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SPECIES AT RISK

**A guide to Canada's species at
risk in the Prairie Provinces**

March 2014



Canada 

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**A guide to Canada's
species at risk in the
Prairie Provinces**

The contents of this booklet pertain to terrestrial species at risk in the Prairie ecozone.

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SPECIES

Mammals

<u>Ord's Kangaroo Rat</u>	8
<u>Swift Fox</u>	9
<u>Western Harvest Mouse</u>	10

Birds

<u>Burrowing Owl</u>	11
<u>Chestnut-collared Longspur</u>	12
<u>Common Nighthawk</u>	13
<u>Eastern Whip-poor-will</u>	14
<u>Ferruginous Hawk</u>	15
<u>Greater Sage-Grouse</u>	16
<u>Least Bittern</u>	17
<u>Piping Plover</u>	18
<u>Prairie Loggerhead Shrike</u>	19
<u>Sage Thrasher</u>	20
<u>Sprague's Pipit</u>	21
<u>Red-headed Woodpecker</u>	22

Reptiles

<u>Eastern Yellow-bellied Racer</u>	23
<u>Greater Short-horned Lizard</u>	24
<u>Northern Prairie Skink</u>	25

Insects

<u>Dakota Skipper</u>	26
<u>Dusky Dune Moth</u>	27
<u>Gold-edged Gem</u>	28
<u>Ottoo Skipper</u>	29
<u>Poweshiek Skipperling</u>	30
<u>Verna's Flower Moth</u>	31
<u>White Flower Moth</u>	32
<u>Yucca Moth, Non-pollinating</u>	
<u>Yucca Moth & Five-spotted</u>	
<u>Bogus Yucca Moth</u>	33

Plants

<u>Slender Mouse-ear-cress</u>	34
<u>Small-flowered Sand-verbena</u>	35
<u>Small White Lady's Slipper</u>	36
<u>Smooth Goosefoot</u>	37
<u>Soapweed (Yucca)</u>	38
<u>Tiny Cryptantha</u>	39
<u>Western Silvery Aster</u>	40
<u>Western Prairie Fringed Orchid</u>	41

<u>Where to go for more information</u>	42
<u>Species of Special Concern</u>	43-44

4 The new federal *Species at Risk Act*

© Gene Fortney



Farmers, ranchers, Aboriginal groups, scientists, and people with an interest in nature have observed the disappearance of plants and animals for decades.

The federal *Species at Risk Act*, in full effect since June 1, 2004, is designed to work cooperatively with landowners and provincial governments to protect species at risk and their habitats. Under the *Species at Risk Act*, species that are threatened, endangered and extirpated (extinct in Canada but exist elsewhere), and their residences (e.g. nest or den) and critical habitats receive protection.

The purpose of the *Species at Risk Act* is:

- to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct or extirpated
- to help recover extirpated, endangered and threatened species
- to ensure that species of special concern do not become endangered or threatened.

For more information about the *Act* visit: sararegistry.gc.ca.

Taking voluntary action as a landowner to protect species at risk on your land is imperative to their survival in Canada.

The Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk (HSP) provides funding for projects that conserve and protect species at risk and their habitats. Over the past 13 years, the HSP has supported over 2,100 projects across Canada, contributing over \$125 million towards on-the-ground conservation action by partners and stakeholders. The HSP continues to be available to assist individuals and groups seeking to implement actions for the conservation and protection of this species.

Across the Prairies, numerous organizations have received HSP funding to develop programs and initiatives geared towards educating and enabling landowners to manage species at risk on their land.

In Saskatchewan, landowners have been provided funding for watering systems and fencing to benefit both species at risk and cattle. Alberta based outreach programs have enhanced the protection of the burrowing owl and loggerhead shrike on private land. Manitoba agricultural and livestock producers have benefited from the implementation of twice-over rotational grazing on their native pastures.



6 Categories of species at risk

Species at risk are listed in one of five categories:

EXTINCT:	A wildlife species that no longer exists.
EXTIRPATED:	A wildlife species that no longer exists in the wild in Canada, but exists elsewhere.
ENDANGERED:	A wildlife species that is facing imminent extirpation or extinction.
THREATENED:	A wildlife species likely to become an endangered species if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction.
SPECIAL CONCERN:	A wildlife species that may become a threatened or an endangered species because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

This guide includes threatened and endangered species found in the Prairie provinces. The *Species at Risk Act* also provides protection for extirpated species including: the greater prairie chicken and the Prairie population of grizzly bear. There are numerous species of special concern found in the Prairies. Management plans are prepared to conserve these species and if they become threatened or endangered they would also be protected by the *Act*. For the complete list of species visit: sararegistry.gc.ca.

How to use this guide

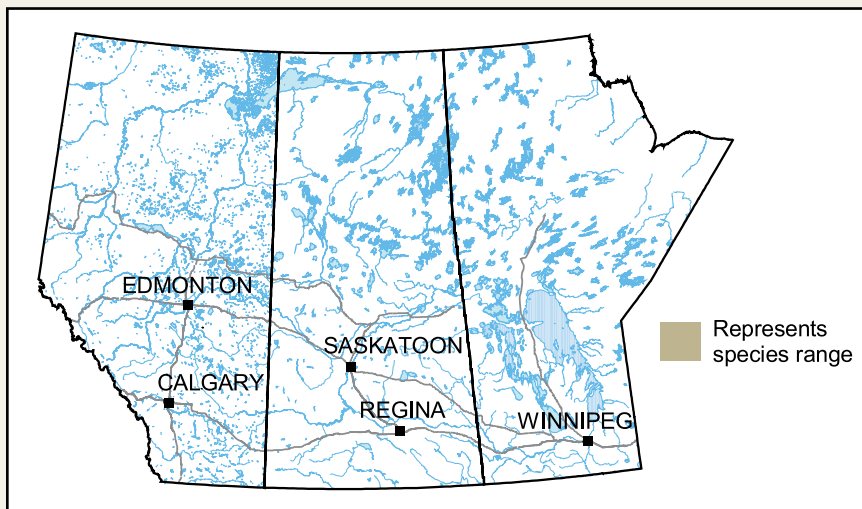
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The purpose of this guide is to help you identify the endangered and threatened species on the Prairies listed in the federal *Species at Risk Act*. This publication will be updated periodically when new endangered or threatened species are designated. For an official current list of species visit: sararegistry.gc.ca.

Photos, accompanied by text, will help you identify the species in the field.

The range maps show the distribution of each species throughout the Prairie provinces so you can determine at a glance if they may occur in your area.

Some species may also occur in other parts of Canada or in the U.S. but this publication only depicts their range within the Prairie provinces.



8 Ord's Kangaroo Rat

Dipodomys ordii

ENDANGERED

Ord's kangaroo rats are small nocturnal rodents with large hind legs and feet and long tufted tails. They are well adapted to desert environments, spending most of the day in underground burrows and foraging for seeds at night. These rodents depend on open and sparsely vegetated habitats such as active sand dunes and sandy hills that occur in southeastern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan.

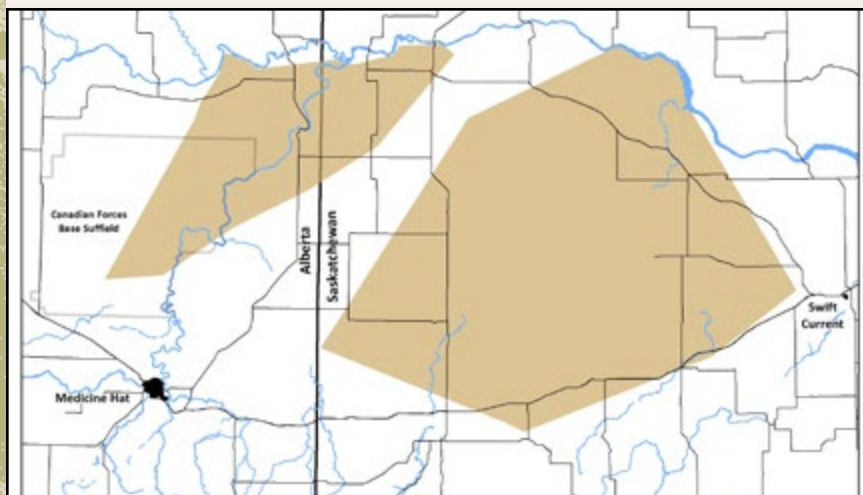


Length including tail: 260 mm (10.2 inches)
Body weight: 69 g (2.4 ounces)

© David Gummer, Courtesy of the Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton, Alberta

Did you know?

- Its common name comes from its kangaroo-like hind legs and hopping style of locomotion; they are able to jump as far as 2 m in a single leap.
- Kangaroo rats use shallow hibernation to conserve energy during the harsh Canadian winter, but most don't survive until the spring.



Swift Fox

Vulpes velox

9

THREATENED

Swift foxes are about the same size as jack rabbits or large house cats. Their small size and black-tipped tail distinguish them from red foxes. Their dens are usually on hills near water bodies, and they roam in the open prairie in search of grasshoppers, small mammals and dead animals.

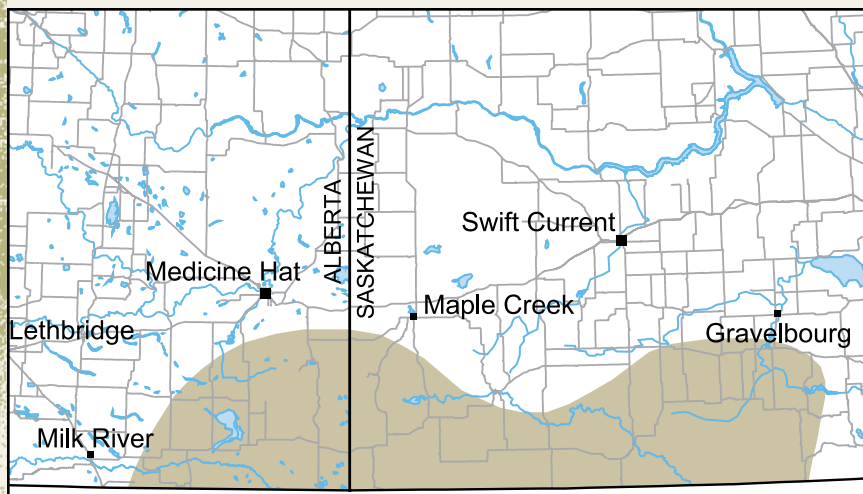


© Lu Carbyn

Height at shoulder: 30-32 cm (12-13 inches).
Length (including tail): 77-80 cm (30-32 inches)

Did you know?

- Named for their remarkable speed, this slender member of the canine family can run faster than 60 km/hr.
- Once completely extirpated from Canada, the swift fox is making a come-back thanks to a successful re-introduction program and on-going support from landowners.



ENDANGERED

The Western harvest mouse is one of the smallest mammals inhabiting the Prairies. It is a long-tailed brownish mouse with a light underbelly and white feet. It is similar in appearance to juvenile deer mice, but deer mice are greyer in colour. Western harvest mice are omnivorous, nocturnal, and can be found in shrub-steppe habitats that contain extensive cover. They make nests at the base of shrubs by weaving together grasses to create shelter for themselves.



© Robin Bloom

Length 136 mm (half of which is tail)
Weight: 11 g

Did you know?

- Its common name comes from its habit of “harvesting” grasses and leaving them in piles along vole runs.
- Prior to 1994, this subspecies had only been documented three times in Canada.



Burrowing Owl

Athene cunicularia

11

ENDANGERED

Larger than a robin and smaller than a pigeon, the long-legged burrowing owls are named for their curious habit of nesting in abandoned gopher (ground squirrel) or badger burrows, on grazed grasslands.

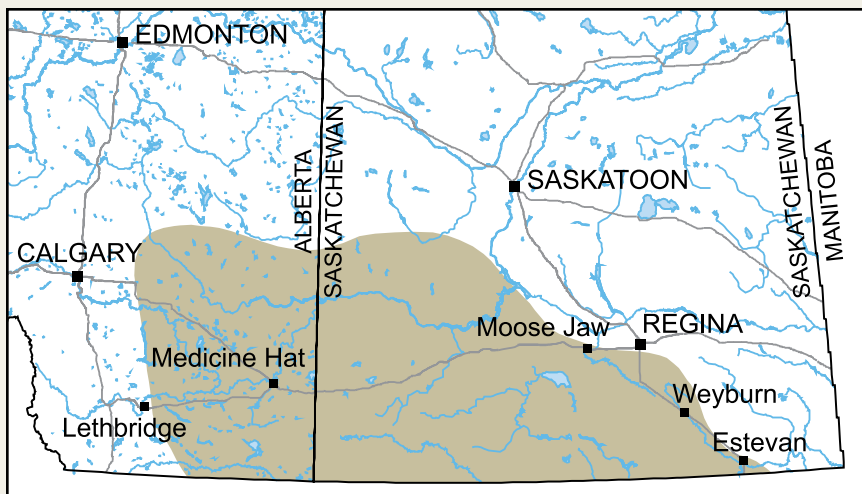


© Environment Canada, Photo: Geoff Holroyd

Length: 23-28 cm (9-11 inches)

Did you know?

- They can co-exist with cattle – they even line their nests with cow dung!
- A female burrowing owl that nested in Arizona flew 1,860 km to Saskatchewan, where she then raised seven young – all within one summer! This is the longest breeding dispersal event within a single breeding season ever recorded for any raptor.



THREATENED

A small, sparrow-sized songbird found in native pastures from southwestern Manitoba to southeastern Alberta. Males, commonly heard singing flying in fanciful aerial display, often reach heights of 15 m descending to rocky terrain, fences and isolated shrubs.

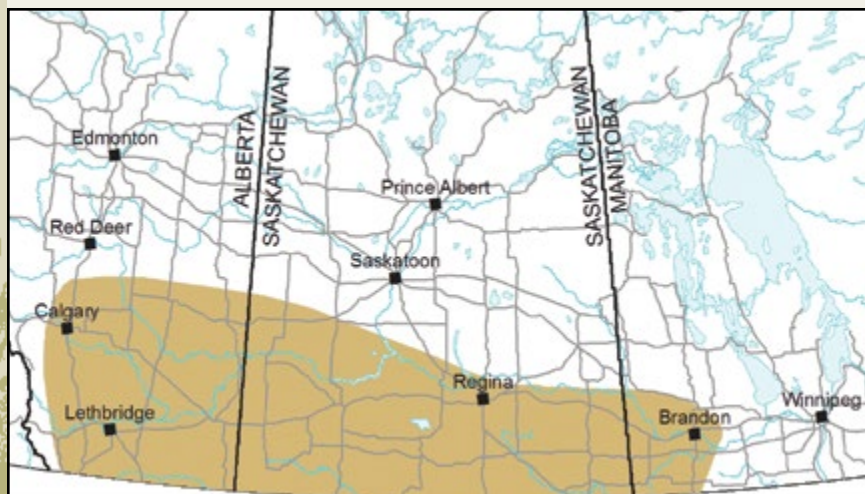


© Nick Saunders

Length: 13–16.5 cm
(5–6.5 inches)

Did you know?

- The nest, constructed by the female, is commonly situated beside a clump of grass, rose, sage or snowberry bush, or a cow pie.
- The longspur is often found on square or rectangular parcels of native mixed-grass pastures, 32 ha or larger, in flatter areas devoid of woody vegetation, with sparse residual vegetation, and areas of shorter grass and bare areas.



Common Nighthawk

Chordeiles minor

13

THREATENED

The common nighthawk is a medium sized bird, dark brown plumage mottled with black, white and buff, often recognized in flight with a white patch across the outer edge of its wing. They are often seen at sunset, flying over areas such as sand dunes, beaches, logged areas/ forest clearings, burned areas, rocky barrens, prairies, peatbogs and pastures.



© Nick Saunders

Length: 41-51 cm
(16-20 inches)

Did you know?

- Generally, two eggs are laid directly on the ground from the 3rd week of May to mid-August.
- Incubation is carried out by the female and lasts 16-20 days, depending on the region. Nestlings become fully developed between 45 and 52 days.
- Once relatively common in cities where they nested on flat, gravel-covered rooftops, common nighthawk populations have declined in the past few decades because of reductions in flying insects, which they rely on for food.



14 Eastern Whip-poor-will

Antrostomus vociferous

THREATENED

Eastern whip-poor-wills are medium-sized, insect-eating birds that are active from dusk until dawn. They have a large, flattened head, large eyes, and their cryptic grey and brown plumage acts as camouflage during the day while they roost in leaf litter on the ground. They live in semi-open forests or patchy forests with clearings.

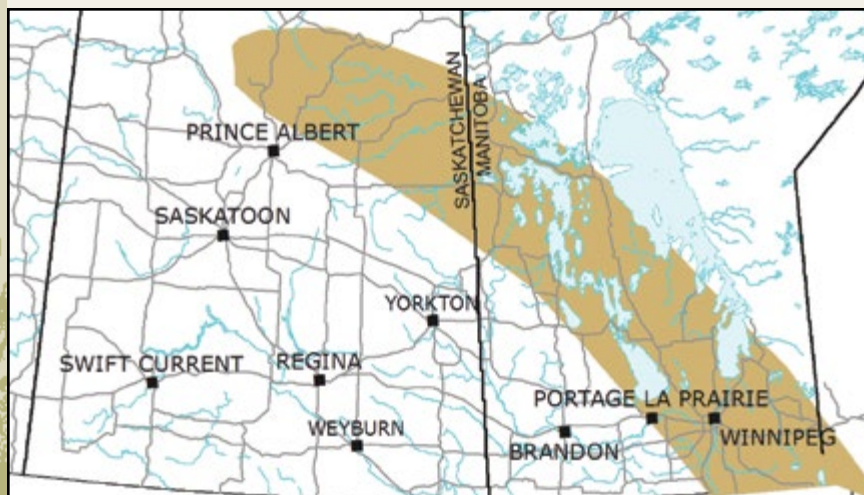


© Kevin T. Karlson

Length: 22-26 cm (8.6 - 10.2 inches)

Did you know?

- With a small bill and a large mouth ringed with long, fine feathers that serve as sensory bristles, this species is adapted to capturing flying insects while in flight.
- Like other aerial insectivores, this species has recently experienced rapid population declines, possibly caused by habitat loss or by declines in their insect food supply which may be caused by pesticides or climate change.



Ferruginous Hawk

Buteo regalis

15

THREATENED

The ferruginous hawk has broad, long wings with rounded tips and a fan-shaped tail. Their name is derived from the Latin term for iron, *ferrum*, due to their rust coloured plumage.

They have a characterisitc “V” on their underside

which is formed by their dark reddish legs when flying. Ferruginous hawks are strongly dependant on native grassland habitats. They require a raised area, surrounded by Prairies for nesting so they can chase its preferred prey, the Richardson’s ground squirrel.

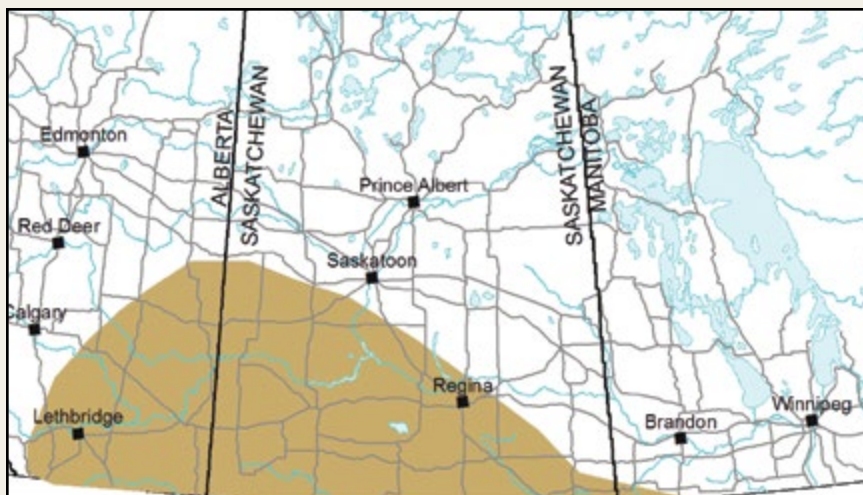


Length: 56-69 cm (22-7 inches)

© Nick Saunders

Did you know?

- Before settlement, ground nesting prevailed and nests were partially constructed of bison bones and wool.
- There are two color versions of the ferruginous hawk. The pale type (described above), or the less commonly seen dark variety with its signature dark brown plumage with either a white or grey tail.



16 Greater Sage-Grouse

Centrocercus urophasianus urophasianus

ENDANGERED

Greater Sage-Grouse, the largest grouse in Canada, are found on the southernmost Prairies where sagebrush grows. Their long pointed tail and black belly differentiate them from other grouse. Their numbers have drastically declined because of habitat loss and degradation, disturbance, weather conditions, predation and disease.



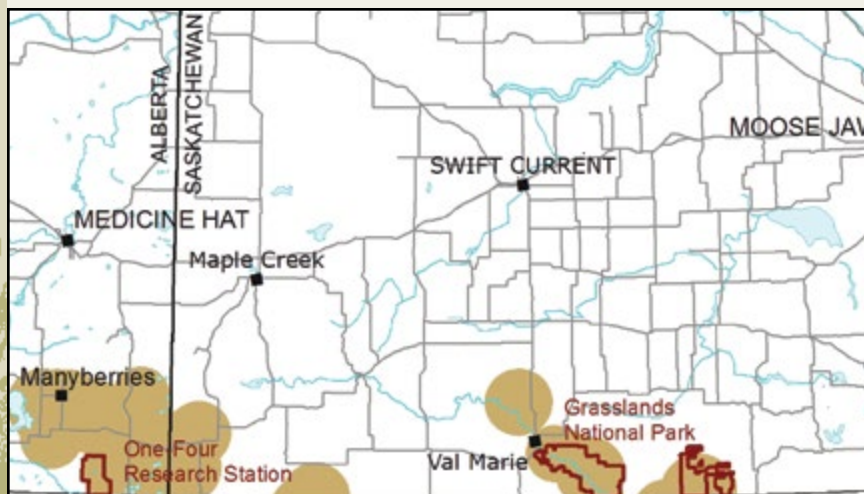
Length of males: 65-75 cm (25-30 inches)

Length of females: 56-58 cm (22-23 inches)

© Parks Canada, Photo: W. Lynch

Did you know?

- In the spring, males strut a flirtatious ritual dance with puffed chests and fanned tails in an attempt to attract females. Despite their macho efforts, only 15 percent of these show-offs successfully attract a mate.
- The Governments of Canada and Alberta have partnered to fund a captive breeding program at the Calgary Zoo as one aspect of an intensive effort to assist with species recovery in Canada.



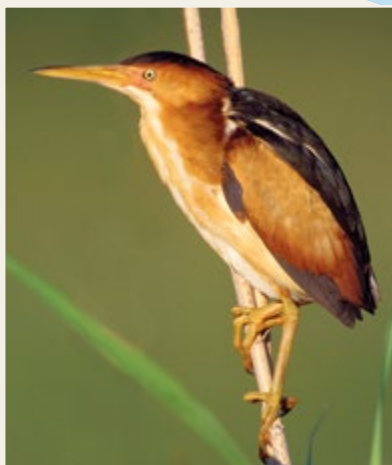
Least Bittern

Ixobrychus exilis

17

THREATENED

Least bitterns are much smaller than other members of the heron family such as American bitterns. They are secretive, often heard giving a soft, low “coo” call. In flight, their legs often dangle below their bodies. They generally prefer marshes that are five hectares (12.5 acres) in size or larger. They reside in areas covered in dense cattail next to deeper open water.



© Brian E. Small, 2001

Length: 28-35 cm (11-14 inches)

Did you know?

- Like other bitterns, they are occasionally seen holding a reed-like pose with their bill pointed upwards, blending in with their surroundings.
- They are affected by recreational water activities and the decline in the number and quality of marshes in the Prairies.
- Maintaining vegetation around wetlands will improve water quality and clarity which they need to forage for aquatic insects, frogs and small fish.



ENDANGERED



© G. W. Beyersbergen



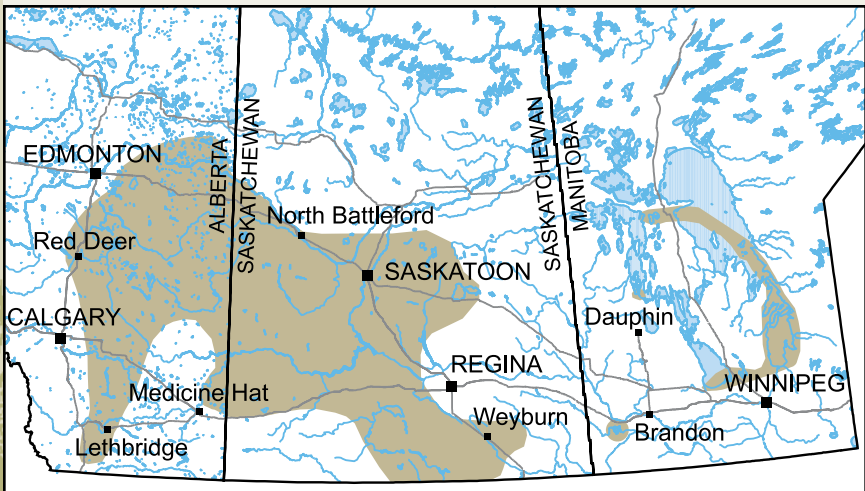
Length: 15 - 19 cm (6-7 inches)

© Environment Canada,
Photo: J. Paul Goossen

Piping plovers are small shorebirds with a single neck-band, an orange bill with a black tip and orange legs that differentiate them from similar looking killdeer that have two neck-bands (see photo). Plovers are found on sparsely vegetated sand or gravel beaches and alkali mud flats where they nest and raise their young.

Did you know?

- Keeping pets, cattle and vehicles (including ATVs) off nesting beaches increases survival of plovers.
- Ranchers and other landowners have signed up for voluntary stewardship programs to conserve piping plovers and their habitat.



Prairie Loggerhead Shrike

Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides

19

THREATENED

Prairie loggerhead shrikes are slightly smaller than a robin with a distinctive black mask across their eyes and forehead. They occupy open grassland areas, but require scattered trees or shrubs nearby for nesting and perches. The loggerhead shrike migrates south in winter, and are replaced on the Canadian Prairie by the similar but slightly larger northern shrike.



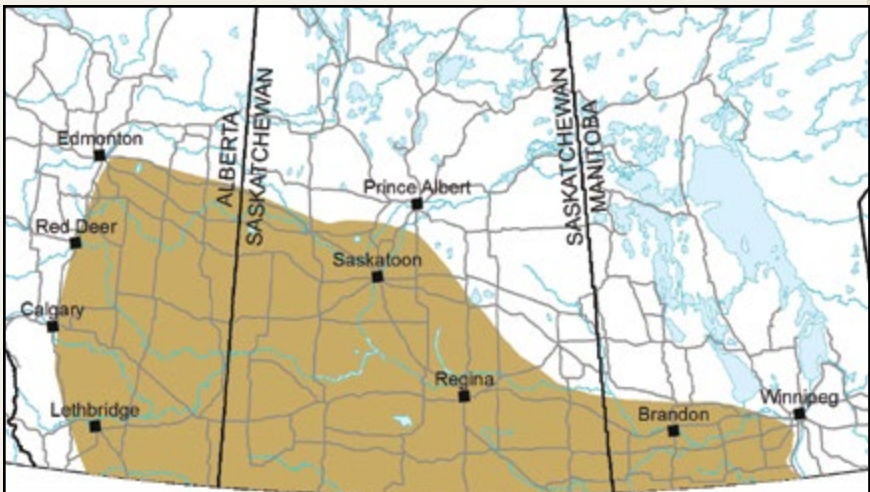
Length: 23 cm (9 inches)

© Henk Kilaan

Did you know?

- These masked hunters use their sharply hooked beak to kill insects or mice and will often impale their prey on thorns or barbed wire for future use.
- Shrikes often use roadside power lines and fences as hunting perches.
- Do not clear abandoned farmyards to maintain shrub and tree growth for nesting shrikes and other wildlife.

birds



ENDANGERED

Sage thrashers are slightly smaller than robins and are distinguished from the more common brown thrashers by their shorter tail and grayish rather than reddish-brown colour. As the name implies, sage thrashers prefer areas where sagebrush grows.

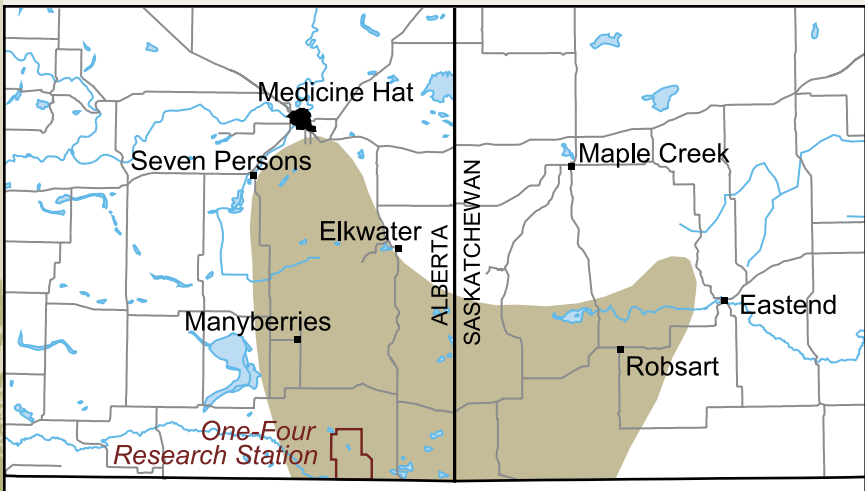


© Peter LaTourrette, 2001

Length: 20-23 cm (8-9 inches)

Did you know?

- Both males and females are equally involved in building the nest, sitting on the eggs and caring for the young.
- Although they are common south of the border in areas where sagebrush is abundant, they are extremely rare in Canada.



Sprague's Pipit

Anthus spragueii

21

THREATENED

Sprague's pipits are secretive sparrow-like birds more often heard than seen. The males sing a twittering "Cheeer, Cheer, Cheer, Cheer" while circling at a height of up to 150 m (500 feet) in the air. Then, they drop rapidly to the ground and hide in the grass.

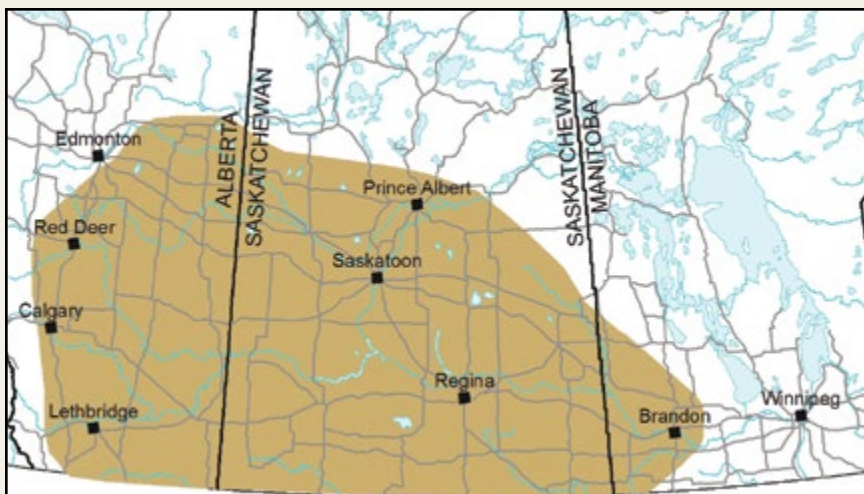


© Bob Gress, 2002

Length: 16 - 17 cm (6 – 7 inches)

Did you know?

- Sprague's pipits nest on the ground in native grasslands and feed insects to their young.
- They prefer range in fair to excellent condition and are rare in cultivated lands or introduced forage.



22 Red-headed Woodpecker

Melanerpes erythrocephalus

THREATENED

Red-headed woodpeckers are easily recognizable robin-sized birds. They have an unmistakable red head and neck and contrasting black and white body. Large white patches are visible on their wings in flight. They prefer woodlots containing larger scattered trees and limited ground cover usually located near clearings such as roads or open pastures.



© Ron Bazin

Length: 24 cm (9¼ inches)

Did you know?

- They can catch flying insects, and do so more frequently and skillfully than most other woodpeckers.
- The male is solely responsible for incubation during the night.
- They nest in dead standing trees or dead limbs of live trees, often found within grazed wooded pastures. Landowners should avoid removing dead trees and limbs from their property if possible.



Eastern Yellow-bellied Racer

Coluber constrictor flaviventris

23

THREATENED

Eastern yellow-bellied racers are long and slender snakes with whip-like tails, elongated heads and smooth lustrous scales. The upper part of their bodies are bluish-green and their bellies are yellow. In Canada, they are found in a few areas of southern Saskatchewan, in open habitats such as grasslands and agricultural areas. They also appear in extreme southeastern Alberta.

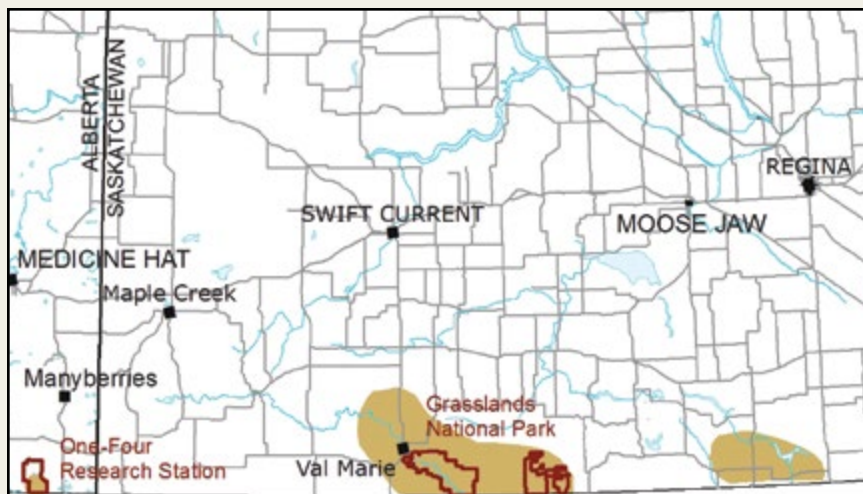


Length: 51 - 121 cm (20 - 48 inches)

© Parks Canada, Photo: W. Lynch

Did you know?

- As the name implies, racers are built for speed and are capable of travelling up to 7 km/h for very short distances.
- They return to the same den each year to hibernate through the winter months.
- Be aware of snakes which may be on roads in their general area of occurrence as they disperse to feed in the summer months.



24 Greater Short-horned Lizard

Phrynosoma hernandesi

ENDANGERED

The greater short-horned lizard is a squat grayish lizard with some dark blotches, often with white edges, on its back. There are short spines along the back of the head, and there are fringes of triangular scales along the sides of the abdomen. This lizard thrives in a hot, dry badland habitat with exposed soils, sparse vegetation along drainages such as rocky river beds in southeastern Alberta and in Grasslands National Park, Saskatchewan.

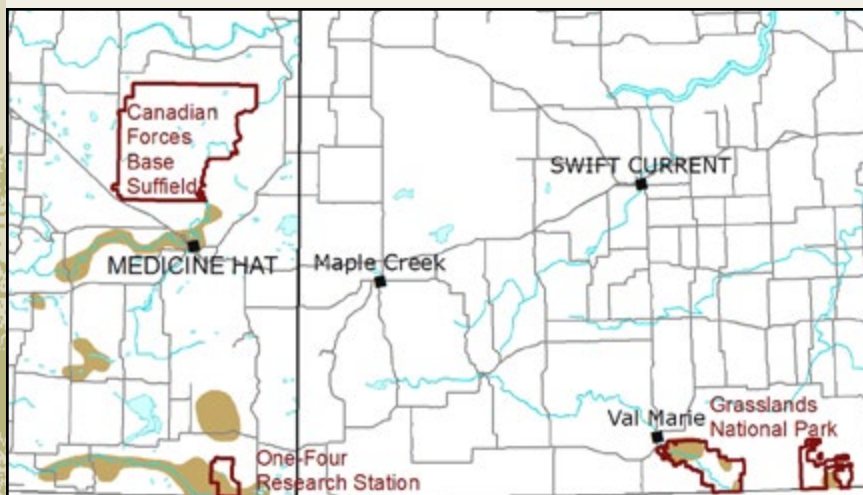


© Shelley Pruss

Length: 6 – 9.5 cm (2.5 to 3.75 inches)

Did you know?

- This lizard eats a variety of insects but it is especially fond of ants.
- The females bear live young which are about 1 inch long.
- These lizards are very secretive and extremely difficult to find because their colour closely matches the ground colour, and these lizards often do not move when they are approached.



Northern Prairie Skink

Plestiodon septentrionalis

25

ENDANGERED

The northern prairie skink is a cigar-shaped lizard with small legs, an olive to olive-brown back, dark sides and seven light stripes on its back and sides. The tail is bright blue in the young. It inhabits sandy areas with adequate cover, such as native grasses.



© A. B. Sheldon

Length: 5-8.5 cm (2-3.35 inches)

Did you know?

- The prairie skink is the only lizard species in Manitoba and one of only six native lizard species in Canada.
- Female prairie skinks nest in subterranean burrows or, more typically, under artificial cover such as sheets of tin and old boards.
- They spend more than seven months of the year in hibernation.

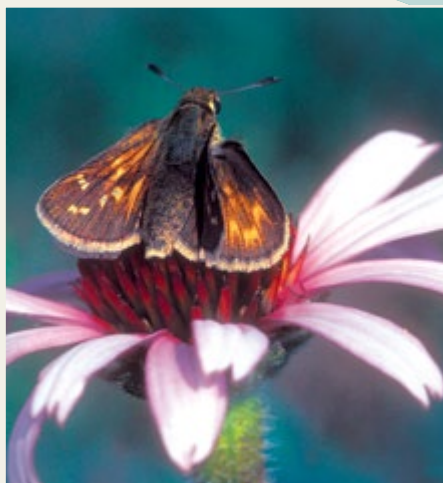


26 Dakota Skipper

Hesperia dacotae

THREATENED

Male Dakota skippers are tawny orange with a brownish border on the upper side of the wings and an elongated dark mark on the front wings. The undersides are yellowish orange with paler spots forming a semicircle. Females are similar but have less distinctive buff colouring and faint markings. They occur only in native tall-grass and mixed grass prairie.

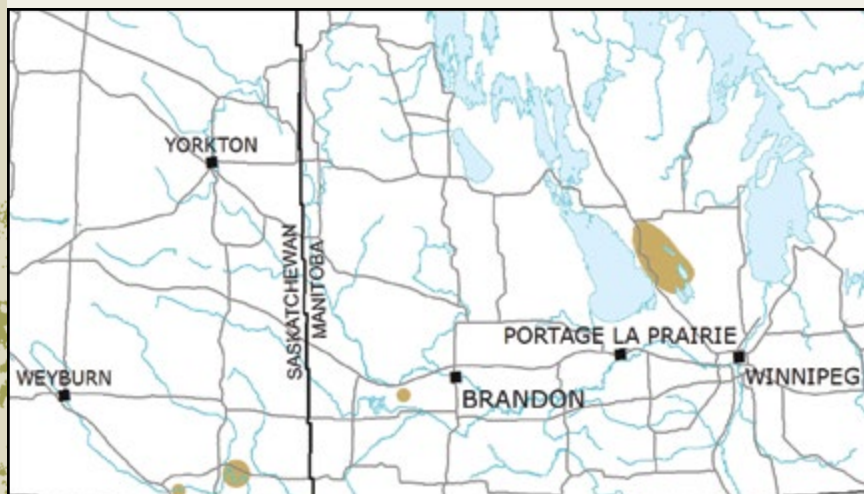


© Robert P. Dana

Wingspan: 21 - 29 mm
(0.83 - 1.14 inches)

Did you know?

- Only 4 isolated populations are known to occur in Canada.
- Conversion of native prairie to cultivated land is one of the biggest threats to Dakota skippers. Since European settlement, 99.9% of the native mixed and tall-grass Prairie in Manitoba and 81% of the mixed-grass prairie in Saskatchewan has been lost.



Dusky Dune Moth

Copablepharon longipenne

27

ENDANGERED

The dusky dune moth is a medium-sized, light brown moth with a distinctive line of black dots on the forewing. A pale streak is often present along the edge of the forewing. Males and females are similar in appearance but females are generally larger in size.

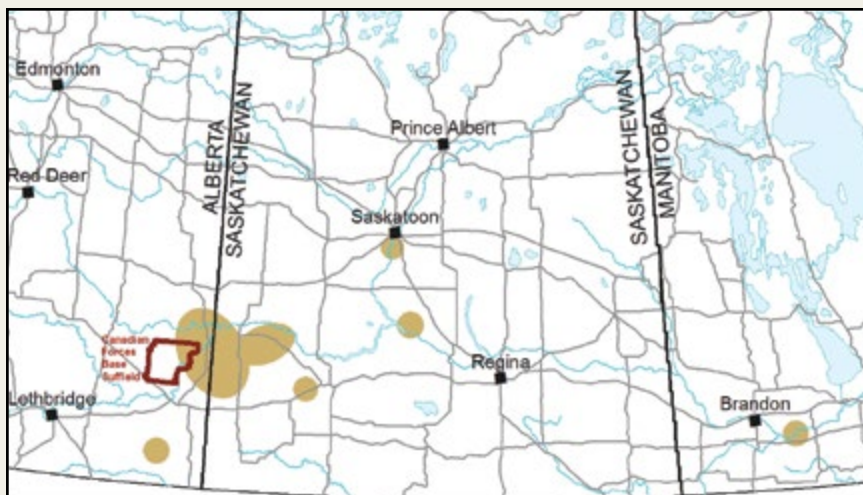


© Environment Canada, Photo: Medea Curteanu

Wingspan: 11-20 mm
(0.4-0.8 inches)

Did you know?

- Dusky dune moths inhabit sparsely vegetated active sand dunes; a rare type of habitat that has been declining in Canada for over a century.
- Very little is known about dusky dune moth adult and larval host plants.

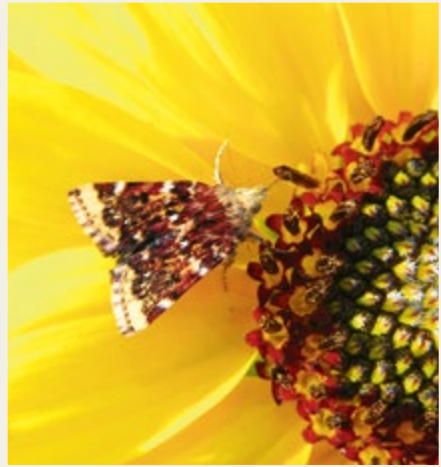


28 Gold-edged Gem

Schinia avemensis

ENDANGERED

The gold-edged gem is a small day-flying moth with specialized habitat requirements. The moth inhabits remnant patches of active sand dunes or blowouts where colonies of Prairie sunflowers (its only known larval host plant) exist. Upper wings of the gold-edged gem are brownish-maroon marked with two yellow bands. Its name comes from the distinctive pale yellow band along the margin of its wings.

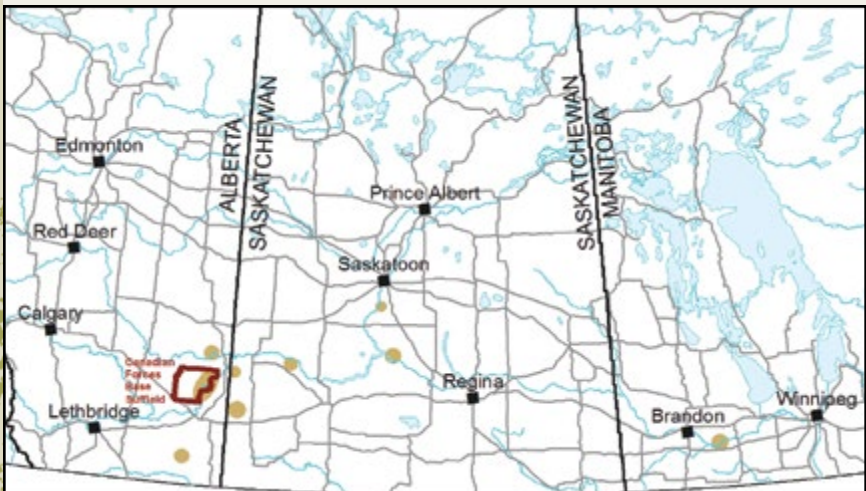


© Jason J. Dombroskie

Wingspan: 16-20 mm ($\frac{2}{3}$ of an inch)

Did you know?

- The gold-edged gem can remain in the pupal stage for more than a year, but once they emerge as adults, they live for only a week.
- The gradual stabilization of active sand dunes by native or introduced vegetation such as sweet clover and spurge threaten this moth's habitat.



Ottoe Skipper

Hesperia ottoe

29

ENDANGERED

The ottoe skipper is a rare butterfly found in localized areas of Manitoba's dry mixed-grass and sand-prairie habitats. The male has yellowish-orange wings with a diffused brown border and an elongated mark on the forewing. The female is dull brown with pale buff markings and one or two whitish spots on the forewing. Males and females both have pale yellowish-orange undersides.

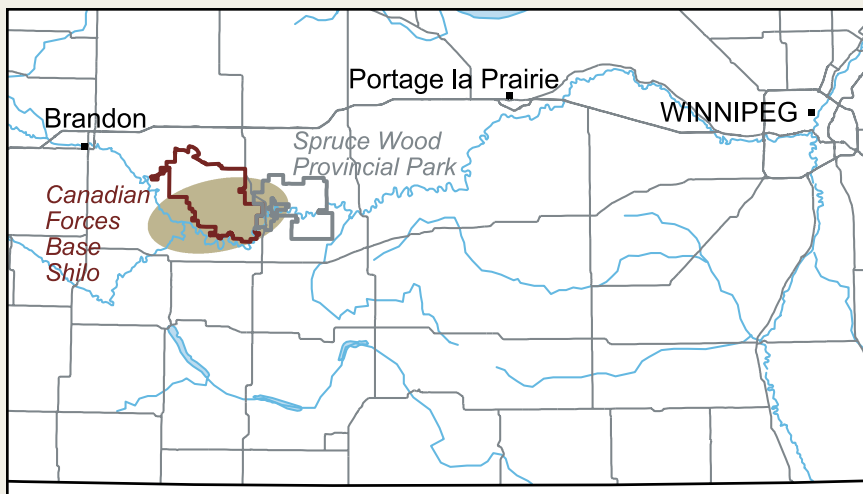


© Robert Dana

Wingspan: 29-35 mm
(1.1 - 1.4 inches)

Did you know?

- Ottoe skipper cannot survive in altered or disturbed habitats and much of this species' preferred grassland habitat has been converted to farmland.
- This species was last seen in Spruce Woods Provincial Park in the late 1980s.



30 Poweshiek Skipperling

Oarisma poweshiek

THREATENED

The Poweshiek skipperling, like all skippers, has a hooked antennae and characteristic skipping flight pattern. This butterfly has an orange head and dark brown upper wings with orange lines along the wing margin. The undersides of wings are dark grey with distinctive silvery-outlined veins. In Canada, they only occur in wet to mesic native tall-grass prairies.



© Mike Reese

Wingspan: 24-30 mm
(0.95-1.2 inches)

Did you know?

- In Canada, the Poweshiek skipperling is found within a 2300-ha area of Southeast Manitoba.
- This butterfly was first discovered in Iowa and is named after the county it was found in: Poweshiek County.



Verna's Flower Moth

Schinia verna

31

THREATENED

The forewings of the Verna's flower moth are contrastingly marked with olive-brown and maroon on a white background. The hindwings are black and white, giving the moth an overall checkered appearance. The known global range of Verna's flower moth is restricted to the Canadian



© Gary Anweiler

Wingspan: 20 mm (0.78 inches)

Prairie grassland and parkland region. It is a day-flying moth, whose flight period is closely synchronized with the blooming of pussytoes, the larval food plant.

Did you know?

- Only one population of Verna's flower moth has been observed in Canada since 2000, north of Jenner, Alberta. It is unknown if other populations still exist.
- The larvae of Verna's flower moth are cannibalistic!



ENDANGERED

The white flower moth is a relatively small moth with an orange head and wings of pure glossy white – it is distinctive from all other species of moths in Canada. Only one population is known to occur in Canada, in the Spruce Woods Provincial Park region of southwest Manitoba.

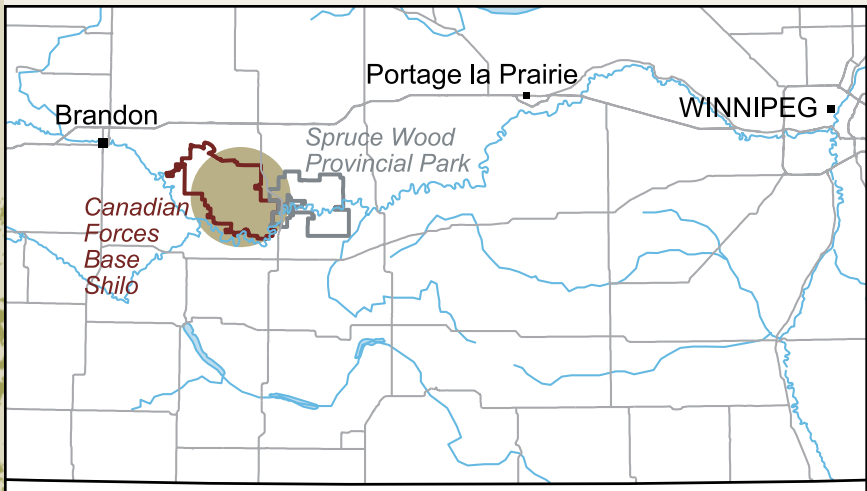


Wingspan: 31 mm (1.23 inches)

© Vernon Antoine Brou Jr.

Did you know?

- Little is known about this nocturnal moth, but it is thought to live in association with the white evening primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*).
- This moth appears to be restricted to active sand dunes, and thus vegetation growth on sand dunes may pose a threat to this species.



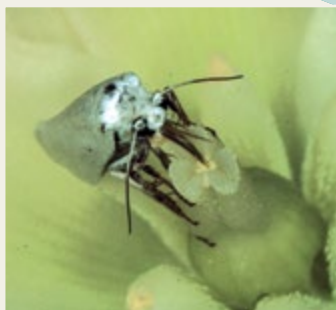
Yucca Moth, Non-pollinating Yucca Moth & Five-spotted Bogus Yucca Moth

Tegeticula yuccasella, *Tegeticula corruptrix* & *Prodoxus quinquepunctellus*

33

ENDANGERED

The yucca moth is a small whitish moth that, like the non-pollinating yucca moth and the five-spotted bogus yucca moth, can be found within the flowers of the soapweed (yucca) plant. These three highly specialized moths are dependent on the soapweed plant and are only found in the localized parts of southern Alberta where soapweed occurs. All three moth species are in decline due to grazing by deer and antelope, agriculture, off-road traffic and the horticultural and medicinal collection of soapweed.



© Olof Pellmyr

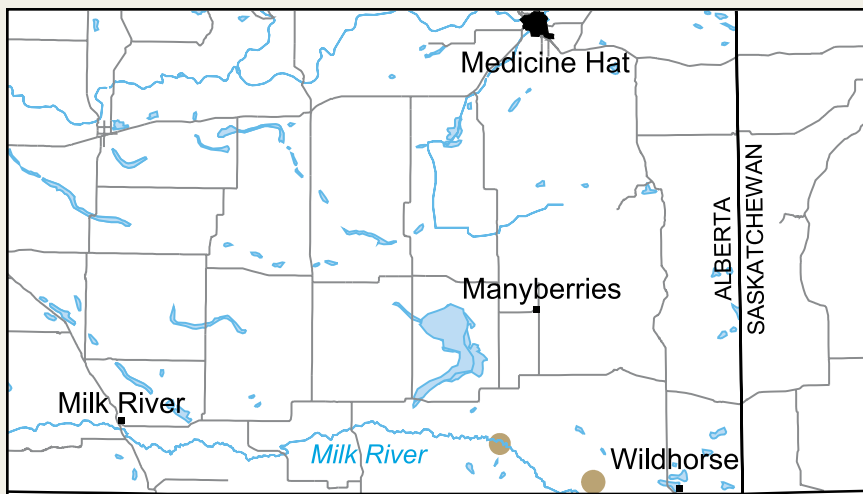
Wingspan: 18-27.5 mm
(0.7-1.1 inches)



© Gordon Court

Did you know?

- The yucca moth's mouth is specially evolved to pollinate the soapweed plant whereas the other two moths simply cohabit the host.
- The survival of two other endangered moth species depends on the pollination of the soapweed.



34 Slender Mouse-ear-cress

Halimolobos virgata

THREATENED

The slender mouse-ear-cress can have single or branched stems, each ending with several white, 4-petaled flowers and seed pods containing many tiny seeds. It grows on flat to rolling open native prairie with sandy or loamy soils.

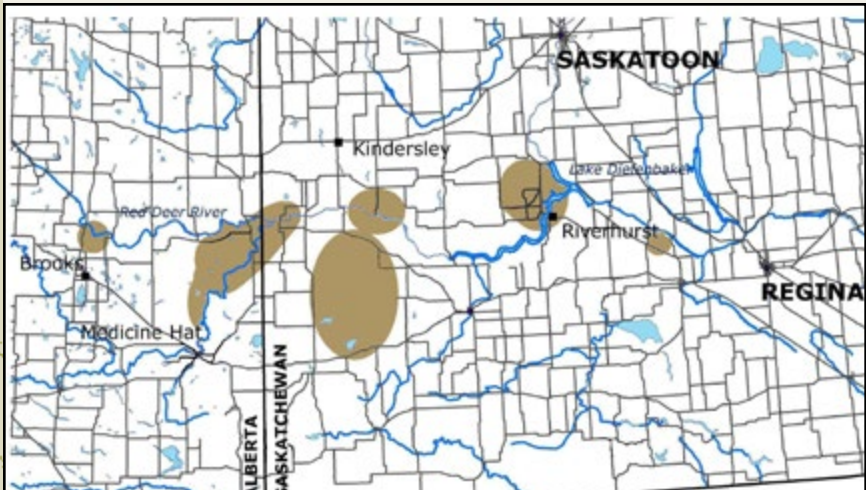


© Bonnie Heidel

Height: 10 - 35 cm
(4 - 14 inches)
Flowers: May - June

Did you know?

- The leaves have ear-like lobes at the base and are covered in fine gray hairs, resembling mouse ears.
- Slender mouse-ear-cress typically grows in areas that have had light disturbance from grazing.



Small-flowered Sand-verbena

Tripterocalyx micranthus

35

ENDANGERED

The small-flowered sand-verbena is an annual plant with highly branched stems, mostly trailing over the ground. It has paired leaves, and small greenish-white flowers arranged in dense clusters which turn into pinkish papery winged fruits. It grows in active or sparsely vegetated sand dunes, and on sandy slopes along rivers.



© Environment Canada,
Photo: Candace Neufeld

20-30 cm (8-12 inches) high with branches trailing up to 60 cm (24 inches).
Flowers: mid-June to fall

Did you know?

- It can be confused with a look-alike species called sand dock (*Rumex venosus*). However, sand dock is a perennial with alternate leaves, papery sheaths around where the leaves join the stem, and more reddish coloring.
- The wings surrounding the seed may contain a chemical that inhibits seed germination until conditions are right for growth.



Small White Lady's-Slipper

Cypripedium candidum

ENDANGERED

The small white lady's-slipper is an attractive orchid with flowers that resemble a slipper due to a white pouch streaked with purple, and two side petals that are twisted and yellowish green. It grows in large clumps with each stem surrounded by two or four leaves, and is found in full sun on calcium-rich prairie openings in wooded grasslands, roadside ditches and moister tallgrass prairie.

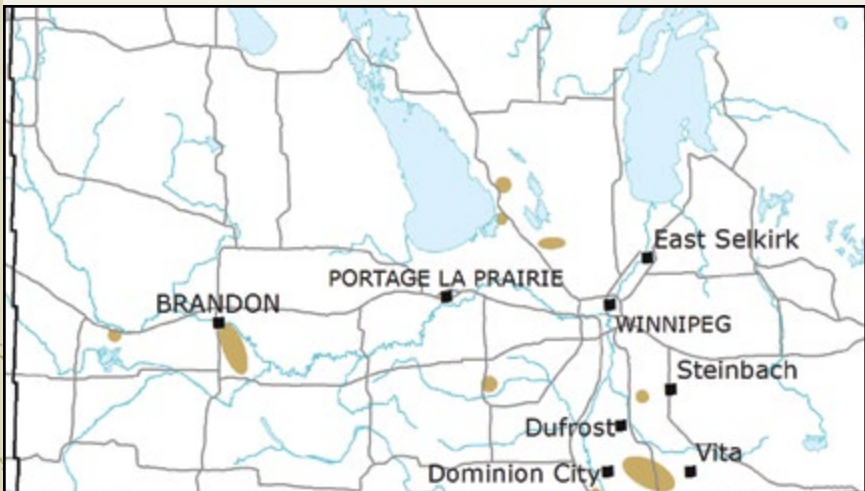


© Manitoba Conservation, Wildlife & Ecosystem Protection Branch

Height: 20-36 cm (8-14 inches)
Flowers: late May to early June

Did you know?

- It can take about 12 years for a plant to flower.
- A key component in survival and recovery of tall grass prairie species is conservation of the little habitat that is remaining, such as the Manitoba Tall Grass Prairie Preserve.



Smooth Goosefoot

Chenopodium subglabrum

37

THREATENED

Smooth goosefoot is an annual plant, yellowish green in colour, with fleshy leaves and green clusters of flowers widely spaced along the branches. Smooth goosefoot grows in sandy soil on sparsely vegetated sand dunes.

Did you know?

- Dune stabilization is one of the biggest threats to sand dune specialists; a combination of fire and grazing during appropriate times of the year, mimicking natural disturbance regimes, is likely most effective at maintaining open sand dune habitat.
- Use of motorized or recreational vehicles (e.g. ATVs, motorbikes) in sand dunes can destroy sand dune plants and damage the habitat.
- Invasive alien plants, such as leafy spurge, threaten to alter sand dune habitat making them unusable for sand dune species.



© Candace Neufeld

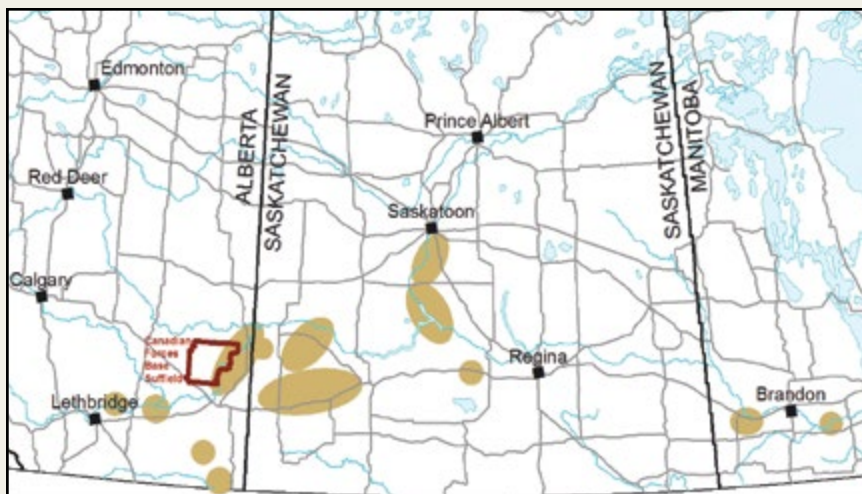
Height: 10-50cm

(4 - 19 inches)

Flowers: July – August



plants



THREATENED

Soapweed is a large plant with a crown of broad sword-like leaves. When flowering, it has a tall stalk topped with creamy white flowers. It thrives in arid regions such as dry coulee slopes.

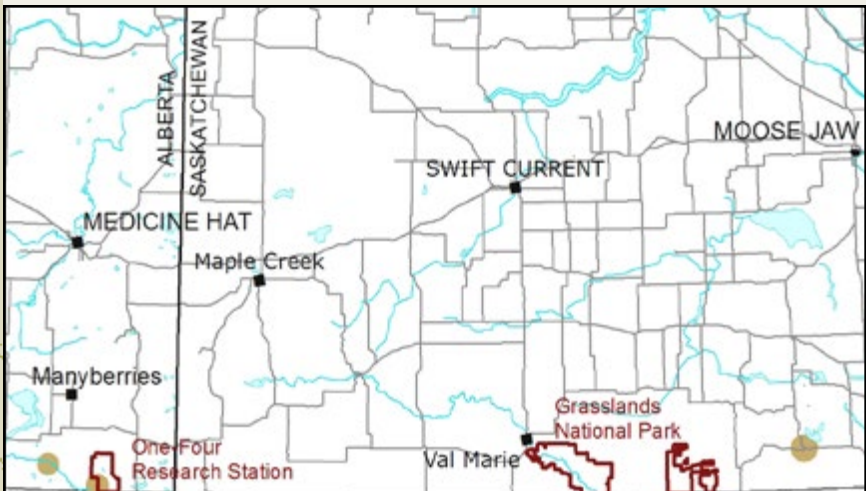


© Joyce Gould

Height: leaves 20-50 cm
(8-20 inches) and flower stalk
50-100 cm (20-39 inches)
Flowers: early May

Did you know?

- Soapweed can only be pollinated by the yucca moth and the larve only eats the seeds of soapweed!
- There are a few introduced populations, such as in Lethbridge and southern Saskatchewan.



Tiny Cryptantha

Cryptantha minima

39

ENDANGERED

The tiny cryptantha is a small, bristly-haired annual plant. It has tiny white flowers with a yellow “eye” in the centre, and a small leaf-like bract at the base of each flower. It grows on sandy, rolling upland, valley slopes, or terraces in dry environments within a few km of rivers.



Height: 3 - 20 cm (1 - 8 inches)

Flowers: June to July



Did you know?

- The fruit (calyx) each contain 4 nutlets; three are smaller and covered in bumps and the other is larger and smooth.
- Tiny cryptantha seeds can germinate at temperatures below 0°C.
- The bristles on the fruiting structures get caught on animal's fur as they pass by, helping to transport the seed.



Western Silvery Aster

Symphotrichum sericeum

THREATENED

The Western silvery aster has daisy-like flowers with a yellowish-brown centre and bright pink to dark purple petals. Leaves are covered in silky hairs, giving it a silvery appearance. They are found on well-drained sandy or gravelly soils on prairie, roadside ditches, and openings in bur oak/trembling aspen woodlands.



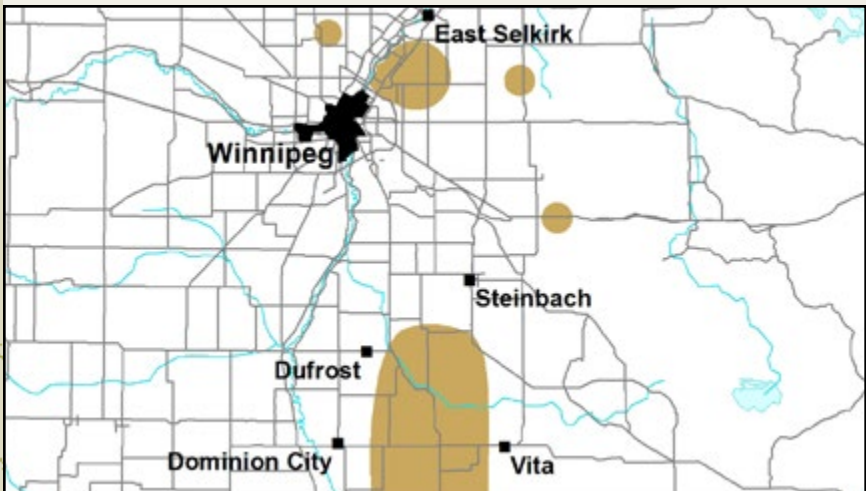
© Thomas G. Barnes

Height: 30-70 cm (12-28 inches)

Flowers: early August to mid-September

Did you know?

- Some populations occur along roadsides. Maintenance activities like mowing in late summer can impact western silvery aster if the flowering heads are removed before the seed is released.
- Western silvery aster is threatened by gravel extraction, and invasion by non-native plants and woody species into prairie.



Western Prairie Fringed Orchid

Platanthera praeclara

41

ENDANGERED

The Western prairie fringed-orchid has a spike of large, white flowers with deeply fringed petal margins. It grows in wet, poorly drained tall grass prairie, roadside ditches, and sedge meadows on calcium rich or alkaline sandy and loamy soils.

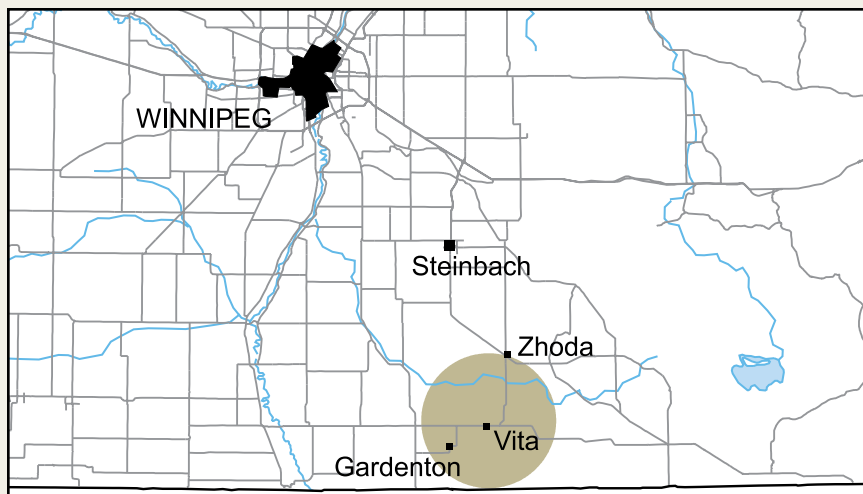


© Gene Fortney

Height: 40-88 cm (16-35 inches)
Flowers: Late June-Mid July

Did you know?

- Flowers are fragrant at night to attract the Sphinx moths which pollinate it.
- It requires very specific soil conditions so altering the water tables in the areas around the plants can make the habitat unsuitable.
- Plants are susceptible to spraying of herbicides and fertilizers, roadside maintenance activities prior to seed set, and overgrazing.



42 Where to go for more information

Government of Canada

Environment Canada
Canadian Wildlife Service

780-951-8700

sararegistry.gc.ca

Provincial Governments

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

780-427-5185

esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/default.aspx

Manitoba Conservation Wildlife Branch

1.866.Manitoba

gov.mb.ca/conservation/wildlife/sar/

Saskatchewan Environment Fish and Wildlife Branch

1-800-567-4224

environment.gov.sk.ca/biodiversity



Great plains toad	Amphibians	AB, SK, MB
Northern leopard frog	Amphibians	NT, AB, SK, MB
Weidemeyer's admiral	Arthropods	AB
Monarch butterfly	Arthropods	BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, PQ, NB, PE, NS
Pale yellow dune moth	Arthropods	AB, SK, MB
Long-billed curlew	Birds	BC, AB, SK
McCown's longspur	Birds	AB, SK
Yellow rail	Birds	NT, BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, PQ, NB
Short-eared owl	Birds	YK, NT, NU, BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, PQ, NB, PE, NS, NL
Peregrine falcon	Birds	YT, NT, NU, BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, PQ, NB, NS, NL
Black-tailed prairie dog	Mammals	SK
Snapping turtle	Reptiles	SK, MB, ON, PQ, NB, NS
Turnor's willow	Vascular Plants	SK
Western blue flag iris	Vascular Plants	AB
Dwarf woolly-heads	Vascular Plants	AB, SK
Felt-leaf willow	Vascular Plants	NU, SK
Riddell's goldenrod	Vascular Plants	MB, ON
Sand-dune short-capsuled willow	Vascular Plants	SK

WWW.ec.gc.ca

Additional information can be obtained at:

Environment Canada

Inquiry Centre

10 Wellington Street, 23rd Floor

Gatineau QC K1A 0H3

Telephone: 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only) or 819-997-2800

Fax: 819-994-1412

TTY: 819-994-0736

Email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca