

REGION 2 SENSITIVE SPECIES EVALUATION FORM

Species: Short-eared owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>)			
Criteria	Rank	Rationale	Literature Citations
1 Distribution within R2	C	The short-eared owl occurs throughout Region 2. Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low	•
2 Distribution outside R2	C	BREEDING: In North America from northern Alaska to northern Labrador, south to California, Utah, Colorado, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and Virginia. In Eurasia from Iceland, British Isles, Scandinavia, northern Russia, and northern Siberia south to southern Europe, Afghanistan, northern Mongolia, the northern Kurile Islands, and Kamchatka. Also in the Hawaiian Islands, Caroline Islands (Ponape), and Greater Antilles (Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico). More numerous in western and central North America than in eastern North America. Breeds in small numbers in every province and territory in Canada. In the northeastern US, currently nests in Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. NON-BREEDING: mostly from the southern parts of most Canadian provinces south to southern Baja California, southern Mexico, Gulf Coast, Florida. Also in Hawaii (resident on all main islands), Greater Antilles (uncommon in Puerto Rico, including Isla Culebra). In Old World from breeding range south to northwestern Africa, Mediterranean region, Ceylon, southern China, and Japan. Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low	• www.natureserve.org
3 Dispersal Capability	C	The species is a wide-ranging migrant. Breeding populations throughout most of Canada and north-central U.S. move south for winter. Somewhat nomadic. Arrives in northern breeding areas mid-May to early June. Migrational patterns are not well known. Apparently more northerly parts of the range are vacated in the fall and the owls move southward. In North America the movement is mostly from Canada and Alaska as far south as the southern U.S. and even Mexico. Toward the central part of the species' range (temperate zones) owls are seen year-round. Because breeding birds move south in fall and winter and are replaced by migrants from more northerly areas, separate populations may occupy these areas during the different seasons. Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low	• www.natureserve.org

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4 Abundance in R2	C	<p>Guesstimated number of breeding pairs in Canada in the early 1990s was 20,000-40,000. Estimates from other regions are unknown. Trend information is the best available information on the status of the species.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.natureserve.org
5 Population Trend in R2	A	<p>As of the early 1990s, reported as declining in many parts of the range. Christmas Bird Count data indicate a significant decline in North America between 1960 and 1989. Breeding Bird Survey data indicate a significant, long-term decline in much of North America between 1966 and 1989, though the population trend is unknown in remote northern Canada. Noted declines in parts of the range in Canada. Erratic population fluctuations make trend detection difficult. NORTH AMERICA: Although never an abundant breeder in the Midwest, the owl is apparently in decline in this region. Various observers relate the decline in breeding in the Midwest to loss of habitat, specifically loss of native prairies. Reclaimed strip-mining areas may present the best possible new nesting habitat. Throughout the Midwest, short-eared owls are more commonly seen during migration and in winter. In southern Ontario, limited in their distribution as a breeder and have declined during this century. This decline may be related to the loss of wetlands to agriculture and housing developments. They may be more abundant in northern Ontario. In the Great Plains states and into southern Canada and westward, the owl is still an abundant nester where there is suitable habitat. However, in some western areas, local and regional declines have been noted. It is a rare and local breeder in Kansas where it was formerly more common. The species is viewed as imperiled in Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, and Kansas, and vulnerable in South Dakota.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.natureserve.org • http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/
6 Habitat Trend in R2	A	<p>Short-eared Owls require large, open grassland or wetland areas, such as native prairie, hayland, retired cropland, small-grain stubble, shrubsteppe, and wet-meadow zones of wetlands. Local occurrence is unpredictable, because populations fluctuate yearly due to variation in small-mammal populations. Given sufficient habitat and food supply, Short-eared Owls are able to colonize new areas.</p> <p>Habitat loss is the biggest problem throughout the range as well as in Region 2..</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.natureserve.org • http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/literatr/grasbird/shortear/shortear.htm

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		<p>Declining in many parts of the range due to destruction and degradation of marshes, grasslands, and low-use pastures (ungrazed or moderately grazed). This may be a result of development, changing land-use patterns (e.g., farmlands to woodlands, or to development), changing farming practices (e.g., hay fields to row crops), reforestation, wetland loss, or a combination of these factors. Populations have declined due to reforestation of farmlands and fragmentation and development of coastal grasslands. Loss of open grasslands to later successional stages of community development reduces available hunting and breeding habitat. Also, vulnerable to mammalian predators, populations of which have been augmented because of human-caused increases in food resources.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	
<p>7 Habitat Vulnerability or Modification</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>Loss of grasslands and heavy use of grasslands are as pervasive as ever. Such lands are easy to alternative uses and so remain vulnerable.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>8 Life History and Demographics</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Initial Evaluator(s): John Sidle</p>			<p>Date: 7/10/01</p>

National Forests in the Rocky Mountain Region where species is KNOWN (K) or LIKELY(L)¹ to occur:

<u>Colorado NF/NG</u>		<u>Kansas NF/NG</u>		<u>Nebraska NF/NG</u>		<u>South Dakota NF/NG</u>		<u>Wyoming NF/NG</u>	
Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely
Arapaho-Roosevelt NF		Cimmaron NG	K	Samuel R.McKelvie NF	K	Black Hills NF		Shoshone NF	L
White River NF				Halsey NF	K	Buffalo Gap NG		Bighorn NF	L
Routt NF				Nebraska NF	L	Ft. Pierre NG		Black Hills NF	K
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison NF				Ogalala NG	K			Medicine Bow NF	L
San Juan NF								Thunder Basin NG	K
Rio Grande NF									
Pike-San Isabel NF									
Comanche NG	K								

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¹ Likely is defined as more likely to occur than not occur on the National Forest or Grassland. This generally can be thought of as having a 50% chance or greater of appearing on NFS lands.

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