

Loggerhead Shrike



Loggerhead shrikes are medium sized migratory songbirds that nest in trees and shrubs but also require open grasslands for foraging.

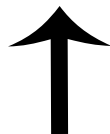
Shrikes prefer thorny buffaloberry, willow, Manitoba maple and caragana for nesting and will sometimes return to nest in the same shrub season after season. Shrikes are unique predators that impale their prey on thorns or barbed wire. They prey on small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects.

Loggerhead shrikes are designated as a species of 'special concern' in Alberta and a 'threatened' species nationally. Their decline over the last few decades is the result of native prairie being converted to other land uses. Recently some evidence suggests their population may be stabilizing or increasing in Alberta. Loggerhead shrikes thrive on native grasslands with patches of trees, shrubs and various grass heights, which may be encouraged through a sustainable grazing system, thus allowing ranching and shrikes to coexist.

Life Cycle

Late March - April

Return to breeding grounds from south and mate. Females may mate with more than one male or may switch mates.



Late August

Return to southern USA or Mexico.

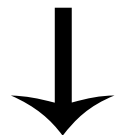


Mid May

Lay about 6 eggs. Only females incubate eggs while males forage for food.



Newborn Chicks



Early June

Eggs hatch. May renest if first attempt fails. Many shrikes will return to the same nesting site next season.



Beneficial Management Practices

The best decision you can make for all species at risk is to preserve your native grasslands.

General:

- Maintain native prairie in its natural state.
- Maintain trees and upland shrubs.
- Protect abandoned railroad right-of-ways as they often provide native shrub habitat for shrikes.
- Plant native shrubs where they have been removed or where they are not regenerating naturally, especially in areas with high vegetation diversity and near fences.
- Maintain shelterbelts and add native shrubs to them. Leave a 2-4 metre grassy area around shelterbelts to allow foraging near nests.
- Reduce linear nature of shelterbelts by planting shrubs irregularly and in patches.
- Avoid use of insecticides and other chemicals that target shrike prey, especially around nests.
- Seed low yielding land or abandoned cultivation back to native grasses or to permanent cover for use as a tame pasture.



For Grazed Land:

- Create variability in the pasture. A range of grass heights is desirable, with taller grass (>20cm) near shrubs that may be nesting sites.
- Light to moderate grazing will promote plant and insect diversity and keep grass height variable.
- Allow flat, shrubby areas to remain undisturbed or minimally disturbed during the breeding season (late March to July).
- Maintain healthy streamside (riparian) shrubs and trees. Avoid grazing these areas during the breeding season and manage them carefully to improve or maintain riparian health. Consider restricting grazing or fencing off completely.

For more information see the [MULTISAR Grazing BMP Factsheet](#) and [Shelterbelt Factsheet](#) in your binder or online at www.multisar.ca.

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