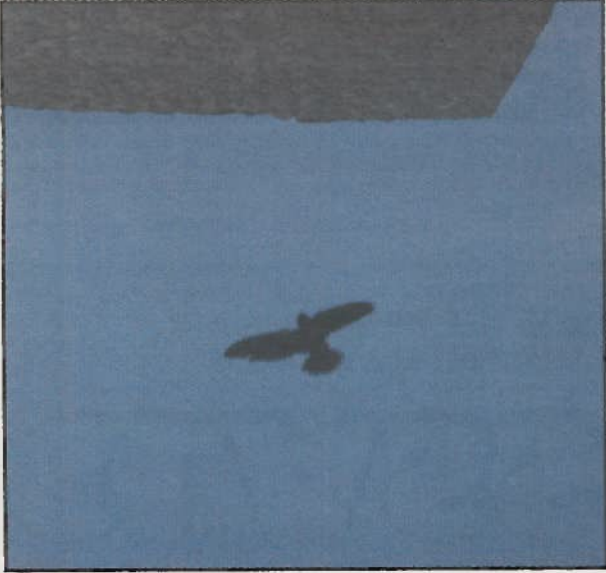
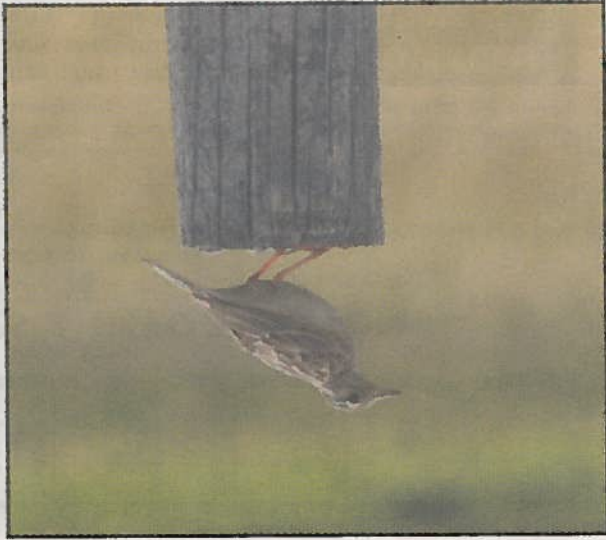




A Chimney Swift entering a chimney at dusk.
PHOTO/COURTESY CHRISTIAN ARTUSO



The male Chestnut-collared Longspur has a characteristic display flight and can often be viewed chasing other males from its territory.
PHOTO/COURTESY CHRISTIAN ARTUSO

Birds at risk in southwestern Manitoba

call ourselves, make an annual pilgrimage to see the specialists of this area. Some of the most sought after species are well known, although not often easily viewed, such as Burrowing Owl and Loggerhead Shrike. Many are little known, rare and specialists of habitats which are severely declining in extent. How many people know about the Sprague's Pipit or Baird's Sparrow? More charismatic, yet equally Dauphin. Unfortunately many of these chimneys are either capped or screened reducing the availability of important nesting habitats for these spectacular birds. Bird Conservation Initiative Grassland and Prairie Bird Conservation Initiative

Remaining grassland and small remnant patches of native prairie. Only the largest patches are able to support viable populations of many of our bird species are numerous and complicated. Most of the birds mentioned above are associated with grassland habitats. According to the 2012 State of Canada's Birds Report, grassland bird populations on the Canadian prairies have declined by almost 40% on average since 1970. Some factors attributed to these declines include loss of pasture, pollution, development, loss of natural fire cycles and climate change. The aforementioned Chimney Swift nests in large brick chimneys in towns and cities from Winnipeg to Dauphin. Unfortunately many of these chimneys are either capped or screened reducing the availability of important nesting habitats for these spectacular birds. Bird Conservation Initiative Grassland and Prairie Bird Conservation Initiative

Chimney Swifts, one of Manitoba's most threatened species. The Chimney Swift is just one of a number of rare birds known as "Species at Risk" breeding in this corner of the Province. Threatened birds in the Prairies

Southwestern Manitoba has long been one of the most famous place in Manitoba for birdwatchers. Birders, as we

In response to the need to increase education about grassland bird population declines and increase stewardship of essential prairie habitats, the Manitoba Important Bird Area (IBA) Program has launched the "Grassland Bird Conservation Initiative" which will focus on one of the last strongholds for threatened prairie bird populations within Manitoba - the Southwestern Mixed Grass Prairie IBA. This IBA covers almost 1,530 km², contains the towns of Melita, Lyleton, and Pierson, and includes three significant bird habitats, the Poverty Plains, the South River Lowlands and the Lyleton-Pierson Prairies. Although it may not presently appear to be so, this is the driest part of the province and is dominated by sandy prairie. Only the largest patches are able to support viable populations of many of our bird species are numerous and complicated. Most of the birds mentioned above are associated with grassland habitats. According to the 2012 State of Canada's Birds Report, grassland bird populations on the Canadian prairies have declined by almost 40% on average since 1970. Some factors attributed to these declines include loss of pasture, pollution, development, loss of natural fire cycles and climate change. The aforementioned Chimney Swift nests in large brick chimneys in towns and cities from Winnipeg to Dauphin. Unfortunately many of these chimneys are either capped or screened reducing the availability of important nesting habitats for these spectacular birds. Bird Conservation Initiative Grassland and Prairie Bird Conservation Initiative

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Birds at risk in southwestern Manitoba

Continued from page 7

Public outreach and education to build awareness of the decline of prairie birds and the habitat needed to sustainably support them will also be a focus of the Grassland Bird Conservation Initiative. Hence on Saturday June 20, we were delighted to meet some of the local landowners near Lyleton, delivering a workshop on grassland-bird identification. The following morning a number of volunteers were out across the area looking for Chestnut-collared Longspurs and Sprague's Pipit. Most of this monitoring was done from the public road with some access to some private landholdings as well. The morning turned out to be a surprising success where we managed to locate 231 Chestnut-collared Longspurs and 40 Sprague's Pipits. A brilliant result! We would like to thank landowners and volunteers for their help.

The Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative

The Chimney Swift is considered a bird of urban areas but not just any urban area! Chimney Swifts require certain conditions in which to flourish just like any of the grassland birds mentioned above. For Chimney Swifts, the primary objects they require are an abundant provision of flying insects (they can eat up to 1,000 mosquitos in a single day), access to a chimney for nesting and access to nesting material, in this case dead twigs on the ends of tree branches. The proximity of a suitably sized and open chimney next to a river explains the presence of Chimney Swifts in Melita. Since 2007, the Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative (MCSI) has documented nesting and roosting sites throughout the species' Manitoba summer range. The aim of MCSI is to retain, restore, and replace those vital chimneys and to embark on a program of monitoring, research, and outreach.

How to get involved?

To learn more about or get involved with the Grassland Bird Conservation Initiative or Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative, please contact Tim Poole, IBA Coordinator, at 204-943-9029 or by email at tba@naturemanitoba.ca. We are keen to speak to as many landowners as possible. The Grassland Bird Conservation Initiative is supported by Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program.

SOUTHWEST HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION
Hartney School - Education Assistant
Southwest Horizon School Division is accepting applications for a half-time Education Assistant working (2.75 hours per day) with K-12 students. Start date September 8, 2015. To send a letter of application (including a resume and three references) or for further information, contact: Shannon Combs, Principal
shannonc@shmb.ca
Phone 204-483-6280 or 204-741-0250
Deadline for applications is July 28, 2015

We thank all applicants for their interest. However, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Successful applicants must provide current criminal record and child abuse registry checks.