

THIRD EDITION 2002-2003

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Contributions

Thanks very much to Dale, Heather, and Chris for contributing articles for this addition of the WHC Newsletter. I would like to encourage all WHC members to consider developing articles of 500 to 700 words for publication in our newsletter. Longer articles will also be considered since they are much easier to handle now that we have switched to electronic format. Articles may include your thoughts on a topical issue important to the WHC, or your editorial comments on previous articles. Before we leave Casper, I would like have commitments or potential contacts for 6 articles. Please give this some thought before the meeting.

See you in Casper,

Chad

Background on Species at Risk Strategies and Programs in Canada

DALE WEISBROT

Federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers responsible for wildlife committed to a national approach for the protection of species at risk in Canada in 1996. This approach is outlined in the agreement called *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*. The Government of Canada works with provinces and territories on the common approach that includes complementary legislation and programs to protect habitat and species. The goal is to protect species in Canada from becoming extinct as a result of human activity. By signing the accord the Governments recognized:

- Species do not recognize jurisdictional boundaries
- Conservation of Species at Risk is a key component of the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy
- Governments have a leadership role in providing sound and appropriate measures for the conservation and protection of species at risk
- Species conservation initiatives will be met through complementary federal and provincial/territorial legislation, regulations, policies and programs
- Stewardship activities contributing to conservation of species should be supported
- Lack of full scientific certainty must not be used to delay measures to avoid or minimize threats to species at risk

The government agreed to:

- Participate in the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council
- Recognize the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as a source of independent advice
- Establish complementary legislation and programs
- Refer any disputes that may arise under the Accord to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council for resolution

Various Provincial statutes are in place that complement and help coordinate the species at risk protection efforts nationally. Now the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) received Royal Assent December 12, 2002, bringing to a close a nine-year legislative process to protect Canada's species at risk and their critical habitat. The new legislation will come into force in 2003.

See the guest article on the Species at Risk in Canada by Heather Felskie from the Agriculture and Agri-food Canada Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration or the PFRA as it is known.

Please note the following link for further information and articles of interest: http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca/species/publications/recovery/oct02/index_e.cfm

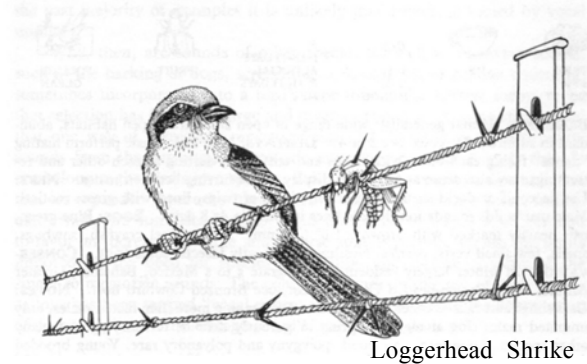


Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) & Species At Risk

By Heather Felskie, PFRA Species At Risk Extension

A total of 402 plants, birds, mammals, butterflies, fish, reptiles and amphibians are currently listed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as "At Risk". These species can be further categorized into species that are extirpated (no longer living in a given area), endangered, threatened or special concern. PFRA pastures fall within the range of 63 Species at Risk.

Bill C-5, also known as the Species At Risk Act or SARA, is in the final stages of a process that has been in the works for over a decade. SARA has received Royal Assent December 12, 2002 and will be proclaimed in the summer of 2003.



Bill C-5 (SARA) At A Glance

- Protects 1) the animal/plant 2) the nest/den of the animal and 3) critical habitat
- When SARA becomes an Act it will impact federal lands immediately
- Each province currently has legislation to protect SAR on private/provincial land
- SARA will affect private/public lands only as a safety net if adequate protection is not provided by the current provincial legislation
- With the Act comes funding available to Canadians through Environment Canada:
 - a) Habitat Stewardship Program, which allocated \$10 million in 2002-2003
 - b) Interdepartmental Recovery Fund, which allocated \$4.5 million in 2002-2003
 - c) Endangered Species Recovery Fund, which has allocated \$4.7 million dollars since 1988
- At this time, all funds linked with SARA have been earmarked to stewardship projects with no funding going towards enforcement



Photo: L. Scott

PFRA plays a crucial role in Species At Risk recovery. Within our 2.2 million acres of pastures, 85% of the land is in its native state. (Note the PFRA administers a custom grazing program for livestock on this land.) These native rangelands are providing habitat for not only the cattle within the pasture system, but for thousands of prairie wildlife species.

In the next few months, PFRA staff will be hosting informational Species At Risk workshops. Heather may be contacted at 306-780-3914.

Management of Linear Openings for Rangeland Benefit

CHRISTOPHER L. MILLER

The management of our natural resources has become increasingly complex and contentious as the human population continues to grow and people continue to develop rural areas. While one cannot be faulted for choosing a life away from the urban landscape, few realize that mass emigration into undeveloped areas rarely occurs without urban sprawl following close behind. In order to support the development of rural landscapes, various utilities (e.g., electric transmission lines, gas and water pipelines, etc.) and supporting infrastructure are required to serve the populace. However, these linear rights-of-way (ROW) can be managed for various plant and wildlife benefits and often provide necessary early-successional habitats for several species in areas where additional clearing may not be desirable or practical, or where residents are poorly informed of beneficial aspects of integrating grassland, shrubland, or early seral habitats.

Although a maintained ROW can vary from a few feet to >200-ft in width [depending on the primary use(s)], management of these areas can add diversity and facilitate a multi-use management plan. To illustrate, a 50-ft maintained ROW will provide slightly more than six acres of linear opening for each mile of length. The quality of habitat maintained within a ROW can be quite variable and dependent on the type(s) of habitat(s) desired and the level of management intensity applied. Treatments may be as simple as periodic mowing or may also include any combination of treatments including prescribed burning, use of herbicides, supplemental plantings, and discing.

Various concerns have been conveyed over loss of habitat for various species resulting from the creation of linear ROW. Further, issues of increased predation, nest parasitism, demographic isolation, and assorted depredation have also been cited among concerns. It has been demonstrated that nest parasitism and depredation may increase in association with a ROW. However, it has also been shown that these increases are offset by increased nesting activity and do not adversely affect population viability. Similarly, demographic isolation does not seem to be a limitation as a ROW is rarely wide enough to preclude traversing by a species. Conversely, subdivision developments,

and specifically ranchette developments more-so than cluster developments, have been shown to have more adverse impacts on wildlife populations (including increased fragmentation and isolation) than a linear ROW.

Numerous benefits to a managed ROW have been identified that enhance game and non-game wildlife species. While the types of management and intensity that management activities are applied would affect results, in general, an increase in abundance and diversity of food items would be expected. In addition to providing nesting and/or brood-rearing habitat for various species, a managed ROW will frequently have higher insect, soft mast, and green forage biomass than adjacent habitats. Many species require open or early-successional habitats for courtship and such areas may allow for increased breeding behavior and subsequent nesting success. Additionally, many animals will use the edge of a ROW, if not the ROW itself, as a travel corridor between two separate habitats. Where a multi-use program includes livestock grazing, a managed ROW can provide a significant increase in available forage that may also reduce foraging pressure on adjacent forested or other types of habitats.

The millions of acres of linear ROW nationwide provides an opportunity for individuals and groups to enhance rangeland and wildlife habitats; often at a minimum of expense. Increased habitat diversity and edge can help increase floral and faunal biodiversity and may serve as an aid to restoration programs that may include, but would not be limited to, various native grassland communities.



Linear right-of-ways (ROW) can be managed to provide habitat for wildlife species or forage for livestock production. Each mile of ROW (50 ft-wide) provides over 6 acres of potential habitat.

SRM Wildlife Habitat Committee

Saturday, February 1, 2003
8 am to Noon
Ballroom A - Parkway Plaza Hotel
Casper Wyoming

Attendees: Patti Barney; Traci Bates; Terry Bidwell; Chad Boyd; Joe Brummer; Paul Bultsma; Boyd Byelich; Steve Clubine; Bryan Coppedge; Ken Crane; John Enfield; Dave Engle; Robert Finck; Sam Fuhlendorf; Patricia Gilbert; Wendell Gilgert; Sharron Gough; Frank Guzman; John Hunter; David Kelley; Richard Keigley; Stephanie King; Kent Mcadoo; Chris Miller; John Murray; Pat Reece; Larry Rittenhouse; Roy Roath (regrets); John Scott (regrets); Harvey Sprock; Tim Steffens; Lance Vermeire; Bryan Vogt; Scott Walker (regrets); John Weir; Dale Weisbrot; Tim Westfall

Tentative Agenda (for approval with additions, if any)

Item		Minutes
1. Call to Order	Dale	2
2. Approve Tentative Agenda	Dale	5
3. Introductions	All	10
4. Confirm Meeting Officers	Attendees appoint the Chair & note taker for meeting	2
5. Review of Old Business	Dale - highlights from the Feb 2002 Kansas City meeting	5
6. Confirm Contact List (& membership)	All (circulate list for updating as needed)	2
7. Reports		30
7.1. Chair	Dale	
7.2. Communication	Chad	
7.3. Division Coordinator	Lance	
7.4. The Other Grazers Workshop	Wendell	
8. New Business		110
8.1. 2003-2004 Officers		
8.2. Salt Lake City Symposium	Roy, Scott or Dale	
8.3. Brainstorm for Future Symposia	All	
8.4. Continue Outreach & Partner Effort	Brainstorm, discussion and plan future action	
8.5. WHC Requests & Information Items	Grasshopper Control; Rangeland Environmental (or Evaluation) Assessment Program (REAP)	
9. Other Item(s)		10
10. Adjourn		