

Adopt-A-Site Program 2025 Summary



The Adopt-A-Site Program (AAS) has been engaging volunteers to help locate shrikes throughout their range in Ontario since 2012. The Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus migrans*) was designated Endangered in Canada in 1991, and in Ontario in 1992. Since 2003, Wildlife Preservation Canada has been leading the recovery effort for this species, and volunteer participation in the AAS Survey is a direct and vital contribution to these efforts. While surveying for shrikes, volunteers also record the presence of a subset of birds, including a number of grassland species-at-risk, and these data are submitted to the province each year through the Natural Heritage Information Centre.



Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
Photo: H. Hess 2025



Five Loggerhead Shrike nestlings
Photo: H. Hess 2025

This year, 42 volunteers surveyed 149 sites across 5 core areas (Carden, Napanee, Smiths Falls, Grey-Bruce, and Pembroke/Renfrew). Between April 17th and July 3rd, over 165 hours of surveys were completed! Volunteers found our main target, the Loggerhead Shrike, at 5 sites (3 sites in Carden and 2 sites in Napanee) during the course of regular surveys (3.4% of all sites surveyed). Two of the sightings helped WPC staff locate shrikes they weren't previously monitoring, and another helped staff find a shrike they hadn't seen in over a month!

Ten pairs of Loggerhead Shrike were confirmed by the WPC team in Eastern Canada this season: 7 in Napanee, and 3 in Carden. Seven pairs were successful in fledging young, producing at least 20 fledglings. Shrikes were also reported in Almonte, Lawrenceville, Rondeau, Saint-André-Avellin, and Thunder Bay, which continues to highlight the importance of conducting surveys in as many locations as possible.

As always, the Adopt-A-Site program concerns many more avian grassland species than just shrikes. For a breakdown of all target species sightings, see page 2.

The Most Popular

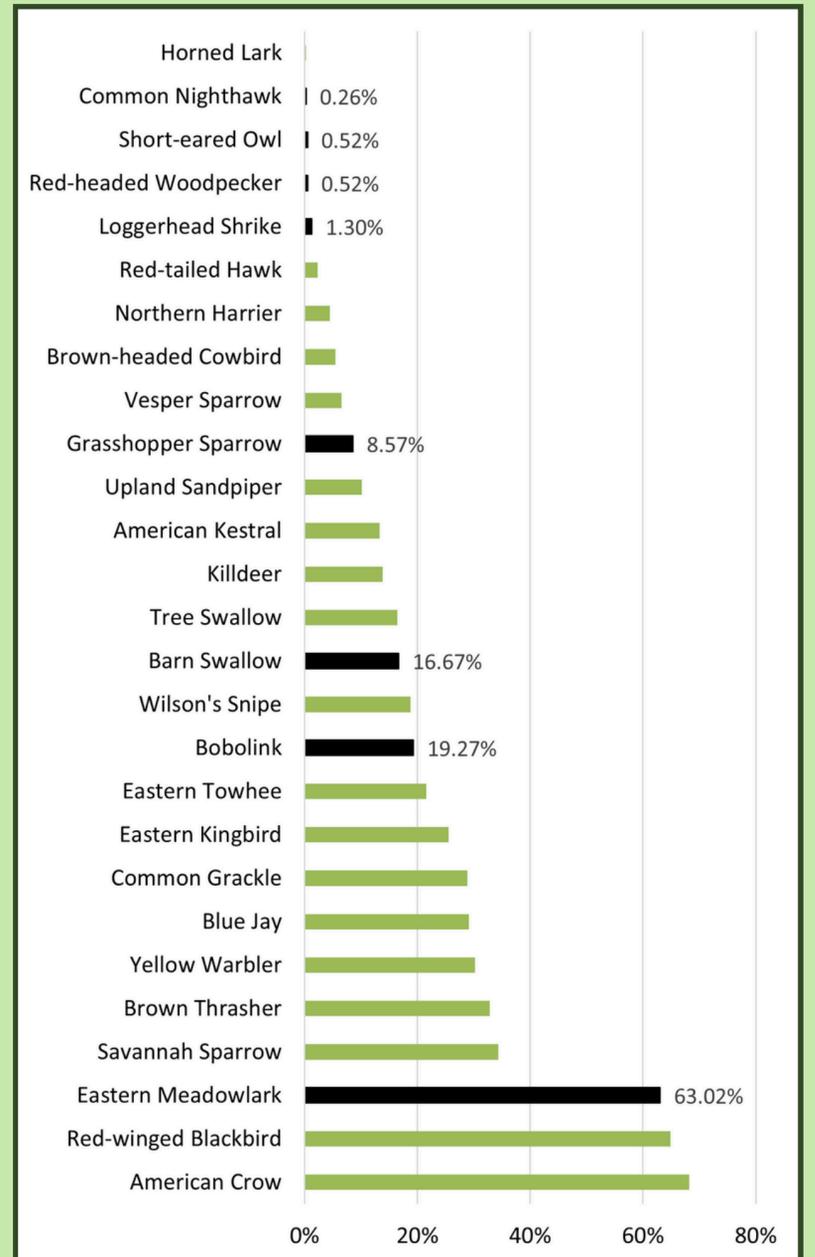
The Eastern Meadowlark, a federally and provincially threatened species, was again the most commonly found species-at-risk this year (present on 62.86% of surveys). Volunteers were able to find Eastern Meadowlarks in all core observation areas! Across all target species, American Crows were the most commonly found (68.05%), followed closely by Red-winged Blackbirds (64.68%) and Eastern Meadowlarks.

The Rarer Finds

Among the less common birds seen this year were Short-eared Owls (0.52%), seen in Smiths Falls and on the Grey-Bruce Peninsula, and Red-headed Woodpeckers (0.52%), seen in Carden. Volunteers also spotted a Common Nighthawk in Carden, the only one reported in Adopt-A-Site surveys all season (0.26%)! Other species-at-risk observed included Bobolinks (19.22%), Barn Swallows (16.62%) and Grasshopper Sparrows (8.57%). The information gathered about these at-risk species has been reported to the National Heritage Information Centre to further help conservation efforts.

Species Richness

The site with the most target species present was once again a large site in Carden which features 16 of the 27 species. While the site was not used as shrike territory this year, shrikes did nest and fledge offspring on a neighbouring site, confirming the area's suitability for shrikes. Other species-at-risk on this site included Barn Swallows, Bobolinks, and Eastern Meadowlarks. Only 32 volunteer surveys (8.31%) conducted across Ontario had 10 or more target grassland species.



Percentage of surveys where target species were observed by AAS volunteers. Black bars and data labels indicate Species-at-Risk.

Our sincere gratitude goes out to all who particulates in the Adopt-A-Site Program this year! Volunteer involvement is crucial to broadening our search efforts, locating all shrike that return to Ontario, and identifying as much breeding habitat for shrike in the province as possible. With your help, we will continue to work towards protecting these important grassland ecosystems for future generations, avian and human alike.

Conducting roadside surveys of large sites has challenges, and getting on-site data is always more valuable. If any volunteers have established relationships with landowners that might be willing to allow access for surveys, please let us know.

To participate in the program in 2026, or if you have any questions or comments, contact:

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