



Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool

Developed and designed for Alberta producers, the **Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool (HBAT)** is part of the Habitat Management chapter in the EFP workbook. It has been intentionally created for producers to identify risks and opportunities for maintaining and improving biodiversity on their land.

Numerous conservation efforts across Alberta focus on individual species or regions. HBAT brings this data together for customized recommendations for specific areas where producers are located, making it easier to implement beneficial management practices when resources allow.

Farmers and ranchers can run the tool on a selected area of their operation to get a full representation of how to enhance biodiversity and support habitat for species at risk.

As stewards of the land, farmers and ranchers play a key role in supporting biodiversity and protecting species at risk (SAR) across the province.

A healthy biodiversity on your farm is a win-win, and if you do find SARs on your land, it's not a bad thing - it's quite the opposite! It means you are maintaining a habitat they can thrive in.

A great first step to sustain and improve biodiversity on your farm or ranch is to first know who could be calling your land home. Start your EFP Workbook today!



Ranchlands are critical to the protection of sensitive habitats and species. **About 75%** of species at risk are found in the grassland and parkland regions.



The HBAT assesses habitat found on your farm or ranch for compatibility with **90 species at risk found in the agricultural regions of Alberta**, as well as how to support biodiversity.



Alberta's grasslands are part of the North American Great Plains and the temperate grasslands, one of the **most endangered ecosystems** on our planet.



By exploring and monitoring what species are present, **land-use decisions** or changes can be made with more consideration and confidence.

ALBERTA'S GRASSLANDS AND NATIVE PRAIRIE ECOSYSTEMS

Are vital habitats for a diverse range of wildlife. By equipping Alberta producers with the knowledge and tools to protect species at risk and their habitats, we foster a sense of shared responsibility for environmental stewardship and contribute to a healthy and thriving agricultural landscape now and in the future. Keep reading to meet a few of the species at risk that can be found in Alberta.



Grassland Natural Region

Sprague's Pipit

Found in native, mixed-grass prairie they will nest where some grazing occurs, but will not nest if there is overgrazing. They feed on insects such as crickets, grasshoppers and sawflies. They will also eat the seeds of grasses and forbs.

STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Use light to moderate grazing in pastures to promote a healthy range and use salt blocks and watering sites to create variability in grass height and litter cover.

Peace River Parkland

Northern Myotis

Also known as the northern long-eared bat, this species weighs little more than a loonie. They live in boreal forests and roost under bark or in tree cavities. On summer nights, one bat can eat hundreds of flying insects and can help control populations of potentially harmful insects.

STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Retain shelterbelts or hedgerows/connectivity. Bats use these lines of vegetation along field and road margins as protected areas of cover during flights between roosting and foraging or drinking habitats. These features also provide roosting habitat when large trees are retained.



Bat Conservation International | J. Scott Altenbach



Central Parkland NSR

Short-Eared Owl

This open-country hunter calls the grasslands home. Characterized by black-rimmed yellow eyes on a pale facial disk, they nest on the ground and eat mostly small mammals, especially mice and voles. These birds require large tracts of open grasslands and are at risk from habitat loss due to agricultural practices, grazing and development.

STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Owls nest on the ground from April - June. Delay haying as long as possible and use a flushing bar to create a disturbance which allows time for nesting birds to avoid machinery.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT ALBERTA'S BIODIVERSITY?

Get started on your Environmental Farm Plan.

ALREADY HAVE AN EFP?

Explore Chapter 5 in the workbook to access the Habitat and Biodiversity Tool.

<https://www.albertaefp.com/>