

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Habitat Preference: Large tracts of undisturbed, open grassland. Large complexes of grassland and wetland are ideal.

Threats:

- Disappearance of natural habitat
 - Conversion of prairie to cultivated ground
 - Short-eared Owls will not nest in areas that have trees scattered throughout the grassland.
- Invasion of non-native plants
- Regular disturbance will prevent thick thatch from developing; short-eared owls will not nest in an area without thick thatch that provides cover.
 - Haying
 - Over grazing



Practice Guidelines:

- Prescribed burns should be done no more than once every 4 years. Prescribed burns should not be done during the nesting season (April - July).
- Establish new tracts of grassland. Large blocks of grassland are essential to a surviving population of short-eared owl. Short-ears may need as much as 100 ha (247 acres) to support a breeding pair. Buffer existing grassland with new establishment to create larger tracts of grassland that will sustain a large population of rodents. When rodent populations are high short-eared owls are more apt to use a particular area.
- Haying could be done periodically to stimulate plant growth. Haying should not be done often because disturbed grassland will deter use by short-eared owls.
- Grazing should be limited or eliminated.
- Restore wetlands to the greatest extent possible whenever feasible, it is important to have a mosaic of grassland and wetlands.
- Short-eared owls are deterred by annual disturbance but periodic management is necessary to keep large open tracts of grassland. Disturbance should not occur between mid-April through mid-July to limit nest destruction and mortality of young birds.