

## Grassland birds you can see and hear in Greene County grasslands:



**The Short-eared Owl** (*Asio flammeus*) is endangered in New York State. This crow-sized owl needs large blocks of grasslands (greater than 250 acres) to find meadow voles, their preferred prey, and roosting sites.

**The Eastern Meadowlark** (*Sturnella magna*), has a beautiful song consisting of a series of 2-8 flutelike whistles in descending pitch. The female starts several nests before perfecting one—a cup with a dome-shaped roof interwoven with adjoining grasses and a side entrance, well-hidden in dense vegetation.



**The Grasshopper Sparrow** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) is named for its song, a high-pitched, buzzy, insect-like trill preceded by two short notes, which it sings from the top of a grass stem. This small bird eats exclusively on bare patches within grasslands.



**The Northern Harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*) hunts for small prey year-round in our area. Formerly known as the “marsh hawk”, look for this slim raptor, a threatened species in New York State, over wet areas in grasslands.



A great place to watch these birds is the **Coxsackie Creek Grasslands Preserve**. Visit our website for more information.

## Greene Land Trust

We are a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to protecting the many places that make Greene County special:

- Scenic vistas that inspired the Hudson River School of painters and have attracted visitors to our mountains and valleys for generations.
- Agricultural lands and the family farms they support, representing an essential part of our heritage and economy.
- Open spaces that provide habitat for an abundance of wild creatures and an array of recreation opportunities for us and future generations.



Learn more about us at our website:

[www.greenelandtrust.org](http://www.greenelandtrust.org)



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Grassland bird illustrations in this brochure were generously provided by local artist, James Coe, [www.jamescoe.com](http://www.jamescoe.com)



# Coxsackie Creek Grassland Preserve





## Grassland birds at risk...

**Grasslands and the birds that depend on them are being lost at a rapid rate. Over the past several decades some grassland bird populations have declined by 70-90%.**

This dramatic decline is due to changes in land use and loss of habitat that has resulted from development, the loss of small family farms, changes in farming practices, and succession of grasslands into forest.

The grassland birds most at risk in our area, and thus the main focus of our conservation efforts, are the state-endangered Short-eared Owl and the state-threatened Northern Harrier. Greene County grasslands are home to several other migratory songbird grassland species that are also in decline and are of conservation interest. In order to halt the losses of these beautiful and significant birds, grasslands need to be protected and managed (mowed or grazed every few years) to prevent further losses and re-establish local grassland bird populations.



## Coxsackie Creek Grassland Preserve

**NYS threatened and endangered grassland birds**, as well as grassland birds of special concern, can be found on these protected grasslands in both the winter and summer months. Short-eared Owls, Northern Harriers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows and Eastern Meadowlarks can be seen and heard as they hunt for food and make their nests in the Preserve's grasslands.



Although mostly grasslands which were former farmland, the Preserve also contains important woodlands and wetland areas, as well as a beautiful stretch of the Coxsackie Creek – a tributary of the Hudson river.

**Public access** to the Preserve is currently only at viewing points in various locations around the perimeter. Planning is underway for public recreation trails in the future. Please see our web site events page for information about public education events in the Preserve when groups are allowed access for educational purposes.

## Partnership for Conservation

**Created in 2004** the Grassland Preserve began through a partnership that included the Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District (GCSWCD), the Greene County Industrial Development Association (GIDA) and a local Greene County Habitat Advisory Committee. This diverse group of stakeholders succeeded in fostering both economic development and environmental conservation. Through cooperation with developers, instead of losing habitat to development, land was permanently conserved as the Preserve. The Greene Land Trust was established to provide management and stewardship for this important grassland habitat. The establishment of the Preserve is an excellent example of how the Trust works with its partners to facilitate a balance between sound development and effective conservation.

