



Summary of the Proposed Recovery Strategy for the

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR IN CANADA

As part of its commitment to the protection of species at risk, the Government of Canada proclaimed the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in 2003. A recovery strategy must be developed for each listed Extirpated, Endangered, and Threatened species to reduce known threats and to help species at risk recover.

What is the Chestnut-collared Longspur?

The Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*) is a small ground-nesting songbird endemic to the Northern Great Plains of the United States and Canada. During the breeding season males can be readily distinguished from females by their black and white plumage and chestnut patch on their nape. Females appear more sparrow-like and are greyish-buff overall with dusky stripes. Both sexes have dark inner, and white outer tail feathers that form a black triangle that is readily seen when the bird fans its tail.

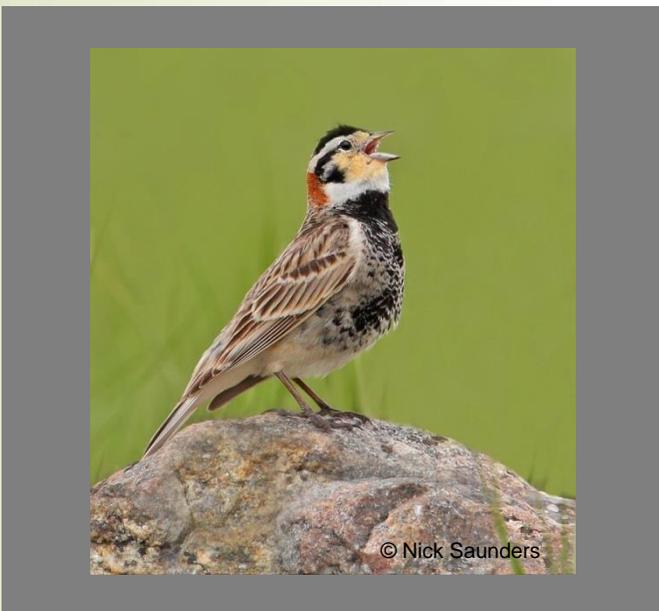


Breeding and wintering distribution of the Chestnut-collared Longspur in Canada and United States

In Canada, the Chestnut-collared Longspur breeding population is found in grazed mixed-grass prairie parcels that are at least 39 ha in southeastern Alberta, southern Saskatchewan, and southwestern Manitoba.

Why Are They At Risk?

In Canada, the Chestnut-collared Longspur is designated as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), due to long-term population declines and as Endangered under Manitoba's *Endangered Species and Ecosystem Act*. Chestnut-collared Longspur populations in Canada showed statistically significant declines of 6%



per annum over the period 1970-2012. Moreover, population declines are greater in the Aspen Parkland ecoregion than in the prairie grasslands, resulting in a shift in range to the south and west.

Current and historic threats to the species may include:

Agriculture:

- converting grassland to cropland and hayland on breeding and wintering grounds;
- overgrazing or under-grazing on breeding and wintering grounds.

Energy production:

- disturbance at/near well sites.
- the potential impacts of wind turbines on survival and reproduction

Transportation and service corridors:

- lower abundance near roads, and increased fledgling numbers with distance from roads

Natural systems modifications:

- fire suppression on breeding and wintering grounds, leading to encroachment by woody vegetation and exotic species

Invasive species:

- conversion of native grassland to exotic vegetation

Pollution:

- agricultural pesticides

Climate change and severe weather:

- nest losses due to increased extreme weather events such as storms and flooding

Critical Habitat

Critical habitat is defined as the habitat that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species; it is identified as the species' critical habitat in a recovery strategy or in an action plan for the species.

The amount, location and features of critical habitat are based on the biological needs of the species. The biophysical attributes of critical habitat include the characteristics listed below.

- open areas of upland native pasture ≥ 39 ha in fair to excellent range condition
- limited woody vegetation
- limited invasion by exotic grasses
- flat to gently rolling topography

Critical habitat for the Chestnut-collared Longspur has been partially identified in southwest Saskatchewan. Most of the proposed critical habitat is composed of provincial crown land (78%) followed by federal (11%, mainly within Grasslands National Park), and private lands (9%) with the remaining 2% falling within road allowances. The identification of critical habitat will be updated when the information becomes available, either in a revised recovery strategy or action plan(s).

What will be done to help this species?

The following are recommended strategies to help conserve and recover Chestnut-collared Longspur:

- Habitat conservation
- Habitat restoration and management
- Inventory and monitoring
- Research
- Communication, collaboration and engagement
- Public outreach

For more information, please contact us directly at:

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You can also visit the following website for more information:
SARA Public Registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

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