

The continued loss of both native and agricultural grassland habitats in Illinois has contributed to an increasingly fragmented landscape.

Finally, we must remember that loss of prairie and grassland habitat in Illinois and throughout the Midwest affects birds primarily during the breeding season. The majority of grassland bird species are migratory and spend only a fraction of any given year on the breeding grounds. Similar losses and disturbances of wintering and possibly even migratory habitat may also significantly affect these bird species. The degree to which events off the breeding grounds affect grassland birds is not well known. For such species as the Dickcissel, however, events on the wintering grounds and migratory routes may be the most important factors affecting distribution and abundance patterns on the breeding grounds in the Midwest (Fretwell 1986). The fact that processes operating outside the boundaries of Illinois affect bird populations within the state does not excuse us from being concerned about events occurring within Illinois, but rather should alert us to the year-round needs of these species. If conservation efforts to preserve grassland birds are to succeed, management efforts must address not only processes operating on the breeding grounds within Illinois but the migratory and wintering needs of these species as well.

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Henslow's Sparrow was abundant in Illinois prior to 1900. Now the species is endangered in the state. Joe B. Milosevich photographed this territorial male Henslow's Sparrow on 29 June 1992 at Goose Lake Prairie State Park in Grundy County.