



Let's Be Candid

Wildlife harassment is defined as any deliberate action that changes the behaviour of an animal. Approaching an animal too closely, touching, feeding, baiting, altering habitat, using decoys, bright camera flashes, artificial bird calls, or doing anything that disturbs wildlife or destroys a nest, lair, or den are all wildlife harassment. You can be prosecuted under the Canada National Parks Act and Regulations for harassing wildlife. Habitat for threatened and endangered species is also protected under the Species at Risk Act. Increased protection exists for the Greater Sage-Grouse in the form of an Emergency Protection Order (EPO). The EPO includes prohibitions surrounding Greater Sage-Grouse habitat as well as noise and travel restrictions during their breeding period. Contact the Park for details.

How to Report Sightings

Report species at risk sightings to park personnel. Reports of aggressive, injured, or oddly behaving wildlife are also encouraged and can be reported to park personnel or to Jasper Dispatch (24 hour service) at 1-877-852-3100.

Viewing Wildlife With Respect

Your guide to responsible birding, photography, and wildlife viewing in Grasslands National Park

A PANORAMIC VIEW

Lower your camera or your binoculars for a moment...expand your view of the animal you have been watching...see the animal, not as a portrait, but as a living, breathing, enduring creature molded by the hot and dusty backdrop of the mixed-grass prairies. Then envision yourself in this endless panorama: a participant in the protection and preservation of rare animals defying extinction. Experience the legacy of Grasslands National Park in such a way that future generations will see what you are seeing at this very moment.



SPECIES AT RISK THE BIG PICTURE

Grasslands National Park is home to several animal and plant species at risk of becoming extinct. Certain animals continue to be threatened by habitat loss, habitat degradation, low reproductive rates, increased depredation, and climatic changes. Direct human disturbances can aggravate an already critical situation. Grasslands National Park seeks to conserve these species through protection of distinct populations, habitat restoration and conservation, species reintroduction, and biological research programs.

ANIMAL SIGNS ARE POSITIVE PROOF...

If an animal becomes agitated or changes its behaviour when you approach, you have already disturbed its activities. Familiarize yourself with animal stress signs, and leave the area immediately if you notice that an animal:
• halts its activities;
• flies, runs, or moves away;
• gives warning sounds such as grunting/huffing, chirping, whistling, hissing, scolding and screeching;
• stands to face you, inflates itself, points its ears in your direction, raises its head, or pretends to feed.

A zoom lens provides greater wildlife photographing opportunities.

...OF PEOPLE'S IMPACT ON WILDLIFE

Small disturbances by humans can add up to large negative effects on an individual animal and its entire species. Your interference may cause an animal to do the following:

- fail to breed and then reproduce;
• abandon its nest or den, or leave it unattended;
• neglect its young by not feeding or protecting them;
• halt its feeding, or waste energy when flying or running away;
• become distracted and fall prey to predators;
• be unable to regulate its body heat efficiently (snakes, amphibians).

WILDLIFE EXPOSURE

Make these principles part of your code of ethics when observing or photographing wildlife. The viewing chart on the reverse of this guide can help you determine appropriate viewing distances and times.

- Take a couple of minutes to observe an animal, then leave it alone, especially if you notice a change in its behaviour.
• Avoid returning several days in a row to the same area.
• Increase your viewing distance to an animal, breeding site, nest, or den by using a zoom lens, spotting scope, and 7X (or stronger) binoculars.
• Feature animals in their natural surroundings. If you are taking a full-frame, non-telephoto image of an animal, you are too close.
• Do not handle or feed any animal. Baby animals can be especially vulnerable to disturbance.
• Exercise caution when driving; wildlife may be crossing the road or using the road to soak up heat to help regulate their body temperature.
• If you experience a chance encounter with wildlife at close proximity, slowly vacate the area.

MEET FOUR SPECIES AT RISK

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has identified more than twenty animal species in Grasslands National Park (with more under consideration) that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern. Many of the species identified by COSEWIC are listed and protected under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). Information related to four of these protected species can be found below:



GREATER SAGE-GROUSE (Centrocercus urophasianus)

COSEWIC STATUS: Endangered
SARA STATUS: Endangered with increased protection under an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) due to imminent threats to its survival and recovery
ZOOM IN: Male has two large, yellowish-green throat sacs hidden under white breast feathers
NATURE NOTE: Endures cold days by burrowing into the snow
WHY AT RISK: Habitat loss and modification, predatory pressure, and low chick survival rate



BURROWING OWL (Athene cunicularia hypugaea)

COSEWIC/SARA STATUS: Endangered
ZOOM IN: White eyebrows, large yellow eyes, and long featherless legs
NATURE NOTE: Lives in prairie dog, ground squirrel, or badger burrows
WHY AT RISK: Loss and deterioration of habitat on breeding grounds, reduced productivity, and high incidence of collision with vehicles



SWIFT FOX (Vulpes velox)

COSEWIC/SARA STATUS: Threatened
ZOOM IN: A black-tipped tail, and dark patches on either side of the nose
NATURE NOTE: Unlike the red fox and coyote, the swift fox is dependent on native upland grasslands
WHY AT RISK: Incidental poisoning, trapping, habitat loss, and increased kills by coyotes



FERRUGINOUS HAWK (Buteo regalis)

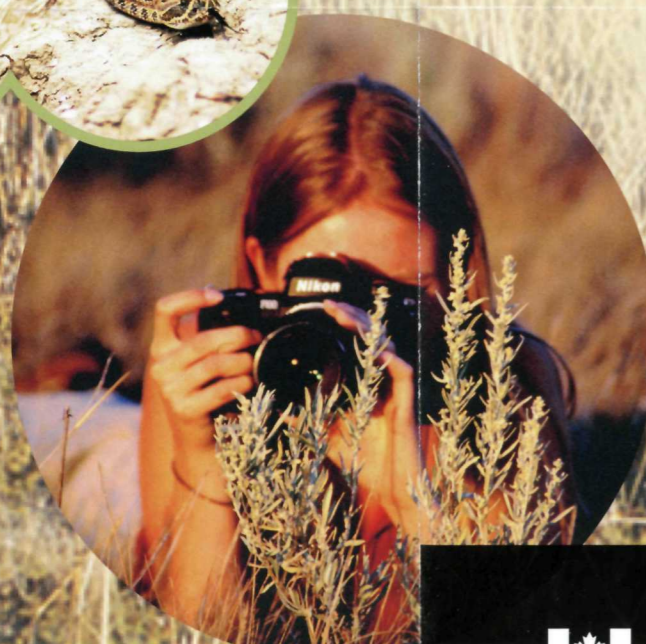
COSEWIC/SARA STATUS: Threatened
ZOOM IN: Seen from below, rust-coloured legs form a "V" against whitish underparts
NATURE NOTE: Female lays its eggs in stick nests built on the ground, on eroded slopes, or in trees
WHY AT RISK: Loss and deterioration of habitat



WILDLIFE CAN SEE YOU

How can you maximize your opportunities for viewing natural wildlife behaviour? Maintain a low profile on the prairies by following these tips:

- Blend into the landscape. Sit down and remain still; use vegetation or boulders to break up your outlines; dress in earth-coloured tones.
• Tread quietly, slowly, and stay low to the ground.
• Use your vehicle as a "blind" when viewing animals from the road.
• Leave your pets at home or keep them on a short leash. They can disturb nests and/or burrows, and endanger wildlife.



GET THE OKAY!



CAMPING? USING BLINDS? PHOTOGRAPHING OR GUIDING COMMERCIALLY? You need to apply for a park permit before you use a wildlife viewing blind or photograph commercially. These permits are available through the Grasslands National Park Visitor Centre in Val Marie. Fees may apply. Registration for front country and backcountry camping is also available at the Visitor Centres or can be reserved through the online reservation system: reservation.pc.gc.ca

CAMPING

- You may camp almost anywhere in the backcountry as long as you are at least one kilometre (1 km) from a road. If you need to be close to your vehicle, there are drive-in locations in each block where you can camp.
- Camping is not allowed within five hundred metres (500 m) of a sage-grouse lek or any other known active wildlife breeding and nesting site. Please contact the Park Visitor Centres for more information.

WILDLIFE VIEWING BLINDS

- Photographers and wildlife observers need approval in the form of a permit for using a wildlife viewing blind.
- Blinds are not permitted within five hundred metres (500 m) of a sage grouse lek. The permit issued will specify any restrictions related to other wildlife.

COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHY, FILM MAKING, AND GUIDING

- Commercial photographers and film makers with a predetermined project that are receiving an income from photographs or film taken in the park must submit a photography/filming permit application for review and approval.
- Commercial guides leading tours or recreational experiences must obtain a business license to operate in the park.

DRONES/UAVs

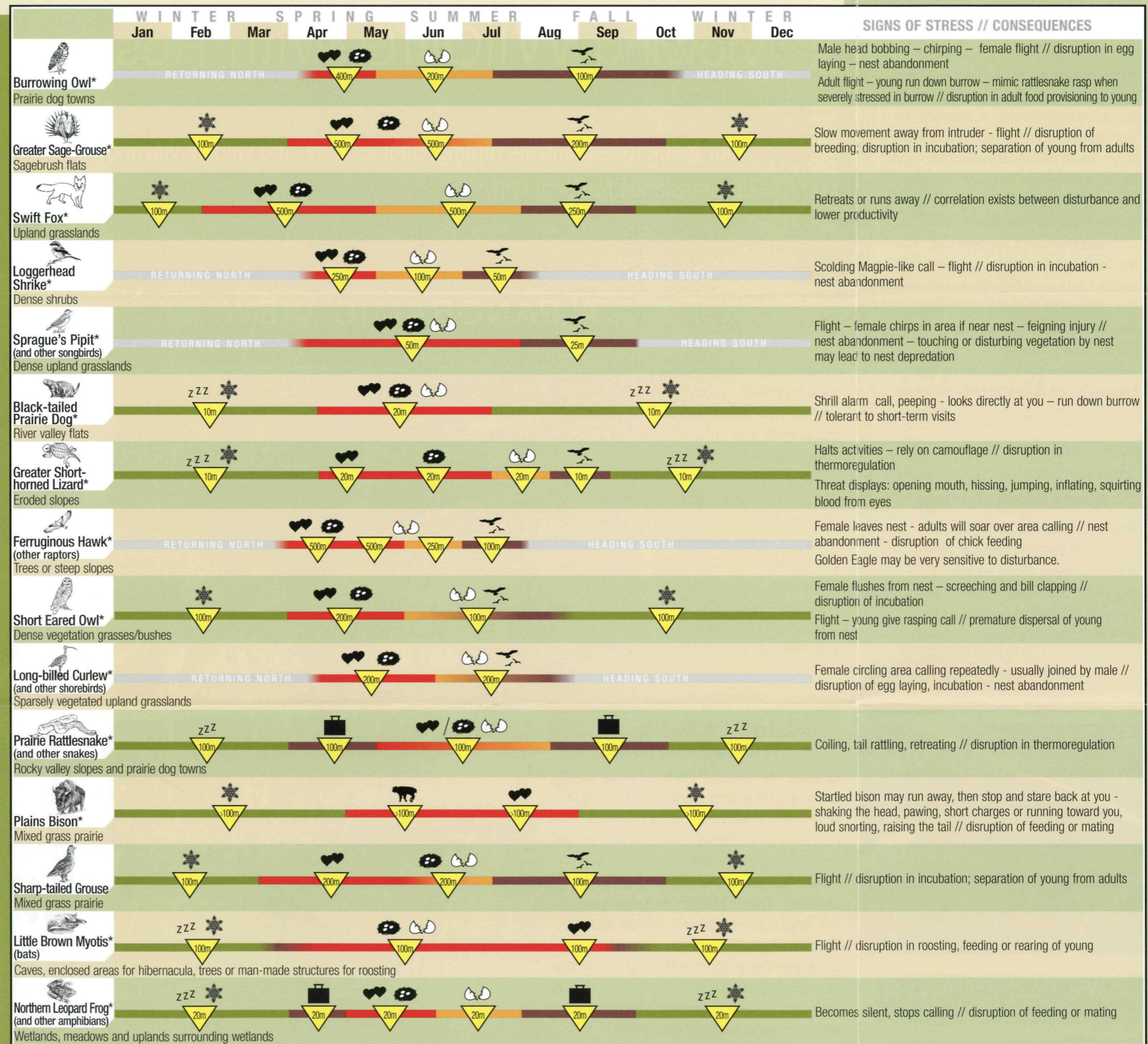
- All Parks Canada places are 'no drone zones' for recreational use. If you do not possess a permit or special permission to fly your drone, please leave it at home. If caught flying a drone in a National Park, a fine and/or impoundment of your equipment may be imposed.

PICTURE PERFECT HABITAT

- Practice no-trace camping and hiking. Pack out all your belongings and garbage and keep your picnic sites and campsites clean.
- Enjoy your activity without disturbing habitat and impacting wildlife. Clipping branches or grass, moving rocks and nests, and moving cultural objects like tipi ring stones to get that perfect picture is illegal within Grasslands National Park and you could face legal action if found guilty.

PRAIRIE ANIMALS YOU MAY SEE

Use this chart to aid you in your wildlife viewing enjoyment while decreasing your impact on wildlife.



KEY			
EXTREME SENSITIVITY	HIGH SENSITIVITY	MEDIUM SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courting, mating Building nests, laying and incubating eggs, gestation or denning Calving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hatching, raising brood, giving birth to live young, pup-rearing, metamorphosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fledging, pup dispersal Travelling to and from hibernaculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> z z z Hibernating * Wintering
Minimum viewing distances			
*Indicates Species at Risk (Listed by SARA or COSEWIC)			

HOW CLOSE? HOW LONG?

How close can you approach a Loggerhead Shrike nest without causing the bird to abandon its eggs? How long can you watch a family of burrowing owls before the young escape down the burrow, wasting precious energy? How close is too close? How long is too long? Setback distances have been determined based on research with the best interests of the animal in mind and are reflective of

minimally invasive disturbances like foot traffic or viewing from a vehicle on a designated roadway. With your cooperation, we can work together to conserve rare prairie wildlife. For more information about viewing bison and prairie rattlesnakes safely, please refer to the following pamphlets: *You are in Rattlesnake Country* and *You are in Bison Country*.

DISTANCES ON THE PRAIRIE

Judging distances on the prairies can be difficult without landmarks such as trees and buildings. Use this comparison to determine your distance from an animal: *Walk one hundred (100) paces from your vehicle, a fence post, or large boulder. Look back to the object you chose. You are now approximately seventy-five metres (75 m) away from where you started. (one average adult pace equals approximately .75 metres)*

IN PLAIN VIEW – RESEARCHERS ON THE PRAIRIES

You may spot researchers in the park studying animals and plants. Researchers are accountable to Grasslands National Park and to their organization. They take special precautions to ensure the welfare of animals and their habitat. Feel free to ask researchers questions or speak to park staff if you have any concerns.



The Black-tailed Prairie Dog is tolerant of people but still needs its space during critical breeding periods. Domestic pets are prohibited from prairie dog colonies except the walking trail through Ecotour colony due to risk of contracting sylvatic plague which can be transmitted by fleas found on prairie dogs.

Funds for the 2018 update of this brochure were provided by Species Conservation and Management, Parks Canada Agency.

Prairie animals are adapted to a treeless environment. Forest animals are not. Share this brochure.

PHOTO CREDITS

(Front) Wheatgrass (scenic background): James R. Page. Greater Short-horned Lizard, Bison: Parks Canada. Willet, Rattlesnake, Photographer: James R. Page. (Back) Camper, Red Buttes: James R. Page. Black-tailed Prairie Dog: Brad Muir. Hiker: J.F. Bergeron

GRASSLANDS NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTRES

101 Centre Street, PO Box 150, Val Marie, SK S0N 2T0 Toll Free: 1-877-345-2257
 West Block Visitor Centre: 306-298-2257 East Block Visitor Centre: 306-476-2018 (seasonal)
 E-mail: grasslands.info@pc.gc.ca parkscanada.gc.ca/grasslands Facebook.com/grasslandsp