

A Full Life Cycle Conservation Plan for Bobolink

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xi
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	5
The Bobolink as a Conservation Priority	5
Planning Approach: Full Life Cycle Conservation	6
Goals, Objectives, and Audience	7
<i>Goals</i>	7
<i>Objectives</i>	7
<i>Audience</i>	8
Plan Development and Integration	8
<i>Input from North American Partners</i>	8
<i>Input from South American Partners</i>	9
<i>Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation and the Miradi Program</i>	10
<i>Plan Integration</i>	10
CHAPTER ONE: DISTRIBUTION, POPULATION STATUS, BIOLOGY, AND THREATS	13
Distribution	13
<i>Breeding Distribution</i>	13
<i>Wintering Distribution</i>	13
<i>Distribution during Migration</i>	17
Legal Status, Population Status, and Trends	18
<i>Global Status</i>	18
<i>Continental and National Status</i>	19
<i>Defining Scale and Boundaries for Trend Estimates</i>	20
<i>Demographic Indicators</i>	24
<i>Population Projections</i>	24
Habitat, Behavior, and Ecology	26
<i>General Year-round Habitat</i>	26
<i>Breeding Habitat</i>	26
<i>Breeding Behavior and Ecology</i>	28
<i>Non-breeding Habitat, Behavior, and Ecology</i>	29
Demography	31
Threats	33
Threats during the Breeding Season	36

<i>Habitat Loss</i>	37
<i>Alternative Energy—Wind</i>	39
<i>Alternative Energy—Biofuels</i>	40
<i>Development—Urban, Suburban, and Oil</i>	42
<i>Fragmentation</i>	42
<i>Parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds</i>	44
<i>Predation</i>	45
<i>Road Development</i>	46
<i>Agricultural Intensification</i>	47
<i>Incompatible Mowing Schedules</i>	48
<i>Pesticides</i>	49
<i>Grazing</i>	51
<i>Succession and Woody Encroachment</i>	52
<i>Fire Suppression</i>	53
Threats during Migration and Winter	54
<i>Collisions</i>	54
<i>Habitat Loss and Degradation</i>	54
<i>Seed Availability and Water Management</i>	55
<i>Mortality from Agricultural Operations—Pesticides</i>	56
<i>Pet Trade</i>	56
<i>Pest Control</i>	56
Climate Change	56
<i>Predicted Climate Change Impacts on Grasslands</i>	57
<i>Potential Climate Change Impacts on Bobolink</i>	60
<i>Predictive Models of Climate Change Impacts</i>	61
A Conceptual Full Life Cycle Climate Change Model for Bobolink	62
<i>Breeding Season</i>	63
<i>Fall Migration</i>	63
<i>Winter</i>	64
<i>Carryover Effects</i>	65
<i>Spring Migration</i>	65
<i>Summary</i>	65
CHAPTER TWO: BOBOLINK FULL LIFE CYCLE CONSERVATION STRATEGY	67
Shaping the Strategy	67
<i>Grassland Bird Conservation: The Need To Go Beyond Birds</i>	67
<i>Conservation Design and Geographic Scale</i>	67
<i>Strategic Habitat Conservation: A Conceptual Conservation Model</i>	69
Overall Population Goals and Objectives	71
<i>Population Trend Goals for Bobolink</i>	73
<i>Derivation of the Quantitative Population Trend Goal</i>	74
<i>Regional (BCR) Population Objectives</i>	75
<i>Translating Population Objectives to Habitat on the Ground</i>	78
<i>Demonstrating the Approach: Assessing Bobolink Objectives in the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture</i>	78
<i>Matching Population Objectives to Habitat Needs Across the Breeding Range</i>	86
Focus: The Breeding Grounds in The U.S. and Canada	86
<i>Where to Focus: The Bobolink Conservation Opportunity Map</i>	86

<i>Co-occurring Bird Species Likely to Benefit from Bobolink Conservation</i>	91
<i>The Socioeconomic Context</i>	93
Focus: Migration and Wintering Grounds	95
<i>Where to Focus</i>	95
<i>Co-occurring Bird Species Likely to Benefit from Bobolink Conservation</i>	100
<i>Context for Conservation in the Llanos</i>	102
Conservation Strategies and Actions	105
<i>Strategies Developed Through Bobolink Plan Workshops</i>	105
➤ <i>Strategy Themes for Canada and the USA</i>	105
<i>Birds Need Grazers (Strategy Theme 1)</i>	112
<i>Addressing the Haying Dilemma (Strategy Theme 3)</i>	113
<i>U.S. Farm Bill Conservation Programs (Strategy Theme 6)</i>	115
<i>Supporting Ecosystem Services in Agricultural Production (Strategy 8.1)</i>	117
<i>Biofuel Production that Provides Grassland Bird Habitat (Strategy Theme 9)</i>	117
<i>Carbon Sequestration on Agricultural Lands (Strategy 10.2)</i>	119
<i>New Cultivars and Cropping Systems (Strategies 3.5 and 15.3)</i>	120
<i>Life Cycle Assessment for Agricultural Products (Strategy 12.2)</i>	121
➤ <i>Strategies for South American Countries</i>	122
<i>Controlling Bobolink Damage in Rice</i>	123
<i>The Pesticide Treadmill</i>	125
<i>Strategies Developed Through Midwest Grasslands Network Seminar</i>	126
<i>Reduce the Negative Impacts of the Renewable Fuel Standard</i>	126
<i>Bundle Ecosystem Service Payments</i>	126
<i>Make Use of Social Systems</i>	127
<i>Manage Rights-of-way on Private Lands</i>	127
<i>Maintain Grasslands</i>	128
<i>Leverage Emerging Opportunities</i>	128
Next Steps	129
<i>Link Actions to Goals and Form Action Teams</i>	129
<i>Build Partnerships at the Hemispheric Scale</i>	130
<i>Develop a Full Annual Cycle Model for Bobolink</i>	130
<i>Move Forward with Conservation Strategies Derived from the Plan</i>	131
<i>Tasks Prerequisite to Development of a Formal Implementation Strategy</i>	132
LITERATURE CITED	135
Personal Communications and Unpublished Data Sources	160
APPENDIX A. WORKSHOPS GENERATING INPUT FOR THE BOBOLINK CONSERVATION PLAN	161
APPENDIX B. A NON-EXHAUSTIVE LISTING OF CONSERVATION PLANS, TOOLS, AND PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY SUPPORT BOBOLINK HABITAT ON THE BREEDING AND WINTERING GROUNDS	165
<i>Grassland Bird Conservation Plans</i>	165
<i>Ontario Grassland Bird Conservation Action Plan</i>	165
<i>Ontario Recovery Strategy and Roundtable for Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark</i>	165
<i>Prairie Pothole JV 2005 Implementation Plan—Section V: Landbirds</i>	166
<i>Canadian Prairie Habitat Joint Venture</i>	167
<i>Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan</i>	167
<i>Northern Great Plains Grassland Landscapes Plan</i>	167

<i>CMS Migratory Grassland Bird Action Plan for Southern South America</i>	168
Species Conservation Plans	168
<i>Upland Sandpiper Conservation Plan</i>	168
<i>Status Assessment and Conservation Plan for the Henslow's Sparrow</i>	168
<i>Grasshopper Sparrow Status Assessment and Conservation Plan</i>	169
<i>National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan</i>	169
Initiatives, Programs, and Projects	169
<i>From the Prairies to the Pampas: Hemispheric Coordination</i>	169
<i>Americas Flyways Framework</i>	170
<i>IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas—Grasslands Specialist Group</i>	171
<i>Southern Cone Grasslands Alliance</i>	171
<i>North American Grasslands Alliance (Commission for Environmental Cooperation)</i>	172
<i>NABCI International subcommittee</i>	173
<i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)</i>	173
<i>Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI)</i>	174
<i>Midwest Grassland Bird Technical Subcommittee</i>	174
<i>Midwest Grasslands Network</i>	174
Joint Ventures and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives	176
Habitat Conservation and Delivery—Some Examples	178
<i>Grassland Bird Conservation Areas</i>	178
<i>Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association</i>	179
<i>Ontario Grassland Initiative Program (GSI)</i>	180
<i>Land Stewardship Project</i>	180
<i>South of the Divide Conservation Action Program (SODCAP)</i>	181
<i>Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (Canada)</i>	181
<i>USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program</i>	181
<i>Multifunctioning Landscapes: a Minnesota Experiment</i>	182
APPENDIX C. PROVINCIAL AND STATE STATUS AND BREEDING BIRD ATLAS RESULTS FOR BOBOLINK	183
APPENDIX D. SPECIES CO-OCCURRING WITH BOBOLINK IN SOUTH AMERICA	187
APPENDIX E. STRATEGIES FOR BOBOLINK CONSERVATION FOR EACH MAJOR REGION/COUNTRY IN THE PLAN, AND ASSOCIATED CONSERVATION ACTIONS	195
APPENDIX F. INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT GRAZING AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION PRACTICES THAT PROVIDE QUALITY GRASSLAND BIRD HABITAT	213
APPENDIX G. EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES	215