

LARAMIE GREENBELT NATURE TRAIL

Created by Rory Eggleston

Introduction

This guide presents eight stations along the Laramie Greenbelt. Each of these stations is indicated by a numbered post, and the flora and fauna that might be viewed from each station is described below. A map of the stations, along with a few photographs, follows the descriptions.

1. **House Finch** (male: orange-red forehead and breast, brown streaked flanks; female: gray-brown overall with grayish streaks on flank.), **Yellow-Rumped Warbler** (male: gray-black all over with yellow throat, forehead and side patch, white underside, white patch on wings; female: gray-black all over, yellow throat, side patch and rump, white underside, white stripes on wing.), **American Crow** (male & female: black overall with broad wings and large head.), **Brown-Headed Cowbird** (male: shiny black body with a dark brown head; female: drab brown overall with short, stout beak.), **Chipping Sparrow** (male & female: gray all over, chestnut forehead, white stripe above eye and white throat, brown speckled wings.)
2. **Black-Capped Chickadee** (male & female: black throat and top of head, dirty white belly, grayish back.), **Yellow Warbler** (male: all yellow with brown stripes on sides, black edges on wings; female: all yellow with black edges on wings.), **Cottonwood tree** (gray trunk and branches, highly grooved, heart shaped leaves.), **Common Yellowthroat** (male: gray-brown body, yellow throat, black and white stripes on head; female: gray brown with yellow throat.), **Gray Catbird** (male & female: dark gray body, black forehead, black tail, rufous undertail.), **Willow** (bush-like, thin, supple branches growing from a short sturdy center trunk, long, narrow leaves).
3. **Mallard Duck** (male: gray body, black and white tail, brown chest, green head and yellow bill; female: drab speckled brown body with dirty orange bill. [Fig. 1]), **Yellow-Headed Blackbird** (male: all black body, white stripe on wing, yellow head; female: brown body, dirty yellow head/throat.), **Great Blue Heron** (male & female: gray-blue body, gray-brown neck, dirty yellow bill. [Fig. 2]), **California Gull** (male & female: dark gray wings, black and white tail, white underside and neck, dirty brown patch on back of neck/head.), **Canada Geese** (male & female: dirty gray body, white rump, black neck and head with white stripe behind the eyes. [Fig. 5]).
4. **Cliff Swallow** (male & female: white underside, blue-black back, wings and tail, red patch on cheek, blue and white forehead.), **Belted Kingfisher** (male: blue back, wings and tail with blue "collar" on neck, white underside and neck, blue head; female: blue back, wings and tail, white underside and neck with rufous patches, blue head.), **Mourning Dove** (male & female: drab brown body with black spots on wing and long spiky tail in flight.), **Barn Swallow** (male: dark blue upper body, light orange underside, dark orange face and throat; female: dark blue body, white underside, dark orange face and throat.), **Tree Swallow** (male & female: blue-green-black back, wings, tail and head, white underside.)
5. **American Coot** (male & female: all black body, yellow legs, white beak, red forehead.), **Spotted Sandpiper** (male & female: brown back, wings, tail and head, white underside with many black dots, orange bill.), **Cattail** (tall green stems with large brown seed head at top; usually close to or in standing water.), **Wilson's Phalarope** (male & female: white underside, grayish back, wings and tail with a red stripe, light orange neck with black stripe ending over the eye, gray forehead.), **Song Sparrow** (male & female: speckled brown body, white and brown striped underside, white throat, gray stripes on head.)
6. **American Beaver** (male & female: approx. 2 1/2 feet long, body overall brown, smooth black tail.), **Mallard Duck** (see post three [See Fig. 1]), **Green-Winged Teal** (male: gray/black body, speckled tan breast, in flight there is a green patch on the back of the wing, head is brown with a green stripe coming back from the eye; female: speckled brown body with a visible green patch on the wing when it is swimming.), **Red-Wing Blackbird** (male: entirely black body with a red and yellow stripe on both wings; female: brown speckled body. [See Fig. 3])
7. **American Coot** (see post five), **Marsh Wren** (male & female: brown back, wings and tail, white and black striped patch on back, white stripe behind eyes, pale underside.), **Greater Yellowlegs** (male & female: black and white speckled body with white underside, long dark bill, bright yellow legs.), **Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher** (male & female: blue-gray body, black and white tail, pale underside, black forehead, long pointed beak, black legs.), **Western Meadowlark** (male & female: brown, white and black speckled body, yellow underside, black "collar" at neck, yellow throat, black and white stripes on head, long pale bill.).
8. **Red-Tailed Hawk** (male & female: brown-black body, whitish-red underside, red tail.), **Killdeer** (male & female: brown body, red tail with black stripe, white underside, two black breast bands, pinkish legs. [See Fig. 4]), **Horned Lark** (male: gray-brown body, white underside, small feather "horns", yellow throat, black breast band and eye stripe; female: gray body, white underside, pale yellow throat, black breast band and eye stripe, no horns.), **Lark Sparrow** (male & female: gray-brown body, white underside with dark spot in the middle of the chest, chestnut, black and white stripes on head, big beak.), **American Goldfinch** (male: yellow body, black wings, black forehead, pinkish legs and beak; female: pale gray-yellow body, blackish wings, white rump, brown beak and legs.).

Photographs



Figure 1: Mallard Duck
<http://www.easystockphotos.com/birds/duckinwater.html>



Figure 2: Great Blue Heron
<http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/viewimage.php?picture=great-blue-heron&image=3015>
Photograph courtesy of Andrew Schmidt



Figure 3: Red-Winged Blackbird
<http://www.fws.gov/digitalmedia/>, click on "Birds and Bird Management"
Photograph courtesy of George Gentry.

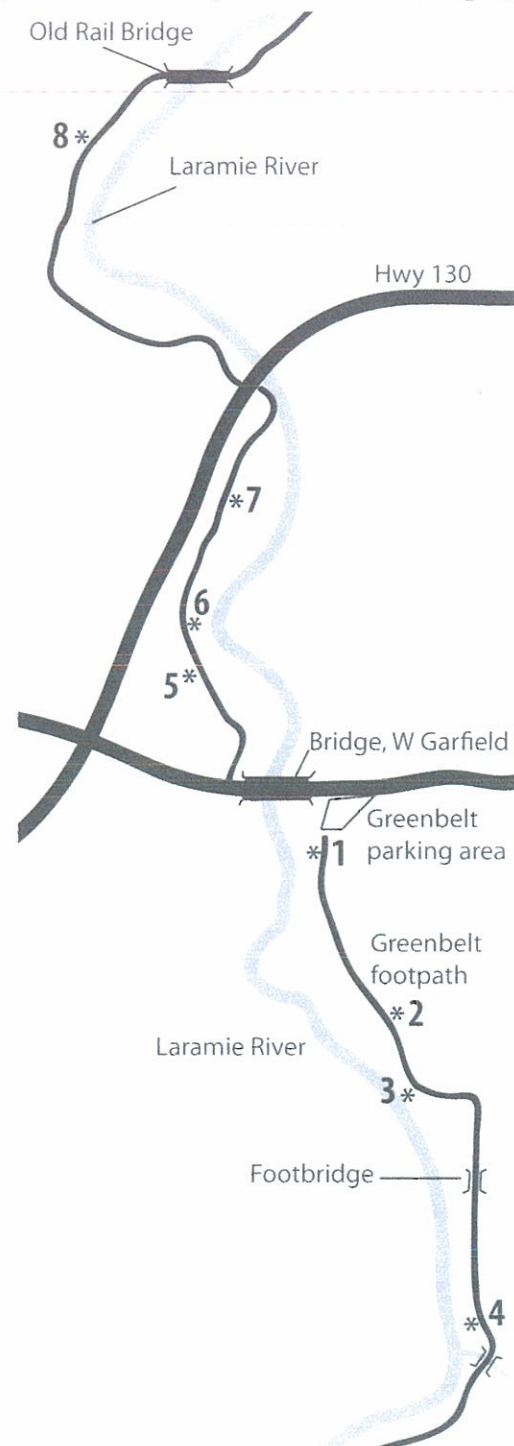


Figure 4: Killdeer
<http://www.public-domain-image.com/animals/birds/slides/birds-oceans-beaches.html>
Photograph courtesy of Jon Sullivan



Figure 5: Canada Geese
<http://www.public-domain-image.com/animals/birds/goose/slides/canadian-geese.html> Photograph courtesy of Rosendahl.

Map of Greenbelt footpath with nature trail post locations



Acknowledgements

First, this nature trail would never have been possible without my parents' support and encouragement throughout. It would not have happened without them. The Laramie City Parks, Tree and Recreation Advisory Board approved the project, for which I am very grateful. I also owe Mike Zook a great deal of thanks for helping plan out the trail and arranging things with the city. Thanks to him, I was able to find all of the best places to set up stations. Finally, the Laramie Audubon Society was very enthusiastic about the project and offered their help to set up the trail. To all who helped this project along its way, thank you.