



Grassland Bird Monitoring

Discover Which Birds Use Your Pastures and How Grazing Management Can Improve Their Nesting Success



Photo Credit: Ryan Sanderson, Macaulay Library

Information

For Grazing Managers



Are you a grazier interested in how your management affects grassland birds? Sand County Foundation and Audubon Great Lakes can conduct surveys to identify the bird species that use your pastures. These findings can help you manage livestock in ways to help improve nesting habitat for these important birds.

Why grassland birds?

Grassland bird populations in North America have dropped by *more than half* since 1970¹. In Wisconsin, these birds often depend on prairies, hay and small grain fields, and well managed pasture for breeding and survival.

How will this help guide my management?

Monitoring helps evaluate the effectiveness of our management practices, and helps you understand how your land and bird habitat are changing over time.

Livestock grazing is a key vegetation management tool for grasslands. The vegetative structure of your pastures is important as each grassland bird species has specific preferences for grass height, density, and composition. Understanding which bird species are using your land can help you manage for those you have, and those you hope to attract.



Who will conduct survey, and when?

An expert trained to identify birds by sight and sound will conduct a sunrise breeding bird survey on your farm. This typically occurs in June, during the Wisconsin breeding season when the birds are easiest to observe. You will need to schedule the visit with the surveyor, but you do not need to be present for the survey.

How do I request bird monitoring on my farm?

Please contact Sand County Foundation to determine if there is a bird survey expert available near you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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PROJECT PARTNERS:

 Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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 Audubon



Sand County Foundation inspires and empowers farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners to ethically care for the land to sustain water resources, build healthy soil, enhance wildlife habitat, and support outdoor recreation.

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¹ K. V. Rosenberg et al., Science 10.1126/science.aaw1313 (2019)