

Scientific Name: *Asio flammeus*
Common Name: Short-eared Owl
 Alt Com Name: Hibou des marais

Element ID: 8924

Taxonomy

Taxonomic class: Aves

Order: Strigiformes

Family Name: Strigidae

Genus Name: Asio

Family Common Name:

Genus Common Name:

Taxonomic Comments:

Ranking and Protection Status

Global Rank: G5

COSEWIC Status: Special Concern

Provincial Rank: S3B,S2N

Provincial Protection Status:

Diagnostic Characteristics

Identification Comments:

The Short-eared Owl is a medium-sized, buffy-white owl with very short ear tufts. The upper parts are broadly but softly streaked. Brown streaks on the abdomen are narrow and more sharply defined. Flight feathers and tail are barred with brown. It has poorly defined blackish areas, which frame the owl's yellow eyes. The owl displays a black patch near the wrist under the wing in flight. It is more buffy than the Long-eared Owl, with no cross-barring on its abdomen. (COSEWIC 1994. N94CAD01SKCA)



unknown © cdc

Lookalikes:

Habitat Information and Comments

Habitat Comments:

The Short-eared Owl is a bird of the open prairie. It depends on extensive areas of grassland habitat for nesting and foraging. It will occasionally use marshland, deep grass fields and low-use pastures where preferred habitat is not available. The Short-eared Owl prefers natural landscapes to cultivated fields.

Breeding:

The species is primarily a ground nesting bird.

It will use abandoned nests of other birds.

Wintering:

The Short-eared Owl inhabits open areas including pastures, fields, hay meadows, grain stubble, young conifer plantations, marshes and old fields interspersed with trees and shrubs (COSEWIC 1994).

The species will roost in low shrubs or bushes, especially in winter when snow cover can be quite deep.

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-Depends on open to quite extensive areas of open habitat. As well, marshlands, deep grass fields and low-use pastures.

-In winter, it inhabits open areas including pastures, fields, hay meadows, grain stubble, young conifer plantations, marshes and old fields interspersed with trees and shrubs (COSEWIC 1994).

-The species mainly nest on the ground. Sometimes slightly higher roosts like low shrubs or bushes can be used, especially in winter when snow cover can be quite deep. It will use abandoned nests of other birds.

-The Short-eared Owl depends on small mammal populations and prefers natural landscapes to cultivated fields.

Threat Comments:

Currently no threat comments for this species.

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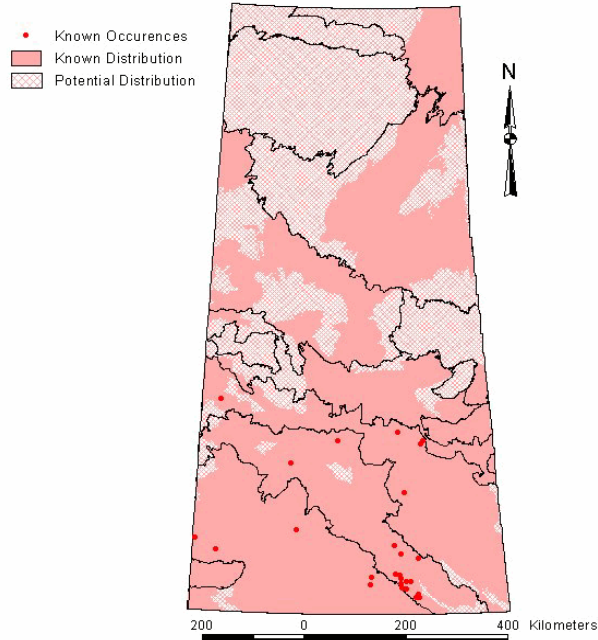
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Protection Comments:

- Avoid removal of dense ground cover as it leaves the nesting sites of the owl vulnerable to predators.
- Destruction and degradation of suitable habitat is being caused by urbanization and agriculture expansion.
- Overgrazing needs to be addressed as it is a factor in the alteration of the Owls habitat.
- It appears that Short-eared Owl populations can be linked with small mammal populations such as voles. When vole populations were high in 1997, the owl's populations also increased. Therefore great changes (reductions) to small mammal populations and habitat should be avoided.
- Domestic animal interaction should be avoided as it poses a threat to the Owl's nests and young.

Saskatchewan Distribution



Rural Municipalities:

No Subnational Data

Range Extent Comments:

- Breeding range estimated to be 594581 km², wintering range 6701 km². Mostly found in the Prairie Ecozone although some records from open bogs and recent burns of northern ecozones.
- Big Quill and Last Mountain Lake areas.
- Found around the Kindersley, Rosetown and Eston areas, as well in ranges around Saskatoon to Prince Albert. Also found west and south of Weyburn.

Phenology

Time of Year

Phenology

Currently no phenology for this species.

Phenology Comments:

Currently no phenology comments for this species.

Reproduction and Ecology Comments

Reproduction Comments:

Currently no reproduction notes for this species.

Management Needs:

- Preservation of native natural grasslands is important for the sustainability of the Short-eared Owl. These areas should not be converted to urban areas or into heavy land use by the agriculture sector. Draining of wetlands should be monitored as this can disrupt the owl's natural habitat.
- Human disturbances, such as roads, airports, railroads, and other infrastructure must be monitored as it leads to collisions or entanglement with aircraft, trains, road vehicles and machinery.
- Controlling vegetation succession in habitat and potential areas will benefit the Short-eared Owl. Reforesting can lead to loss of habitat. Monitor recreational developments such as golf courses so they do not impede on the owls environment. Examining the threat of predation and potentially controlling it will also be beneficial.
- Contact and inform private landowners in regards to conservation of this species. Educating the public in regards to the ecology and conservation of the Short-eared Owl, and more importantly habitat preservation at all levels.
- Government and managed land should be maintained, and addressed to ensure the viability of this species.
- Protection from hunting, possession, and selling should be covered in all Wildlife Acts throughout Canada.
- Contact the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre the specifics of a particular site.

Management Comments:

Currently no management guidelines for this species.

References

Reference ID **Citation**

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