

Grassland birds are declining faster than any other community of birds.



Eastern Bluebird Fledgling, Amy Johnson

With more than 80% of North America's grasslands currently residing on private lands, it is imperative that we optimize the potential of these areas for preserving declining early successional bird species in shrub and grassland habitats.

Virginia Working Landscapes is currently monitoring shrub and grassland bird populations on private properties across 13 Virginia counties in an effort to understand the long-term trends of relative abundance and species composition in relation to habitat structure and land management practices.

The species illustrated are the current focus of our conservation efforts as these birds are solely dependent on shrub and grassland ecosystems.



Red-winged Blackbird Nest, Amy Johnson

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Postpone Fall 'cleanup' until the Spring.

Grassland birds benefit from brush piles, shrub patches and fallow fields throughout the winter.

Delay field maintenance until mid-July.

If it is necessary to cut earlier, do so by mid-May and wait 60 days before the next cut. This will allow most grassland birds to successfully fledge at least one clutch of young.

Follow low-intensity grazing practices.

This improves insect availability and provides favorable foraging conditions for grassland birds. Rotational grazing can produce similar conditions.

Actively control non-native vegetation.

Non-native plants easily out-compete native species which can disrupt the entire food web.

Plant native trees, shrubs, and grasses.

Native vegetation provides ample foraging opportunities for grassland birds and helps to protect them from predators and severe weather.

Keep cats indoors.

Outdoor cats kill an estimated 2 1/2 billion birds annually, in the continental US alone.

Volunteer your time.

Participation in local projects, such as Virginia Working Landscapes, is a great way to assist scientists in the monitoring of long-term trends of declining shrub and grassland bird species.

Educate yourself and your peers on the causes of shrub and grassland bird decline.

Sharing your enthusiasm for local species creates opportunities to teach others about their importance and how to best protect them.



Smithsonian Conservation
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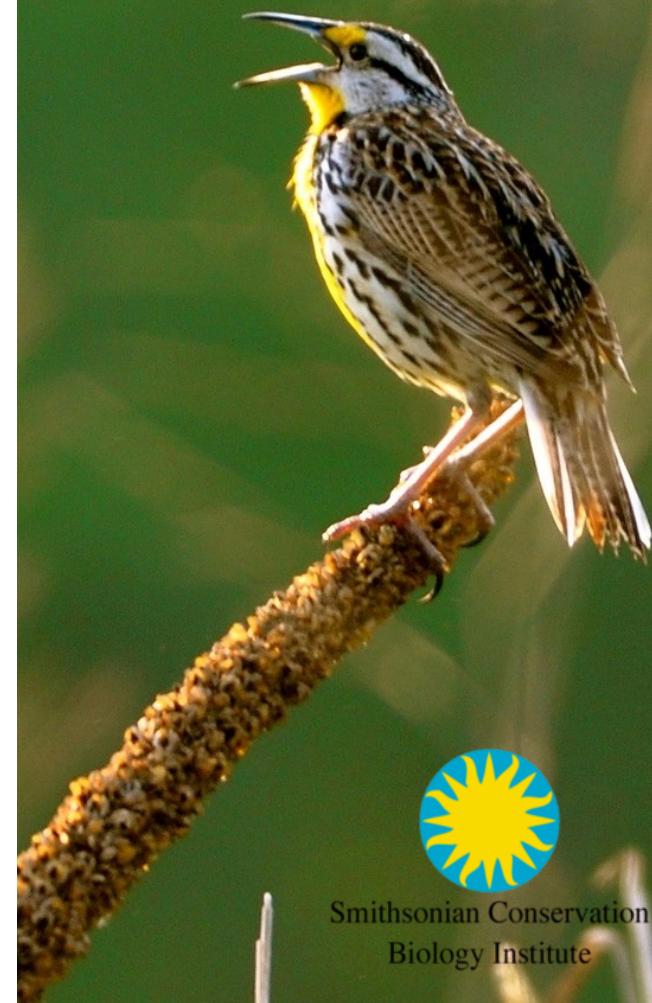
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SHRUB & GRASSLAND

BIRDS



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Shrub & Grassland Bird Checklist



Willow Flycatcher



Vesper Sparrow



American Kestrel*



Common Yellowthroat



Field Sparrow*+



Eastern Bluebird



Northern Harrier



Grasshopper Sparrow*+



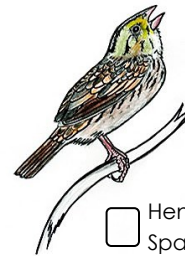
Indigo Bunting



Bobolink^+



Eastern Towhee*



Henslow's Sparrow*^



White-eyed Vireo



Blue-winged Warbler*



Yellow-billed Cuckoo*+



Savannah Sparrow



Loggerhead Shrike*+



Prairie Warbler*^+



Red-winged Blackbird



Blue Grosbeak



Eastern Meadowlark*+



Brown Thrasher*



Yellow-breasted Chat*



Dickcissel



Eastern Kingbird*



Northern Bobwhite*+