

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.



Grassland Habitat Stewardship Pledge:

As a Greene Land Trust
“Grassland Habitat Steward”, I pledge to:

1. Conserve and manage grasslands on my property to provide suitable habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife;
2. Keep disturbance of grasslands on my property to a minimum, when practical, especially during grassland bird nesting season (early May through late July);
3. Work in partnership with the Greene Land Trust to develop a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for grasslands on my property and follow this HMP to the best of my ability;
4. Seek conservation assistance if needed;
5. Consider renewing my Stewardship Pledge with the Greene Land Trust once every five years.

Grassland bird illustrations in this brochure were generously provided by local artist, © James Coe, www.jamescoe.com



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Savannah Sparrow © Larry Federman

Become a Grassland Habitat Steward



www.greenelandtrust.org



Grassland birds are at risk. You can help...

Grasslands, including open fields, pasture, hayfields and farmland, are rapidly being lost in Greene County due to development pressures and other factors. As a result, more than a dozen species of grassland-dependent birds are disappearing, too. According to Audubon NY, grassland birds, such as the Short-eared Owl, Northern Harrier, Savanna and Grasshopper Sparrows, and Horned Lark, are the most at-risk birds in the United States.

Grassland birds can be protected by implementing grassland stewardship management practices. Because most of Greene County's grasslands are in private ownership, we need your help... Please consider becoming a "Grassland Habitat Steward".

Call or email the Greene Land Trust to find out how you can help.

Assistance to Grassland Habitat Stewards

The Greene Land Trust will work in partnership with committed Grassland Habitat Stewards to help manage grasslands and promote stewardship efforts. GLT will work with each Steward to provide:

- Attractive property signs to communicate voluntary habitat stewardship (see back panel),
- A site-specific Habitat Management Plan,
- A copy of "*Conserving Grasslands Habitat: A Landowner's Guide*",
- A beautiful "Grassland Birds of Greene County" poster with illustrations by nationally acclaimed local artist, James Coe.
- Recognition in Greene Land Trust publications, website and events.
- When resources allow, technical assistance with grassland habitat management.

Who is eligible to become a Grassland Habitat Steward?

Any landowner that has all of the following:

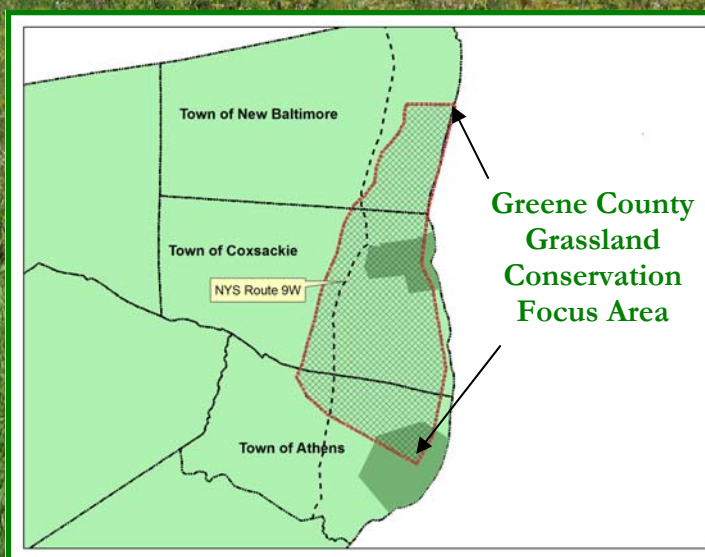
1. Owns grasslands, or land that is restorable to grasslands; and,
2. Owns land located in the Greene County Grassland Conservation Focus Area (see map below); and,
3. Is willing to commit to the voluntary "Grassland Habitat Stewardship Pledge" (see back cover).



American Kestrel

"With landowner stewardship, through the **Community Grassland Stewardship Project**, we can expand and connect key grassland habitats and restore these beautiful birds to our Greene County landscape for generations to come."

- Bob Knighton, President, Greene Land Trust



10 Simple Actions for Grassland Habitat Stewardship:

A few simple management practices can go a long way to providing good habitat for declining grassland-dependent bird species and other important grassland wildlife.

It is important to find a balance of practices that are complimentary with how your land is used in relation to what grassland birds need. Even active land uses such as haying, grazing and crop farming can be coordinated with grassland stewardship.

1. Nesting season is early May through late July. Grassland birds nest in the grass, so keep grassland area as undisturbed as possible during these three critical months.
2. Mow grasslands after August 1st every 2-3 years to keep out trees and shrubs.
3. Help to reduce nest predation risks, especially by cats.
4. Plant grass seed to maintain a diversity of grass heights and densities.
5. Monitor for invasive grassland species.
6. Consider removing hedgerows—these are seen as "walls" by grassland birds and limit their habitat.
7. Keep grassland areas free of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.
8. If there are wetlands or wet meadows on the property, watch for invasive species, such as purple loosestrife.
9. To enhance bird habitat, install nest boxes or perching posts.
10. Post conservation signage to increase awareness of grassland bird habitat stewardship.



Eastern Bluebird