



# Audubon

PROTECTS BIRDS AND THE  
PLACES THEY NEED, TODAY  
AND TOMORROW.

## OUR GOAL

The Audubon conservation ranching program will enhance and restore millions of acres of grassland bird habitat across the Great Plains by partnering with ranchers to implement sustainable grazing practices. The program offers market-based incentives for good grassland stewardship, and it allows consumers to participate in conservation efforts that keep ranchers on the land and healthy grasslands on the landscape.

For more than a century, Audubon has built a legacy of conservation success by mobilizing the strength of its network of members, chapters, centers, state offices and dedicated professional staff to connect people with nature and empower them to protect it.

[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)



PROTECTING BIRDS  
BY RESTORING  
**GRASSLANDS**

**AUDUBON CONSERVATION  
RANCHING PROGRAM**

## THE PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Native grasslands are among the most altered and imperiled ecosystems in the world. Throughout the Great Plains, these ecosystems are dwindling at an alarming rate as tracts are degraded through invasive and woody plant encroachment, conversion to cropland or other development, and poor grazing practices. Narrow profit margins and increasing costs have forced many ranchers to adopt management practices that are incompatible with the habitat needs for birds and other wildlife. The resulting landscape-level changes continue to have far reaching economic, social, and environmental impacts.

The loss of grassland habitat has led to declines in populations of grassland-dependent birds and other wildlife, many of which are projected to drop by another 50% in the next 20 years.

“The purpose of our program is to establish a market-based incentive for ranchers to voluntarily want to improve grassland bird habitat.”



To learn about ranches and  
retailers near you, please visit:  
[Audubon.org/ranching](http://Audubon.org/ranching)





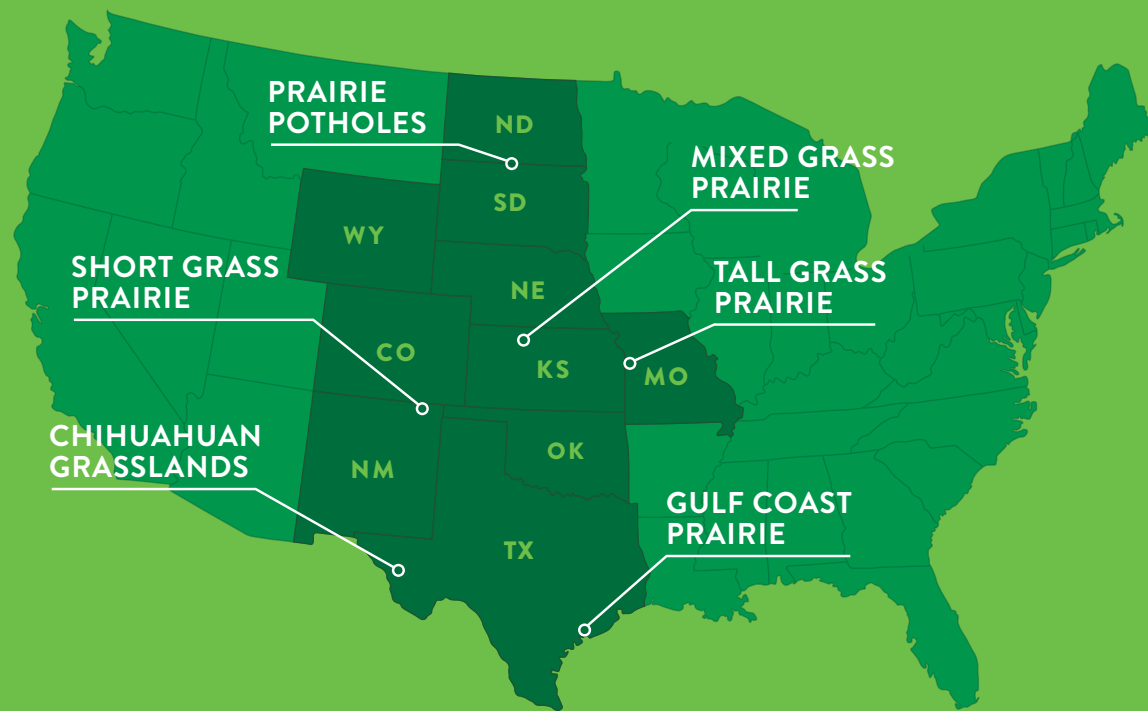
## OUR STRATEGY

The critical element to achieving grassland bird conservation at scale is to support ecologically friendly grazing. Since 85% of grasslands in the U.S. are privately owned, we cannot achieve scalable outcomes unless we engage and support the families who have worked the land for decades and even centuries. Our aim is to strengthen the important role of cattle ranchers as managers of grassland ecosystems that benefit birds and other wildlife.



## NORTH AMERICAN HEARTLAND

Birds are an important indicator of overall ecosystem health, and population trends confirm that our grasslands are in crisis. Grassland-obligate birds have declined more severely than any other suite of North American birds.



## GRASSLAND BIRD CONSERVATION TARGET LIST

Mountain Plover  
Long Billed Curlew  
Ferruginous Hawk  
Northern Harrier

Sprague's Pipit  
Bobolink  
Lesser Scaup  
Horned Lark

Vesper Sparrow  
Grasshopper Sparrow  
Baird's Sparrow  
Henslow's Sparrow

Sandhill Crane  
Lesser Prairie Chicken  
Peregrine Falcon  
Northern Bobwhite



PRAIRIE POTHOLE  
NORTHERN PINTAIL



SHORT GRASS PRAIRIE  
LONG BILLED CURLEW



TALL GRASS PRAIRIE  
GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN



MIXED GRASS PRAIRIE  
WESTERN MEADOWLARK



CHIHUAHUAN GRASSLANDS  
APLOMADO FALCON



GULF COAST PRAIRIE  
LE CONTE'S SPARROW

## PROGRAM STANDARDS

We enhance grassland bird habitat by providing technical assistance to producers to make their practices more ecologically and economically sustainable. We conduct ecological monitoring on all ranches to ensure that we are seeing the desired results on the landscape. Third-party certification assures consumers that products from Audubon-certified ranches meet program standards.



BIRD FRIENDLY RANCH CERTIFICATION

## HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Each ranch receives a Habitat Management Plan for the regional bird target species, and livestock production specialists help ranchers transition to sustainable grazing methods.

## FORAGE CONSUMPTION

Livestock solely graze on open pastures. No feedlots are allowed.

## ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE

Livestock production methods adhere to the compassionate treatment of animals. Hormones and antibiotics are prohibited.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Ranching practices result in cleaner streams, healthier soils, more pollinators for plants, and more carbon stored in plants and soil.