

Manitoba Species at Risk

Loggerhead Shrike

Lanius ludovicianus



Christian Artuso



Habitat



Diet



Provincially
Endangered

Loggerhead Shrike Range Map



* Range map based on potential range.

The Loggerhead Shrike is a provincially Endangered and federally Threatened songbird. Despite its small size (21 cm long), it is infamous for its raptor-like habit of impaling its prey on thorns and barbed wire. They consume large numbers of grasshoppers, field mice, and meadow voles, all major pests of agricultural crops, making them quite useful to agricultural production.

At one time quite common around farms and suburbs, Loggerhead Shrike populations have dropped drastically in the past 35 years. Although it is not certain why Canadian populations continue to decline, threats such as loss of habitat and pesticide use are considered major contributors.

Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs)

- Preserve native prairie habitat of adequate size for breeding shrikes
- Practice moderate grazing
- Encourage variable grass heights
- Plant shelterbelts more than 200 m from road
- Only plant trees and shrubs on modified landscapes like interfaces between different crops and along fences or powerlines and not on native grasslands
- Restrict livestock access to woody vegetation, such as shelterbelts

Co-benefiting Species: The BMPs listed for this species may also benefit Ferruginous Hawks and Chestnut-collared Longspurs.

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More about the Loggerhead Shrike

Description

A notable field mark of the Loggerhead Shrike is the black "mask" across its eyes and forehead. Their thick bodies covered in black, white, and grey plumage, make adult Loggerheads particularly conspicuous. Like birds of prey, they have hooked bills; however, unlike birds of prey, they do not have talons and require sharp objects to skewer prey.

Habitat

Loggerhead Shrikes require a combination of open, grazed areas adjacent to nesting and perching sites, and dense ungrazed habitat for prey. Shrubby/thorny bushes and trees are also required for nesting.

Threats

Primary threats to Loggerhead Shrike include habitat loss and over use of pesticides. Recently, Loggerhead Shrikes have experienced a significant number of fatalities due to collisions with vehicles, which is thought to be the result of increased use of road edge habitat, caused by habitat loss.

Outlook

Although the outlook for the Loggerhead Shrike appears uncertain, additional species research and implementation of beneficial management strategies will help ensure that viable populations of this species are maintained.

Producer Benefits

The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) is a voluntary, confidential, self-assessment process, enabling farm managers to develop an action plan to address agri-environmental assets and risks in their operation. Completion of an EFP may qualify you for funding to implement BMPs on your land. For more information or to register, contact your local Manitoba Agriculture office.

Beyond the species benefits, BMPs can help your operation through:

- Access to on-farm programs and incentives
- Meet emerging market demands for sustainable sourcing
- Increased agricultural sustainability
- Greater resilience to events such as insect outbreaks, floods and droughts
- Better pest control and management
- Improved water quality, quantity and erosion control
- Improved pasture and forage

For more information regarding beneficial management practices on your land, please contact Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation or the organizations listed below.

FUN FACT

A Loggerhead Shrike can kill and carry an animal as large as itself.

Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation

www.mhhc.mb.ca

Conservation Data Centre

www.manitoba.ca/sd/cdc

Manitoba Agriculture

www.manitoba.ca/agriculture

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