 20.5 - 23 in.
Description: Small mottled brown duck with green wing-patch and white, vertical side stripe and rump patch. Breeding males have cinnamon head with green streak on side.
Diet: Seeds, some small fish
Habitat: Wetlands
Viewing: Spring/fall, statewide; summer, northeast



Red-tailed Hawk

Buteo jamaicensis
Size: L: 18 - 22 in., WS: 45 - 52.4 in.
Description: Large raptor known for their rusty red tail. Plumage can vary widely, but generally dark brown above and light below.
Diet: Carnivore, mainly small mammals
Habitat: Fields to woodlands
Viewing: Year-round, statewide



Ring-necked Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus
Size: L: 20.0 - 27.6 in., WS: 20 - 24 in.
Description: Buffy cinnamon with red face, green neck with white ring at base, and long barred tail.
Diet: Seeds, insects, fruit
Habitat: Agricultural land and fallow fields
Viewing: Year-round, statewide



White-faced Ibis

Plegadis chihi
Size: L: 18 - 22 in., WS: 37 in.
Description: Large maroon shore bird with dark green wings, long legs, and long, downturned beak.
Diet: Aquatic invertebrates
Habitat: Wetlands
Viewing: Spring-fall, statewide



Eared Grebe

Podiceps nigricollis
Size: L: 11.8 - 14 in., WS: 20.5 - 21.6 in.
Description: Small gray and white water bird, thin bill and red eyes, males black and cinnamon in breeding.
Diet: Aquatic insects, shrimp, fish
Habitat: Wetlands
Viewing: Fall/spring, statewide; summer, western Sandhills



Yellow-breasted Chat

Icteria virens
Size: L: 7 in., WS: 9.8 in.
Description: Olive/gray above, bright yellow chest and white "spectacles".
Diet: Insects
Habitat: Shrubland
Viewing: Spring-fall, west



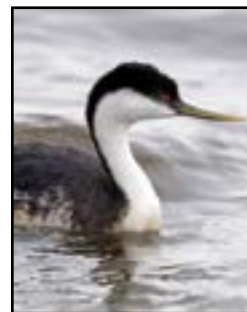
Killdeer

Charadrius vociferus
Size: L: 8 - 11 in., WS: 18 - 19 in.
Description: Brown shorebird with white belly, chin, and face markings, two black chest bars and long legs.
Diet: Insects
Habitat: Rural to urban
Viewing: Spring-fall, statewide



American Avocet

Recurvirostra americana
Size: L: 17.0 - 18.5 in., WS: 28.4 in.
Description: Breeding males have rusty head/neck, pale gray/white through body, black on wings and back, long blue-gray legs, long black upturned bill.
Diet: Aquatic invertebrates
Habitat: Wetlands
Viewing: Spring-fall, statewide



Western Grebe

Aechmophorus occidentalis
Size: L: 21.6 - 29.5 in., WS: 31 - 34 in.
Description: Black back and face, white neck and underside, long neck and thick bill.
Diet: Fish
Habitat: Wetlands
Viewing: Fall/spring, statewide; summer, western Sandhills



Western Meadowlark

Sturnella neglecta
Size: L: 6.3 - 10.2 in., WS: 22 - 24 in.
Description: Short tail, flat head, long bill, brown back, yellow front, and black V on chest.
Diet: Insects
Habitat: Grasslands
Viewing: Year-round, statewide