

# Grassland Bird Assessment in Switchgrass Fields

## Request for switchgrass grower participation

### March 21, 2023

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Environmental Management Branch

# Bird Assessment June and July 2023

**Are you willing to have a wildlife biologist complete a grassland bird assessment in your switchgrass field this summer?**

- Seeking landowners who have established switchgrass fields to participate in bird assessments in June and July 2023.

**What is the purpose?**

- Research on the effectiveness of switchgrass as a habitat for grassland bird species.
- Long term goal to see if switchgrass farmers can be paid for establishing and maintaining grassland bird habitat, similar to 'delayed haying' payments, while operating fields as productive agricultural systems.

# Grassland Birds and Switchgrass

## Why are we focusing on grassland birds?

- Due to reductions in grassland habitat, grassland birds are in decline.
- Economic opportunities to those who offer habitat for grassland bird species.

## Why Switchgrass?

- Switchgrass has been shown in other areas to be a habitat for these birds.
- Harvest activities for switchgrass that happen in fall, winter or spring don't disturb their breeding and nesting period (June-July)
- In future programming, switchgrass offers opportunities environmentally and economically.

**Bobolink**



**Eastern meadowlark**



# What will participating landowners expect?

- A **paid wildlife biologist** would arrange with you to visit your farm to observe grassland birds and make field characterizations relating to grassland bird habitat.
  - Biologist will **only** record, and report observations related to grassland birds.
  - Arrangements can be made to suit the landowner's comfortability.
  - Encourage landowners to join the biologist during their visit to learn more about grassland bird habitat and any species found on site
- **The outcomes will be reported to OMAFRA and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)**
  - Biologist will summarize all results using only regional location identifiers (e.g. township) when reporting to OMAFRA and ECCC. The results would not be linked to your specific farm.
  - The generalized results may be made public.

# Requesting Participation

Landowners who choose to participate in this bird assessment project will **be contributing to research that may be used to develop future funding programs for switchgrass farmers.** Final reports will be shared among all participating landowners.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact Jenna Sanderson from OMAFRA:

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