An assessment of Relative Bird Abundance in two Riparian Areas with Differing Grazing Histories on the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge [TWS]

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We conducted surveys for breeding birds in riparian zones of two perennial streams on the Charles M Russell National Wildlife Refuge in north-central Montana during June 1994. One drainage, Siparyann Creek, had a history of intensive livestock use while the other drainage, Rock Creek, had a history of lesser use including no grazing and spring-only grazing in recent years. Few trees or shrubs were present along Siparyann Creek while plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) and willow (*Salix spp.*) were common along Rock Creek. Thirty bird species were observed along 15 transects in Siparyann Creek, and an average of 12.2 individual birds were recorded per transect. Thirty-two bird species were observed along 20 transects in Rock Creek averaging 20.2 individual birds per transect. Bird species associated with grasslands dominated in Siparyann Creek, while bird species associated with forested riparian habitats dominated in Rock Creek.