

# Northern Great Plains Joint Venture

Sustaining bird habitat and rural communities



## A Shared Vision

The Northern Great Plains Joint Venture is a voluntary partnership of private landowners and industry working alongside federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, tribes, academia, and other partners. Joint Venture partners work together to build and sustain a healthy world for birds, other wildlife, and people.

## A Successful Model of Collaboration

- ❖ **Working lands conservation** – Northern Great Plains Joint Venture partners support conservation practices that work for birds and for the people who depend on the Northern Great Plains. Our collaborative approach to conservation helps sustain local producers and the economic vitality of rural communities.
- ❖ **Resilient lands and communities** – Our conservation projects help recharge aquifers, improve water quality, stabilize soils, sustain bird and pollinator populations, and improve sustainable foraging production for ranching.
- ❖ **Non-regulatory solutions** – The Joint Venture supports voluntary and proactive conservation, which reduces the need for additional regulations such as species listings under the Endangered Species Act.

## Continental Importance for Declining Grassland Birds

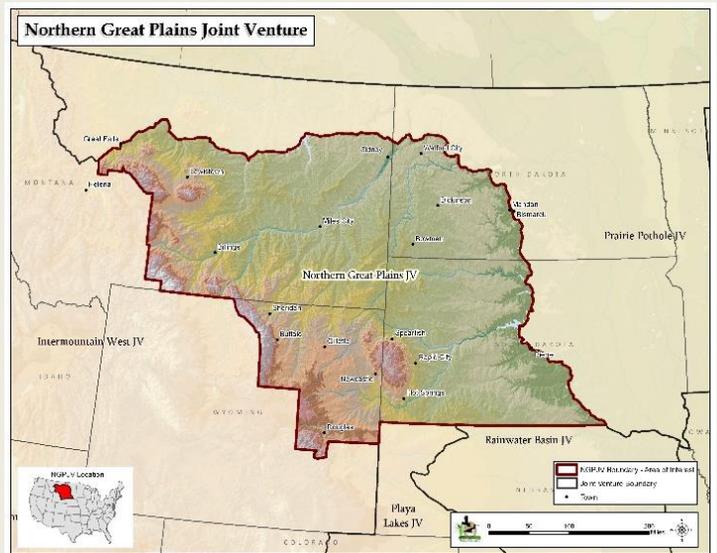
The Northern Great Plains provides some of the most important and intact breeding habitat for grassland birds, which as a group have experienced a population decline of 53% since 1970. Approximately 53% of the global populations of Lark Bunting and 24% of the global populations of Chestnut-collared longspurs call the Northern Great Plains home for part of the year. The region also supports significant breeding populations of Thick-billed Longspurs, Baird's Sparrow, and Sprague's Pipit.

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## Grasslands Projects

### *Northern Grasslands Restoration Incentive Program (N-GRIP)*

The Joint Venture is providing cost-share funding for reseeding cropland to native grassland, grazing infrastructure to help transition idle grounds to grazed pasture, and grazing management practices that help enhance the productivity and diversity of native range. Since 2019, Joint Venture partners have restored and enhanced over 15,000 acres of grasslands in areas of high importance to grassland birds within the region.



## Planning Support and Tools

### *Conservation Delivery Network and Guidance Directory*

The Joint Venture fosters cross-program collaborations and enhanced information sharing among the network of conservation professionals working within the region. Our Conservation Guidance Directory and spatial planning tools help private landowners understand the regional significance of the lands they manage and help natural resource professionals prioritize project support in areas of highest importance to grassland birds.

## Ongoing Challenges

Grassland loss continues. In 2018, 550,000 acres of grasslands in the Northern Great Plains were converted to cropland according to the World Wildlife Fund's *Plowprint Report*. Acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program are expiring, leading to additional potential losses of vegetative cover and ecosystem services. Invasive annual grasses are increasing within the region, further stressing the sustainability of diverse grassland resources. Many wetlands and riparian systems are degraded by years of runoff, poor filtration, and stream channelization. Joint Venture partners are dedicated to continuing to work with public and private land managers to address these and other challenges to provide for a sustainable, productive future for the people and wildlife of the Northern Great Plains.

## For More Information

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Working lands



Wetlands



Collaborative management



Mixed-grass prairie

Habitat photos by Catherine Wightman