



home on the range

NEW SHRIKE PARTNERSHIPS

by Janet Lapierre

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spot a shrike, help save a species

This field season, the eastern loggerhead shrike field breeding program will see an exciting expansion as both the Mountsberg Raptor Centre and African Lion Safari become involved. These partnerships are an opportunity to expand the program and involve new organizations with the shrike recovery effort.

African Lion Safari came on board as a partner in 2010 and has attempted breeding within their aviaries over the past two springs. The 2012 field season will be the first time they breed shrikes within the larger field enclosures. These types of field enclosures are believed to provide a major advantage to young shrikes and may be part of the success that the field breeding and release program has experienced at our sites in Carden and Dyer's Bay. While the facility still provides food and other care for the birds, these parent-raised juveniles are reared in their natural environment where they have access to natural prey that may enter the enclosures. They also learn predator deterrent techniques from their parents and may experience inclement weather, all while still in the safety of their enclosures. These are vital skills for the juveniles when it's time for them to be released.

In 2011, Mountsberg Raptor Centre became involved with the program and housed 11 individuals over this past winter. Come spring, their spacious new facility will convert into a breeding aviary for five pairs of shrikes. Each flight pen has the capacity to double in size by opening the shared door of a flight pen adjacent to it, creating lots of space for young shrikes to stretch their wings and practice their flight skills before they are released. Once young shrikes are old enough to be released into the wild, they will be transported to one of our release sites in Ontario. After receiving up to two weeks to familiarize themselves with the new environment, staff and volunteers will release the birds into the wild. Hopefully the young will migrate and return the following year to breed.

Both African Lion Safari and Mountsberg Raptor Centre are valuable partners. They bring knowledge and experience in avian care to the project and have the potential to introduce the program to a whole new group of people. Through their own educational programs, they are able to reach people of all ages to engage them in issues related to species at risk. We are thrilled to be expanding the breeding program and welcome our new partners on board.



A WIN/WIN SITUATION

by Janet Lapierre

How do you put a price on clean air, fresh water or species diversity? This is a question asked in many countries around the world where environmental requirements such as clean watersheds and natural habitat seem to compete with social needs like food production and maintaining an income to keep up with the cost of daily living. But do these two requirements need to be at odds? Perhaps not. The concept of Payment for Ecological Services (PES) is not a new one, with roots reaching as far back as the American dust bowl era when the U.S. government compensated landowners for not farming erosion-prone land. The idea has since seen a resurgence in the past decade due to the ever-increasing demand on land, and many countries are getting on board.

The goal of PES programs is to fairly compensate farmers and other landowners for good land stewardship practices. The United States Conservation Reserve Program pays almost \$1.8 billion a year to landowners for managing 34.7 million acres of environmentally sensitive land.

Similar programs exist in the EU, Switzerland, Japan, China, Mexico and Honduras. Closer to home, the Alternative Land Use Services (or ALUS) is an ecological goods and services program that compensates farmers for conserving and restoring natural areas in Manitoba, Alberta, PEI, and in Norfolk County, Ontario.

In 2011, The Gosling Foundation teamed up with The Couchiching Conservancy to start a three year PES pilot program on the Carden Plain to reward private landowners who maintain suitable habitat for the endangered

About the Project

In May of 2003, Wildlife Preservation Canada signed a Conservation Agreement with Environment Canada - Ontario Region, making WPC responsible for coordinating and implementing the recovery program for the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike in Ontario.

For More Information

To learn more about the recovery program, email info@shrike.ca or visit www.shrike.ca. You can also contact Wildlife Preservation Canada toll-free at 1-800-956-6608 or via email admin@wildlifepreservation.ca or by writing to RR#5, 5420 Highway 6 N., Guelph, ON N1H 6J2.

Project Partners

Wildlife Preservation Canada • Environment Canada • Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources • Couchiching Conservancy • Mounstberg Conservation Area • Toronto Zoo • African Lion Safari • Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums • Bird Studies Canada • Over 250 Ontario Landowners • Numerous Local Naturalist Groups • and more to come!



What is suitable shrike habitat?

Shrikes prefer flat, open areas of short grassland with scattered trees and shrubs for nesting and hunting. Shrikes can often be found in alvars, unique habitats consisting of shallow soils over limestone bedrock, resulting in naturally short grasslands. Elsewhere, cattle ranching and pastures are important land use types, helping to keep the grass short for foraging. Pastures are ideal for habitat for shrikes, interspersed with nesting trees or shrubs and perching areas like fence posts. Thorny branches or even barbed wire are used by shrikes to impale their prey before consuming it.



eastern loggerhead shrike. The Shrike Payment Program is a voluntary program whereby landowners possessing suitable habitat within 400m of a current year's shrike nest are eligible for financial compensation of \$20/acre. In return, the landowner makes a one year commitment to continue their current land-use practices by maintaining short grassland (generally through livestock grazers), not removing trees or shrubs without consultation with Couchiching Conservancy or Wildlife Preservation Canada, and not disturbing nesting shrikes. In addition, the landowner would permit WPC staff to access to the property to confirm nesting.

At the onset of the project, a committee of local ranchers was established to ensure that the program was effective and that all parties were receiving fair benefits. Working with Wildlife Preservation Canada to determine shrike nesting locations, 19 private landowners (including both farmers and quarry operations) were identified as possessing land eligible for the payment in 2011. Five took part in the program and \$3500 was distributed, covering 175 acres of shrike habitat.

The goal of the program is to make it sustainable beyond the three year pilot period through fundraising efforts and new partnerships. Ultimately, it is anticipated that the concept will be expanded to other areas and other species at risk. With the inaugural year of the program a success, it is hoped that the partnerships being developed between farmers and conservation groups will continue to grow. And with a win-win situation for all involved, the eastern loggerhead shrike is one endangered species that stands to benefit the most.

If you have any questions regarding the program, please contact Ron Reid at the Couchiching Conservancy at 705-826-2584. Please report any Loggerhead Shrike sightings to Wildlife Preservation Canada at 1-800-956-6608. as a landowner, volunteer or donor is even more important. We greatly appreciate the support of everyone who continues to be involved in the recovery of this unique songbird!

MEET TEAM SHRIKE - 2012

In order to meet the needs of a busy field breeding season, the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Program under the supervision of Wildlife Preservation Canada (WPC) brings together a talented team of conservationists. They spend their season interacting with landowners, scouting for shrikes returning from their wintering grounds, checking for nests and hatchlings, and working in the field breeding and release facilities. Their work is vital to the progress of the recovery program. Three of this year's team members introduce themselves here.



Amy Chabot, Napanee Biologist I have served as a scientific advisor to the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Team since 1994, after completing my Master's degree on the reproductive biology and habitat selection of the loggerhead shrike in

Ontario and Quebec. In 2010 I completed my PhD, which examined the genetic population structure and migratory behaviour and wintering grounds of loggerhead shrike in North America. I have been banding wild shrikes in Ontario since 2008 and have been working with a small, endangered population of loggerhead shrike in Illinois since 2005. I am thrilled to once again be looking for shrikes in the Napanee, Smiths Falls and Pembroke/Renfrew areas.

Aija White, Grey-Bruce Biologist (with a Song Sparrow) I have had a passion for field biology ever since I was a B.Sc. student at the University of Victoria (BC). In 2011, I earned a Masters of Science in Biology at the University of Western Ontario after spending two years researching how predators affect populations of song



sparrows in BC's Gulf Islands. I love working with birds, and have a significant interest in population ecology and conservation of species-at-risk. I am excited to be Wildlife Preservation Canada's Shrike Biologist responsible

for Grey and Bruce counties in 2012. I look forward to participating in WPC's efforts to recover populations of eastern loggerhead shrike.



Drew White, Carden Biologist I earned my B.S. in Conservation and Restoration Ecology at Utah State University in 2010. I have worked with a variety of plants, mammals and birds including several species being evaluated for protection

under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. In the last couple years, I have worked primarily with the Greater Sage Grouse, monitoring the survival and nest success of this ground-dwelling species. I also spent three months with the Smithsonian Institute of Conservation Biology working with the elusive Asian clouded leopard gaining more experience with captive breeding programs. I'm very excited to work with the unique eastern loggerhead shrike and contribute to its recovery.