

## 6. Hastings Sand Coulee SNA

Only a few years ago, the State designated the Sand Coulee in Hastings as a natural area to preserve for its' unique dry prairie habitat. Providing home to breeding birds that prefer the rare plants and food found within. Eastern Towhee, Lark Sparrow, Orchard Oriole and American Woodcock can be found nesting on this public land. Look for these special breeding birds in the summer and many migrating birds during spring and fall.

The main parking area and entrance is located on the west side of Hwy 316 just south of the city limits. This gives you access to the portion the SNA south of 316. No trails are developed but signage is on site giving visitors' guidance. This portion is quite open prairie habitat and has can give you a real feeling of what the native prairie was



*Lapland Longspur*  
Photo by Kevin D. Smith

originally like in Hastings. The Coulee goes north of Hwy 316 all the way to Spiral Boulevard in Hastings. At this end the sandy slopes are lined with oak forest. An old cemetery sits on top of the western bluff near Tuttle Drive and a storm water pond has been installed that is not native to the site, but provides birds the water they need. The city has worked with partners over the past decade to add a diverse mix of native wetland and mesic plants around the pond. Consequently the birding possibilities are very good.

Because the habitat at this SNA is so unique you won't want to miss a chance to visit. Be prepared for the elements. The site has wood ticks and poison ivy which we are sure you want to avoid as much as possible.



*Lark Sparrow*  
Photo by Jim Williams



*Sand Coulee*