



Summary of the proposed Management Plan for the

BAIRD'S SPARROW

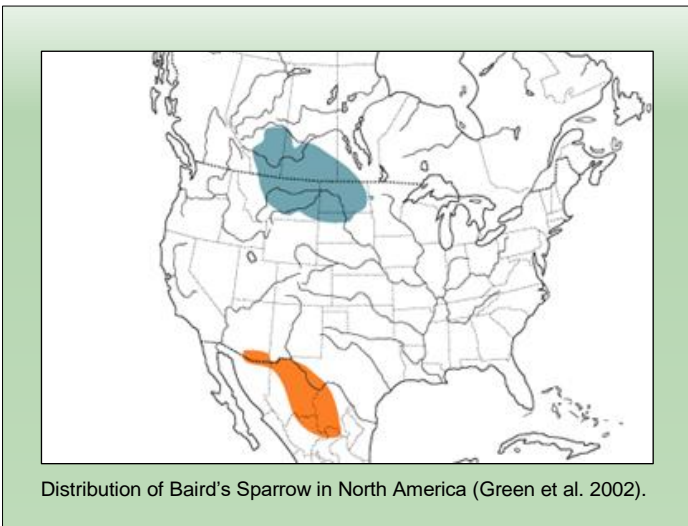
Under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), a management plan must be developed for each species listed as Special Concern to identify measures for the conservation of the species. This document highlights the key sections of the proposed management plan.

Species Conservation Status

Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*) is listed as Special Concern under the federal SARA. The species is listed provincially as Endangered in Manitoba under the *Endangered Species and Ecosystem Act* and identified as Sensitive in Alberta; it is not listed in Saskatchewan.

Description

Baird's Sparrow is a small, brownish, streaked songbird. Males and females have similar colouration. Both have a prominent yellow-ochre face colour and median crown stripe, two dark spots behind the cheek feathers, dark lateral throat stripes, and short dark streaks on the breast and upper flanks. Upperparts are a mixture of blackish and pale-brownish markings.



© Glenn Bartley

Baird's Sparrows are more readily identified by the male's song, which is a series of quick, clear introductory notes, usually followed by a single trill, often sung from tufts of grass or small, scattered shrubs.

Distribution & Population

Baird's Sparrow is found only in the northern Great Plains of North America. Its breeding range occurs within the mixed-grass prairie of Canada and the northern United States (U.S.). In Canada, Baird's Sparrows breed in southern Alberta, southern Saskatchewan, and southwestern Manitoba. Approximately 45% of Baird's Sparrow's breeding range is within Canada.

Baird's Sparrow winter range occurs in northern Mexico and parts of the southwestern U.S.

Long-term population trends (1970-2015) in Canada indicate a decline of 1.8% per year. The species is experiencing long-term population declines in each of the Prairie Provinces, particularly in Manitoba where the annual decline is 7.9%.

Habitat Needs

Baird's Sparrows breed in native mixed-grass prairie and grasslands dominated by fescue grasses, as well as other habitats with similar vegetation structure such as dry wetland basins, wet meadow, planted tame pastures, and hayland. Moisture plays a key role in the distribution of Baird's Sparrow throughout their breeding range, with drier areas favoured in wet years, and moister areas in dry years.

Baird's Sparrows are associated with relatively dense standing dead vegetation 10-30 cm tall, and very little bare ground cover, although very dense cover is avoided. Baird's Sparrows will also use forb cover, but prefer areas with little to no shrubs.

Baird's Sparrows require a minimum grassland patch-size of 14-33 ha of native rangeland. In native and planted grasslands, Baird's Sparrow abundance increases with the amount of native grassland in the landscape.

Baird's Sparrows have been associated with undisturbed or idle grasslands but typically use native and tame pastures in good-excellent range condition, and to a lesser extent, hayland and cropland.

On their wintering grounds, Baird's Sparrows are solitary and sedentary, and appear to prefer native grasslands with relatively flat or rolling topography.

Threats to the Species' Survival

- Habitat loss and degradation due primarily to:
 - conversion of native grassland to cropland
 - alteration of grazing practices resulting in poorer range condition
 - fire regimes that promote build-up of residual vegetation and allow for tree and shrub encroachment into grassland areas
- loss and degradation of wintering habitat
- nest predation pressure
- conversion of native habitat to industrial infrastructure, and
- inclement or extreme weather conditions

Management Objectives

The management objectives for Baird's Sparrow are to:

1. Stabilize the long-term population trend by 2040 and maintain the current distribution.
2. Increase the 2005 population size and trend in Canada in the next 30 years.

Strategies to Help Meet Objectives

Broad strategies to address the threats to the survival and recovery of the Baird's Sparrow include:

1. **Habitat assessment, management, conservation and protection**
Adopt land management practices that are beneficial to Baird's Sparrow by working collaboratively with land managers and land-users to conserve, manage, restore, and protect rangeland through effective stewardship programs.
2. **Research**
Undertake research projects to address knowledge gaps.
3. **Monitoring and Assessment**
Continue to monitor populations to assess changes in population abundance and distribution.
4. **Outreach and Communication**
Conduct outreach and communication programs to inform target audiences such as land managers of Baird's Sparrow habitat requirements and management strategies.

How You Can Help

- Learn more about the Baird's Sparrow, the threats to its survival and its habitat needs at www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry.html;
- Practice voluntary stewardship activities and beneficial management practices, for example:
 - Work in cooperation with Environment and Climate Change Canada and/or local conservation groups to conserve important habitat; and
 - Avoid activities that could harm the species or its habitat.
- Submit observation data to conservation data centres such as eBird, the Manitoba Conservation Data Centre or the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Center.

For more information, please contact us directly at:

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) – Canadian Wildlife Service **Prairie Region**
115 Perimeter Road, Saskatoon SK S7N 0X4

Phone: 1-855-245-0331 or Email: SARA.PNR@EC.gc.ca

You can also visit the following website for more information:

Species at Risk Public Registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

For information regarding reproduction rights, please contact Environment and Climate Change Canada's Public Inquiries Centre at 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only) or 819-997-2800 or email to ec.enviroinfo.ec@canada.ca.

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change 2016

Aussi disponible en français