

# Your Lands, Your Wildlife

## Grassland Birds



### BIRDS VANISHING FROM AMERICA'S MOST ENDANGERED ECOSYSTEM

Known as the American Serengeti, the grasslands of the United States boast an incredibly rich diversity of life. In 2001, over 3 million people took advantage of this public natural asset by birdwatching for the over 300 species of birds that make their homes in America's Great Plains.

Prairies are the most endangered ecosystem in the world, and these unique birds have lost nearly all of their historic habitat. Between 1966 and 1996, two-thirds of grassland birds experienced population declines of up to 75 percent, making them the fastest declining group of birds in North America.

National Grasslands provide a refuge for grassland dependent birds. Without these intact tracts of prairie, the \$32 billion bird-watching industry would lose a national treasure. Defenders of Wildlife is working to ensure that grassland birds continue to have a home, and that our nation's 47.7 million birdwatchers have birds to watch



Courtesy USDA NRCS

#### Lesser Prairie Chickens

The boom of the male prairie chicken can be heard a mile away as these colorful prairie natives vie for female attention. The Comanche National Grassland supports the largest population of chickens and concentration of mating leks in Colorado. Birders from all over the world come to enjoy viewing opportunities in the national grassland and nearby towns.

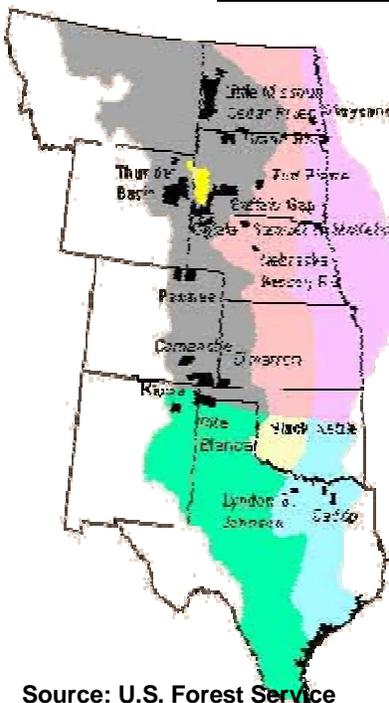


#### Prairie Natives

12 species of bird are endemic to the Great Plains

- Long-billed curlews
- Mountain Plovers
- Cassin's sparrow
- Marbled godwit
- Sprague's Pipit
- Franklin's Gull
- McCown's longspur
- Chestnut-collared longspur
- Lark Bunting
- Ferruginous Hawk
- Baird's Sparrow
- Wilson's Phalarope

### Your National Grasslands



**Number:** 20 grasslands in 13 states

**Total acres:** 3.8 million, which is less than 2% of the entire national forest system.

**Biggest:** Little Missouri, North Dakota, 1,028,051 acres

**Smallest:** McClellan Creek, Texas, 1,449 acres

**Most divided:** Black Kettle in Texas is made of 60 separate parcels of land!

**Best birding:** Cimarron Grassland in Kansas has been named one of the top 100 places to bird in the U.S.

Source: U.S. Forest Service

**Defenders of Wildlife supports balanced, science-based wildlife conservation measures on public lands. Healthy bird, fish, and wildlife populations on public lands indicate overall land health, leading to unparalleled recreation opportunities, outstanding water quality, clean air and countless other natural, social and economic benefits for all Americans.**