

Grassland Dependent Birds Habitat Assessment Guide

Landowner Name:

Evaluator:

Date:

Instructions: This assessment shall be used to identify the habitat limiting factors for grassland dependent birds. This habitat assessment guide should not be used for sites associated with agricultural tracts (i.e., do not use when doing whole farm planning for agricultural tracts). Each site must be assessed and scored individually. Weighted averages are not allowed.

If the evaluation determines that the current habitat quality is less than 0.5 (on a scale of 0 to 1), recommendations will be made to improve the existing habitat so the planned (future) condition will have a quality rating of 0.5 or more. **If wildlife is the client's primary objective, the land unit must achieve a quality rating of 0.7 or better.** If the evaluation determines that the current condition is equal to or greater than 0.5 (or 0.7 if wildlife in the primary objective), recommendations will be made to maintain the existing habitat in its present condition.

For all the habitat components below, select the habitat description that most closely mirrors the field(s) being appraised and enter that value in the table. Both the existing and planned conditions must be evaluated.

1. **Patch Size** - Estimate the patch size (it will generally be the same as the field size unless similar habitat managed for wildlife is directly adjacent). To be counted, habitat must consist of herbaceous vegetation that remains undisturbed from April 15 through August 1.
 - ≥ 50 acres = 10
 - ≥ 30 to < 50 acres = 8
 - ≥ 10 to < 30 acres = 6
 - ≥ 5 - < 10 acres = 4
 - < 5 acres = 0

	Site No.				
<i>Existing Condition</i>					
<i>Planned Condition</i>					

2. **Percent Grass Cover** – Evaluate the proportion of the herbaceous cover (counted in factor 1) that is comprised of grass species.
 - $> 80\%$ of herbaceous canopy consists of grass species = 10
 - $> 60 - 80\%$ of herbaceous canopy consists of grass species = 7
 - $> 50 - 60\%$ of herbaceous canopy consists of grass species = 5
 - $30 - 50\%$ of herbaceous canopy consists of grass species = 2
 - $< 30\%$ of herbaceous canopy consists of grass species = 0

	Site No.				
<i>Existing Condition</i>					
<i>Planned Condition</i>					

3. **Average Herbaceous Cover Height** - Estimate the average height of the herbaceous cover (counted in factor 1) from mid-April through July. If the vegetation is mown, or burned between April 15 and August 1, give field a score of 0. If herbaceous cover is grazed, determine average height during this time period.

- 10 to 20 inches = 10
- 8 to <10 inches = 8
- 6 to <8 inches = 4
- <6 inches or greater than 30 inches = 0

	Site No.				
Existing Condition					
Planned Condition					

4. **Percent Shrub Cover** - Estimate the percent shrub cover in the field.

- <5% shrub cover = 10
- 5 to 10% = 8
- >10 to 15% = 6
- >15 to 20% = 4
- >20 to 30% = 2
- >30% = 0

	Site No.				
Existing Condition					
Planned Condition					

Scoring

For each site being evaluated, enter the before and after values for every habitat component. There is a total of 40 points possible. Divide the total for each site (both the existing and planned conditions) by 40. This will give you a value between 0 and 1, which represents the habitat value of the particular field for the grassland dependent birds in the existing condition and in the planned condition.

	Patch Size	Percent Grass Cover	Average Herbaceous Cover Height	Percent Shrub Cover	Total	Habitat Value (total/40)
Site No.						
Existing Condition						
Planned Condition						
Site No.						
Existing Condition						
Planned Condition						
Site No.						
Existing Condition						
Planned Condition						
Site No.						
Existing Condition						
Planned Condition						
Site No.						
Existing Condition						
Planned Condition						