

Farm and Hay Land

Although native habitat is preferable, some prairie species at risk are adaptive and are able to use lands that have been cultivated for crops or hay. Most of these species will forage for insects, seeds or small animals in farm or hay land but will prefer to nest in their native habitat, usually grasslands, trees or cliffs. Others will nest in farm or hay land. There are several beneficial management practices producers can use to minimize disturbance, provide food and shelter and avoid killing these species.

Species at risk that will use farm or hay land include:

- Long-billed Curlew - May be at Risk - Special Concern
- Sharp-tailed Grouse - Sensitive
- Loggerhead Shrike - Sensitive - Special Concern
- Plains Spadefoot - May be at risk
- Prairie Rattlesnake - May be at risk - Data Deficient
- Burrowing Owl - At Risk - Endangered
- Richardson's Ground Squirrels*
- American Badgers* - Sensitive - Data Deficient



Loggerhead Shrike



Richardson's Ground Squirrel

*These are keystone species, meaning they are important to the life cycle of other animals and are not at risk. They dig burrows used by owls, snakes, reptiles and mammals and also provide food for raptors and mammals.



American Badger

Try to tolerate Richardson's ground squirrels and American badgers if they are not causing excessive damage. If their populations are high, allow vegetation to grow where they are most prevalent as they prefer not to live in tall vegetation and may leave the area. Avoid using poison as it can kill wildlife other than ground squirrels; use only once migratory birds have left the area (November to February).

Beneficial Management Practices

For farm and hay land:

- Defer haying until July 15 to allow nesting and raising of young.
- Consider seeding winter wheat in your rotation to reduce disturbance during spring and early summer.
- Minimize pesticide use, especially in spring and early summer. Birds, owls and amphibians naturally control insects by eating them.
- Leave natural trees and shelterbelts. Maintain and replant if they are not naturally regenerating.
- Use zero or minimal tillage to reduce disturbance and provide stubble for shelter and foraging.
- Use flushing bars on equipment to avoid killing wildlife.
- Avoid seeding invasive grasses next to native land (timothy, smooth brome, crested wheat grass).
- Leave narrow strips of vegetation in hay fields when swathing to provide foraging areas for wildlife.
- Where multiple hay fields are adjacent to each other, swath fields on a rotational schedule leaving one untouched each year to provide space for wildlife movement. Divide fields if needed.
- Remove marginal cropland from production and seed to native or tame grasses to provide permanent cover.
- Native rangelands benefit when crop or haylands are used for grazing. Delaying spring grazing on native rangelands will improve forage yields.



Remnants of native land that have not been cultivated but that are surrounded by cultivated land may still be used by wildlife. These areas should be left in their natural state.



For wetlands - temporary and permanent:

- Leave a 30m buffer when spraying pesticides, cultivating, seeding and subsoiling. Allowing vegetation to grow around them will attract wildlife, maintain water quality and reduce siltation.
- Leave natural wetlands natural. Do not dig dugouts in these areas.
- Leave a 100m setback distance between wetlands and industrial developments.



American Bittern

Ducks, deer, antelope, birds, frogs, toads, snakes and many other wild animals use wetland areas for foraging and shelter.



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