

**PRELIMINARY CHECKLIST OF THE  
BIRDS OF THE  
LANPHERE DUNES  
AND MAD RIVER SLOUGH**

by C. John Ralph, Kimberly Hollinger,  
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**HUMBOLDT BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY**

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A total of 266 species have been recorded to date in the area of this checklist, quite an unusually high number. This area includes a rich variety of habitat, including nearshore ocean waters, sandy beach, active dunes, conifer forest, riparian edge, pasture, fresh water ponds and ditches, tidal slough, and salt and fresh water marsh. For the past 20 years a great deal of monitoring has been conducted in this area with Mrs. Hortense Lanphere's deeding of a large area of dune and forest to the Nature Conservancy. Notable were Richard Hill and Susan Sferra who did landbird censuses in 1973 and 1983, Linda Long who surveyed the pastures and slough areas in 1989, and the U.S. Forest Service which has conducted ocean censuses since 1991. The Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory has also conducted censuses, trapping, and constant effort mist-netting since 1981, primarily in the summer and fall, and since 1995, essentially throughout the year. All of these resources were used in compiling this report, and differ from the usual checklist in that we had the advantage of quantitative assessment of many of the species.

While all of the habitats provide many species, the riparian edge, that is, the border between the forest and the pasture or slough marsh, is by far the richest. Approximately two-thirds of all species on this list have been recorded here, many captured in mist nets. During the fall, many vagrant landbirds, such as warblers and flycatchers, are found in coastal areas such as this.

We consider this very much a preliminary draft, as many observations that we know of have not yet been tallied. We thank all the observers in all the various projects for many years of hard work.

## ABUNDANCE CATEGORIES

These are approximations only, and would differ between bird watchers. They assume about four hour's birding in the area, in the proper season and habitat for a given species, and are adapted from Harris (1996).

A = Abundant. Many individuals seen easily.

C = Common. Seen in smaller numbers on more than about half the trips.

U = Uncommon. Seen in smaller numbers on less than half the trips.

R = Rare. Only a few individuals seen, but usually present in every year.

V = Visitor or Vagrant. Those with very few records, and not expected but once in every 5 to 10+ years.

## SEASONAL CATEGORIES

The following are approximations only. For example, many shorebirds arrive in July in early fall migration, and some landbirds arrive in November in late fall migration.

SPRING - March and April

SUMMER - May, June, and July

FALL - August, September, and October

WINTER - November, December, January, and February

## HABITAT

The categories represent the primary habitat that the species is found in. Many species are found in more than one habitat, sometimes even quite commonly.

O - Ocean, within telescope range of shore, about a mile, and the beach.

D - Dunes, the active dunes covered with dune mat vegetation, and regenerating willow and low pine hollows.

F - The conifer forest dominated by pine, spruce, and fir, with a huckleberry understory.

R - The riparian zones, mostly the boundary between the forest and pasture, but also along the forest-dune interface, and along some seeps or streams in the forest.

P - The pasture bordering the slough, mostly diked wetlands with some fresh water ditches and small ponds.

S - The tidal Mad River Slough and associated marsh and mud flats.

I - An irruptive species, found in some numbers in one or two years and then gone for many more.

## References

- Harris, S.W. 1996. Northwestern California Birds. Humboldt State University Press, Arcata, California. Second Edition.
- Hill, R.L. 1977. Avian composition of coastal dune Habitat on the Samoa Peninsula, California. MS Thesis. Humboldt State University.
- Long, L.L. 1993. The daytime use of agricultural fields by migrating and wintering shorebirds in Humboldt County, California. MS Thesis. Humboldt State University.
- Sferra, S.J. 1988. Bird use of the interior and edge of an isolated coniferous forest in Humboldt County, California. MS Thesis. Humboldt State University.

LIST OF THE SPECIES BY HABITAT

Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Banded?	Habitat
Pacific Loon.....	R	R	U	R	.	O
Red-throated Loon.....	R	R	-	-	.	O
Common Loon.....	U	C	C	U	.	S
Pied-billed Grebe.....	U	U	U	U	.	S
Western Grebe.....	-	R	C	C	.	S
Clark's Grebe.....	-	-	R	R	.	S
Red-necked Grebe.....	-	R	-	R	.	S
Sooty Shearwater.....	-	R	U	-	.	O
Buller's Shearwater.....	-	-	V	-	.	O
Northern Fulmar.....	-	V	-	-	.	O
Brown Pelican.....	-	U	C	U	.	O
White Pelican.....	-	-	V	-	.	S
Double-crested Cormorant.....	U	U	U	U	.	S
Brandt's Cormorant.....	U	U	U	R	.	O
Pelagic Cormorant.....	U	U	U	U	.	O
American Bittern.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
Great Blue Heron.....	U	U	U	U	.	S
Great Egret.....	C	C	C	C	.	S
Snowy Egret.....	U	U	U	U	.	S
Cattle Egret.....	-	-	R	-	.	P
Green-backed Heron.....	-	-	R	-	.	P
Black-crowned Night Heron....	-	R	R	-	.	R
White-faced Ibis.....	-	-	R	-	.	S
Tundra Swan.....	-	-	-	-	.	P
Brant.....	-	-	U	U	.	O
Greater White-fronted Goose..	-	-	R	-	.	P
Canada Goose.....	C	C	C	C	.	P
Snow Goose.....	-	-	-	R	.	P
Wood Duck.....	-	-	V	-	.	R
Green-winged Teal.....	R	-	R	R	.	P
Mallard.....	U	U	U	U	.	P
Northern Pintail.....	R	-	R	U	.	S
Cinnamon Teal.....	R	R	R	-	.	P
Northern Shoveler.....	R	-	R	U	.	S
American Wigeon.....	U	-	U	U	.	S
Canvasback.....	U	-	U	U	.	S
Lesser Scaup.....	U	-	U	U	.	S
Greater Scaup.....	C	-	C	C	.	S
Oldsquaw.....	-	-	-	V	.	S
Surf Scoter.....	C	U	A	C	.	O
Black Scoter.....	U	-	U	U	.	O
White-winged Scoter.....	C	U	C	C	.	O
Common Goldeneye.....	-	-	-	R	.	S
Bufflehead.....	U	-	U	U	.	S
Hooded Merganser.....	-	-	-	V	.	S
Common Merganser.....	R	R	R	R	.	S
Red-breasted Merganser.....	-	-	R	-	.	S

Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Banded?	Habitat
Ruddy Duck.....	R	-	R	U	.	S
Black Vulture.....	-	-	V	-	.	R
Turkey Vulture.....	-	U	U	U	.	P
Osprey.....	U	U	U	U	.	S
White-tailed Kite.....	U	U	U	U	.	D
Bald Eagle.....	-	-	V	-	.	S
Northern Harrier.....	C	C	C	C	.	S
Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	U	R	U	U	B	R
Cooper's Hawk.....	-	-	-	U	B	F
Red-shouldered Hawk.....	U	U	U	U	B	R
Red-tailed Hawk.....	C	C	U	C	.	F
Rough-legged Hawk.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
American Kestrel.....	-	-	R	R	B	R
Merlin.....	-	-	-	R	B	P
Peregrine Falcon.....	R	R	R	R	.	S
Prairie Falcon.....	-	-	-	R	.	P
California Quail.....	C	C	C	C	B	R
Sora.....	-	-	V	-	.	S
Virginia Rail.....	U	U	U	U	B	R
American Coot.....	U	-	U	C	.	P
Black-bellied Plover.....	C	-	A	A	.	S
Lesser Golden Plover.....	-	-	R	R	.	S
Semipalmated Plover.....	U	-	U	U	.	O
Snowy Plover.....	-	V	-	-	.	O
Killdeer.....	U	-	C	C	.	P
Mountain Plover.....	-	-	-	V	.	P
American Avocet.....	-	-	V	-	.	S
Greater Yellowlegs.....	R	-	U	U	.	S
Lesser Yellowlegs.....	-	-	-	R	.	S
Willet.....	C	-	C	C	.	S
Wandering Tattler.....	-	-	-	V	.	S
Spotted Sandpiper.....	-	-	V	-	.	S
Whimbrel.....	-	-	C	U	.	S
Long-billed Curlew.....	U	-	U	U	.	O
Marbled Godwit.....	C	-	C	C	.	S
Ruddy Turnstone.....	V	-	-	V	.	O
Black Turnstone.....	R	-	-	-	.	S
Red Knot.....	V	-	-	-	.	S
Sanderling.....	-	-	C	C	.	O
Western Sandpiper.....	U	-	U	C	.	S
Least Sandpiper.....	U	-	A	A	.	S
Baird's Sandpiper.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
Pectoral Sandpiper.....	-	-	R	R	.	P
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
Dunlin.....	C	-	U	A	B	S
Buff-breasted Sandpiper.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
Ruff.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
Long-billed Dowitcher.....	R	-	U	U	.	S
Short-billed Dowitcher.....	R	-	U	C	.	S
Common Snipe.....	R	-	U	U	B	P

Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Banded?	Habitat
Red-necked Phalarope.....	-	R	U	-	.	S
Red Phalarope.....	-	R	U	-	.	O
Parasitic Jaeger.....	-	R	U	-	.	O
Pomarine Jaeger.....	-	-	V	-	.	O
Black-legged Kittiwake.....	V	-	-	V	.	O
Sabine's Gull.....	-	V	-	-	.	O
Bonaparte's Gull.....	R	V	R	-	.	S
Heerman's Gull.....	-	U	U	-	.	O
Glaucous-winged Gull.....	-	-	R	R	.	O
Ring-billed Gull.....	R	R	R	R	.	S
California Gull.....	U	R	U	U	.	S
Herring Gull.....	U	R	U	U	.	O
Western Gull.....	C	U	C	C	.	O
Mew Gull.....	R	-	R	-	.	O
Caspian Tern.....	-	U	R	-	.	S
Elegant Tern.....	-	R	R	-	.	S
Arctic Tern.....	-	-	V	-	.	O
Forster's Tern.....	-	R	R	-	.	O
Common Tern.....	-	R	-	-	.	O
Black Tern.....	-	-	V	-	.	S
Common Murre.....	R	A	A	U	.	O
Pigeon Guillemot.....	R	C	C	-	.	O
Marbled Murrelet.....	C	C	C	R	.	O
Ancient Murrelet.....	-	-	-	V	.	O
Cassin's Auklet.....	R	R	R	R	.	O
Rhinoceros Auklet.....	R	U	U	U	.	O
Tufted Puffin.....	-	-	V	-	.	O
Band-tailed Pigeon.....	U	R	-	-	.	F, I
White-winged Dove.....	-	-	V	-	.	R
Mourning Dove.....	U	U	-	-	.	R
Black-billed Cuckoo.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Yellow-billed Cuckoo.....	-	V	-	-	B	R
Barn Owl.....	R	R	R	R	.	R
Short-eared Owl.....	R	R	R	R	.	P
Great Horned Owl.....	U	U	U	U	.	F
Burrowing Owl.....	-	-	-	V	.	P
Snowy Owl.....	-	-	-	V	.	D
Saw-whet Owl.....	-	V	-	-	.	R
Poorwill.....	-	-	V	-	.	R
Common Nighthawk.....	-	R	R	-	.	R
Black Swift.....	-	-	V	-	.	R
Vaux's Swift.....	R	-	U	-	.	R
Anna's Hummingbird.....	C	U	U	C	B	R
Calliope Hummingbird.....	-	R	-	-	B	R
Rufous Hummingbird.....	C	C	C	-	B	R
Allen's Hummingbird.....	A	A	U	-	B	R
Belted Kingfisher.....	C	C	C	C	B	S
Acorn Woodpecker.....	-	-	V	-	.	F
Red-breasted Sapsucker.....	-	R	R	-	B	R
Downy Woodpecker.....	U	C	C	U	B	R

Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Banded?	Habitat
Hairy Woodpecker.....	-	U	R	U	B	R
Northern Flicker.....						
Red-shafted Flicker.....	C	C	C	C	B	R
Yellow-shafted Flicker.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Pileated Woodpecker.....	-	-	V	V	.	F
Olive-sided Flycatcher.....	-	U	U	-	B	R
Western Wood Pewee.....	-	C	C	-	B	R
Willow Flycatcher.....	-	V	R	-	B	R
Least Flycatcher.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Hammond's Flycatcher.....	V	-	R	-	B	R
Dusky Flycatcher.....	U	-	R	-	B	R
Gray Flycatcher.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Pacific-slope Flycatcher.....	C	C	C	-	B	F
Black Phoebe*.....	C	C	C	C	B	R
Ash-throated Flycatcher.....	-	R	R	-	B	R
Tropical Kingbird.....	-	-	V	-	B	P
Western Kingbird.....	-	-	R	-	.	P
Eastern Kingbird.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
Horned Lark.....	-	-	-	R	.	D
Purple Martin.....	-	R	-	V	.	F
Tree Swallow*.....	C	A	R	-	B	R
Violet-green Swallow*.....	C	C	R	-	B	R
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	-	R	-	-	.	S
Bank Swallow.....	-	V	-	-	.	P
Cliff Swallow*.....	-	C	C	-	.	S
Barn Swallow*.....	C	C	C	-	B	R
Gray Jay.....	-	V	-	-	B	R
Common Crow.....	R	R	R	-	.	P
Common Raven.....	C	C	A	A	B	R
Black-capped Chickadee.....	R	R	R	R	B	R
Chestnut-backed Chickadee....	C	C	A	A	B	F
Bushtit.....	C	C	U	C	B	R
Red-breasted Nuthatch.....	-	-	U	U	B	F
White-breasted Nuthatch.....	-	-	V	-	.	F
Brown Creeper.....	U	U	U	U	B	F
Rock Wren.....	-	-	V	-	.	R
Bewick's Wren.....	U	U	U	U	B	F
House Wren.....	-	R	R	-	B	R
Winter Wren.....	C	C	C	C	B	R
Marsh Wren.....	U	C	C	U	B	D
Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	U	U	C	A	B	F
Ruby-crowned Kinglet.....	C	R	U	A	B	R
Swainson's Thrush.....	R	A	A	V	B	F
Hermit Thrush.....	C	R	U	A	B	R
American Robin.....	C	C	C	A	B	R
Varied Thrush.....	R	-	U	A	B	F
Townsend's Solitaire.....	-	-	V	-	.	R
Wrentit.....	A	A	A	A	B	F
Northern Mockingbird.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Brown Thrasher.....	-	V	-	-	B	R

Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Banded?	Habitat
Gray Catbird.....	-	V	-	-	B	R
American Pipit.....	U	-	U	U	.	D
Cedar Waxwing.....	-	C	C	-	B	F
Northern Shrike.....	-	-	V	V	B	R
European Starling.....	C	C	C	C	B	P
Solitary Vireo.....	-	R	R	-	B	R
Hutton's Vireo.....	C	U	U	C	B	R
Warbling Vireo.....	-	C	U	-	B	R
Orange-crowned Warbler.....	A	C	C	-	B	R
Tennessee Warbler.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Nashville Warbler.....	V	-	R	R	B	R
Northern Parula.....	-	V	-	-	B	R
Yellow Warbler.....	R	U	U	-	B	R
Chestnut-sided Warbler.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Black-throated Blue Warbler..	-	-	V	-	B	R
Yellow-rumped Warbler.....						
Audubon's Warbler.....	A	C	C	C	B	F
Myrtle Warbler.....	C	R	C	A	B	R
Black-throated Gray Warbler..	R	-	U	-	B	F
Townsend's Warbler.....	V	-	U	-	B	F
Hermit Warbler.....	-	R	R	-	B	F
Prairie Warbler.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Palm Warbler.....	-	-	R	R	B	R
Blackpoll Warbler.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Black-and-White Warbler.....	-	V	V	-	B	R
American Redstart*.....	-	R	V	-	B	R
Prothonotary Warbler.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Worm-eating Warbler.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Ovenbird.....	V	V	V	-	B	R
Northern Waterthrush.....	-	V	-	-	B	R
MacGillivray's Warbler.....	-	R	U	-	B	R
Connecticut Warbler.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Common Yellowthroat.....	U	U	U	-	B	R
Wilson's Warbler.....	C	C	C	-	B	R
Hooded Warbler.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Canada Warbler.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Yellow-breasted Chat.....	-	R	R	-	B	R
Summer Tanager.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Western Tanager.....	-	R	U	-	B	R
Rose-breasted Grosbeak.....	-	-	v	-	.	R
Black-headed Grosbeak.....	-	C	C	-	B	R
Lazuli Bunting.....	-	V	V	-	.	R
Indigo Bunting.....	-	V	V	-	B	R
Painted Bunting.....	-	-	V	-	B	R
Rufous-sided Towhee.....	C	R	U	C	B	F
American Tree Sparrow.....	-	-	V	V	B	R
Chipping Sparrow.....	U	-	R	-	B	R
Vesper Sparrow.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
Lark Sparrow.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
Black-throated Sparrow.....	-	V	-	-	B	R

Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Banded?	Habitat
Lark Bunting.....	-	-	V	-	.	P
Savannah Sparrow.....	C	C	C	C	B	P
Fox Sparrow.....	C	-	C	A	B	R
Song Sparrow.....	A	A	A	A	B	R
Lincoln's Sparrow.....	C	U	U	C	B	R
White-throated Sparrow.....	R	-	R	U	B	R
Golden-crowned Sparrow.....	C	-	C	A	B	R
White-crowned Sparrow.....	C	C	C	A	B	R
Gambell's Sparrow.....	-	-	-	U	B	R
Dark-eyed Junco						
Oregon Junco.....	C	R	U	A	B	R
Slate-colored Junco.....	-	-	-	R	B	R
Gray-headed Junco.....	-	-	-	V	B	R
Lapland Longspur.....	-	-	-	V	.	P
Bobolink.....	-	-	V	-	.	S
Red-winged Blackbird.....	U	U	U	U	B	P
Western Meadowlark.....	U	-	U	C	.	D
Brewer's Blackbird.....	U	C	C	U	B	P
Brown-headed Cowbird.....	U	C	U	U	B	R
Bullock's Oriole.....	U	C	U	-	B	R
Purple Finch.....	C	A	C	U	B	F
House Finch.....	C	C	C	U	B	R
Red Crossbill.....	C	U	U	-	B	F
Pine Siskin.....	A	C	C	U	B	F
American Goldfinch.....	U	A	C	U	B	R
Lesser Goldfinch.....	-	R	U	-	B	R
Evening Grosbeak.....	-	-	-	-	.	F
House Sparrow.....	U	U	-	-	B	R