

Discussion

Besides the diversity of prairie birds, their abundance at Prairie Ridge SNA is noteworthy. Table 1 shows the estimated numbers of some breeding bird species found in Jasper County that might be regarded as large or significant for the state. The success of this area in providing habitat for Illinois' area-sensitive, threatened, and endangered species has been great in spite of the relatively small area being managed (about 2,100 acres in 16 separate tracts).

In Illinois, grassland birds have declined 75–95% over the past 25 years (Herkert 1991). All public and private efforts to halt these declines

warrant support. Areas such as Goose Lake Prairie and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie have received considerable attention for their outstanding populations of grassland birds. Perhaps due in part to their isolation in southeastern Illinois, and the area's lack of observers, Prairie Ridge State Natural Area has not been fully appreciated for its grassland bird density and diversity.

Literature Cited

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Appendix A. Birds Of Open Habitats Of Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, Jasper and Marion Counties (1994–1996)		
<i>Podicipediformes</i> Pied-billed Grebe (T)		
<i>Ciconiiformes</i> Great Blue Heron Cattle Egret Black-crowned Night-Heron (E)	Little Blue Heron (E) Great Egret (T) *?Least Bittern (E)	Green Heron Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (T) *American Bittern (E)
<i>Anseriformes</i> Canada Goose Black Duck Green-winged Teal Northern Shoveler Canvasback Hooded Merganser	Snow Goose Gadwall *Blue-winged Teal Wood Duck Lesser Scaup	*Mallard Northern Pintail American Wigeon Ring-necked duck Ruddy Duck
<i>Falconiformes</i> *Turkey Vulture Red-tailed Hawk Osprey (E)	Sharp-shinned Hawk (E) Rough-legged Hawk *American Kestrel	Cooper's Hawk *Northern Harrier (E)
<i>Galliformes</i> *Greater Prairie-Chicken (E)	*Northern Bobwhite	*Ring-necked Pheasant
<i>Gruiformes</i> *King Rail (T) American Coot	Virginia Rail	Sora
<i>Charadriiformes</i> *Killdeer Greater Yellowlegs Spotted Sandpiper Common Snipe	Lesser Golden Plover Lesser Yellowlegs Wilson's Phalarope (E) Short-billed Dowitcher	*Upland Sandpiper (E) Solitary Sandpiper *American Woodcock Semipalmated Sandpiper