

Henslow's Sparrow *Ammodramus henslowii*

Habitat Preference: Tall, dense grass with a well developed litter layer with little to no woody vegetation. Henslow's sparrows are found primarily in grasslands greater than 100 acres.



Threats:

- Henslow's Sparrows are a late successional grassland species. This means that traditional grassland maintenance will deter use by Henslow's sparrows.
 - Haying an area during nesting season destroys nests.
 - Henslow's sparrows will not use grasslands that are grazed heavily; even light grazing during the nesting season can destroy nests.
- Loss of grassland habitat
 - Conversion of prairie to cultivated ground
 - Encroachment of woody vegetation. Henslow's sparrows will not nest in areas that have trees scattered throughout the grassland.
 - Invasion of non-native plants
- Fragmentation of grassland habitat
 - Because Henslow's Sparrows need large (+100 acres) undisturbed grassland tracts, they require plenty of refuge from disturbance such as fire and grazing. These birds will cease to use tracts when large sections are managed in a variety of ways not conducive to this sparrow's nesting.

Appropriate Practices:

- Prescribed burning is an important component to control woody invasion; when burning an area be sure there is plenty of grassland (70% of an area) that has not been disturbed for many years (10 years). Burning should be limited to early spring and late fall.
 - Partition a site off into 3-4 tracts of at least 75 acres each and burn these tracts in rotation.
 - Henslow's sparrows will be absent from areas the first growing season after a burn.
- Periodically remove encroaching woody vegetation.
- Haying will prevent the stand from becoming thick and rank; haying is not a compatible practice unless used in rotation on large areas. Haying should take place after the breeding season.
- Henslow's sparrows will avoid using an area after mowing until the vegetation recovers. Limit mowing to after the nesting season (August 15).
- Occasional light grazing during non-nesting times might work as a management tool, since these sparrows have been known to use areas that have been lightly grazed; but in general they avoid areas that have any grazing.

Any type of disturbance should be limited to a small portion of any area being used by Henslow's sparrows. The majority of the area should be left undisturbed.