

Habitat and Population Survey of Eastern Loggerhead Shrike Near Winnipeg, Manitoba – 2007

Prepared by: Christopher D. Higgs

The population of Eastern Loggerhead Shrike (ELOSH) in Manitoba experienced a 50% decline since 2000 (11 pairs in 2000), but has levelled off to between 5 and 6 known breeding pairs since 2004. This study seeks to identify and categorize shrike habitat in a 2800km² study area (or core nesting area) near the City of Winnipeg in 2007. The primary objective is to develop a framework for monitoring loggerhead shrike on a long-term basis, based on data gathered from monitoring nests and nest productivity, as well to identify and analyze potential breeding habitat. Five breeding pair of shrike initiated nesting in 2007, but only three pairs were successful. All three successful nests were located at an abandoned landfill site, in the northwest corner of Winnipeg. Four trapped adults and 23 young shrike were banded during the field season. Local recruitment to the local population is occurring as 2 other adults banded previously at Optimist Park and John Blumberg Golf Course were trapped at the Summit Landfill site. Between 14 and 17 young shrike were estimated as successfully fledging.

Patches of “potential” breeding habitat were identified from historical status and habitat reports and from observations made during a vehicle survey of the study area. One hundred and twenty one habitat patches were identified and placed in one of three categories 1) Very good, 2) Good, and 3) Moderate. The number of habitat patches in each category is as follows: 1) Very Good (18), 2) Good (52), and 3) Moderate (51). Criteria such as habitat size, nest trees, hunting habitat, and perches were used to measure the suitability of each patch. Based on the survey of habitat patches and nesting sites, a framework for conducting a bird census in the spring of 2008 will be developed. Protection of the Summit Road site, implementing habitat improvements, and predator control methods are recommended.