

Breeding Birds of Chauncey Marsh Natural Area, Lawrence County

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Chauncey Marsh is an oxbow marsh of the Embarras River in northern Lawrence County. The 920-acre natural area also contains bottomland forest, shrub-swamp, and prairie communities. To guide managers restoring portions of the natural area, we conducted a breeding bird survey of the site in the summer of 1998 for the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund.

Methods. We established seven transects through forest (4 transects), prairie (1 transect), and marsh/shrub-swamp habitats (2 transects) to survey breeding birds. Occasionally, we also made area searches into parts of the natural area not well-covered by transect sampling. Since the purpose of the survey was to document all breeding bird species, rather than quantify densities, all bird observations were recorded, regardless of distance from transects. Transects were 500-700 m in length and surveyed from sunrise to 1000 h on 3-4 dates each from 23 April to 24 June 1998. We defined breeding species based on nests located, fledglings observed or heard begging, observed copulation, observed nest building, and when pairs were observed for 3 weeks or longer and the species is known to regularly breed in the region.

As an index of abundance, we have ranked species based on percent of observations within marsh/shrub-swamp, forest, and prairie/forest edge habitats (Table 1). Species heard in one habitat but obvi-

ously located in another were not included (e.g., Pileated Woodpeckers heard from prairie restorations, but located in the forest).

Results. We located 64 species during our surveys, at least 54 of which were breeding within the natural area during the survey period

Table 1. Relative abundances of breeding birds (% of observations) within different habitats at Chauncey Marsh Natural Area, 1998. Up to 20 of the most common species within a habitat are included.

Marsh/Shrub-Swamp

Red-winged Blackbird (34)	Common Grackle (16)
Common Yellowthroat (11)	Indigo Bunting (10)
Song Sparrow (6)	House Wren (5)
Yellow Warbler (5)	Willow Flycatcher (4)
Wood Duck (3)	Green Heron (<2)
Spotted Sandpiper (<2)	Carolina Wren (<2)

Prairie/Forest Edge

Indigo Bunting (14)	Common Yellowthroat (10)
Mourning Dove (7)	Common Grackle (7)
American Goldfinch (7)	American Robin (6)
Red-winged Blackbird (6)	Eastern Towhee (5)
Dickcissel (5)	Song Sparrow (4)
Northern Flicker (3)	House Wren (3)
Baltimore Oriole (3)	Northern Cardinal (3)
Red-headed Woodpecker (2)	Downy Woodpecker (2)
Northern Bobwhite (<2)	Grasshopper Sparrow (<2)
Brown-headed Cowbird (<2)	Field Sparrow (<2)

Bottomland Forest

Tufted Titmouse (18)	Downy Woodpecker (9)
Great Crested Flycatcher (8)	Eastern Towhee (8)
Red-bellied Woodpecker (7)	White-breasted Nuthatch (6)
House Wren (6)	Red-headed Woodpecker (5)
Eastern Wood-Pewee (4)	Blue Jay (4)
Carolina Chickadee (4)	Red-eyed Vireo (4)
American Crow (4)	Northern Flicker (3)
Yellow-billed Cuckoo (3)	Prothonotary Warbler (2)
Red-shouldered Hawk (2)	Yellow-throated Vireo (2)
Northern Parula (<2)	Cerulean Warbler (<2)