

## BIRDS ONLY

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### Notations Used

E	Endangered
T	Threatened
SC	Special Concern
N	None (location records maintained by DNR, in most cases)
N (X)	None, and probably extirpated from Minnesota (location records maintained by DNR, in most cases)
--	None (location records <i>not</i> yet maintained by DNR)
*	Change in scientific name accompanies change in status

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### CHANGE IN SCIENTIFIC NAME NOT ACCOMPANIED BY A CHANGE IN STATUS

<u>Old Scientific Name</u>	<u>New Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
<i>Dendroica cerulea</i>	<i>Setophaga cerulea</i>	SC
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	SC
<i>Larus pipixcan</i>	<i>Leucophaeus pipixcan</i>	SC
<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>	<i>Parkesia motacilla</i>	SC
<i>Speotyto cunicularia</i>	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	E
<i>Wilsonia citrina</i>	<i>Setophaga citrina</i>	SC

### CHANGE IN STATUS; STATUS SHEET PROVIDED

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Current Status</u>	<u>Proposed Status</u>
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	N	SC
Boreal Owl	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	N	SC
Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>	E	T
Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	--	SC
Trumpeter Swan	<i>Cygnus buccinator</i>	T	SC
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	T	SC
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	SC	N
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	T	E
Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	T	E
Purple Martin	<i>Progne subis</i>	--	SC
Bell's Vireo	<i>Vireo bellii</i>	N	SC

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EXTRACTED FROM

Proposed Amendment of Minnesota Rules, Chapter 6134: Endangered and Threatened Species  
Statement of Need and Reasonableness: August 10, 2012

## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Accipiter gentilis*

COMMON NAME: Northern Goshawk

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: None

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Special Concern

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The Northern Goshawk is a large, forest-dwelling raptor that occurs throughout the boreal and montane forests of North America. Within Minnesota, it is found nesting and wintering widely dispersed across the state's northern forests. Recent research within Minnesota has documented the Northern Goshawk's preference for mature and old upland forest for nesting and foraging, with a minimum of 4,000 acres of this age class found in active territories. Nests tend to be built in the primary crotch of mature aspen trees. Telemetry studies have determined that the average home range of a pair of breeding goshawks within Minnesota is 25 square miles.

Increased survey effort for Northern Goshawk nests during the past decade has found an average of 29 territories with nest attempts per year in the state. A system for reporting and investigating stick nests has been in place for several years, and new nests are reported as they are discovered. Since 1991, 130 active territories have been identified in Minnesota. Interagency Northern Goshawk nest monitoring efforts typically monitor nest territories until they have been inactive for five years, and have determined that an average of 79% of active nest territories have been occupied in the previous year, emphasizing the ongoing importance of existing nest territories to this species. Nest success and productivity rates in Minnesota appear to be lower than other areas of the country, with nest success averaging 1.5-1.8 young per successful nest.

In 2005, the Northern Goshawk was designated a 'Species of Greatest Conservation Need' in Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. The availability of large patches of mature forest preferred by the species is in decline regionally due to fragmented land ownership as well as fragmentation of historically large contiguous stands resulting from past and current forest management practices. Harvest plans for public lands in Minnesota project a decrease in the old aspen utilized by Northern Goshawks. While harvest plans will eventually produce an increase in mature upland conifers, a gap in the availability of these conifer forests will exist during the coming decades as these forests mature and become goshawk habitat. As an example, a recent study found an average net loss of 26% of upland mature/old forest habitat within eight Northern Goshawk territories between 1996 and 2006. Given these trends and their likely effect on the species' habitat availability and nest success, it is reasonable and needed to designate the Northern Goshawk as a Species of Special Concern.

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## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Aegolius funereus*

COMMON NAME: Boreal Owl

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: None

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Special Concern

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The Boreal Owl is a small forest-dwelling owl that reaches the southeastern edge of its breeding range in northeastern Minnesota. Although never common within the state, Boreal Owl nests have been occasionally documented in Lake, Cook, St. Louis, and Roseau counties since the first discovery of a nest in the state in 1978. Auditory survey efforts have regularly detected singing males during the breeding season in these counties, as well as in Itasca and Lake of the Woods counties. However, reports of Boreal Owl nests and singing males have declined dramatically in Minnesota during the past decade. While the species exhibits a somewhat cyclic population fluctuation that may reflect changes in prey populations and snow depth, the degree to which this dynamic may influence the observed trend in the state's Boreal Owl population is unknown.

Boreal Owls establish their nests in abandoned cavities originally excavated by woodpeckers. Prior to nesting, males attract females by singing from nearby song perches that are usually located in conifer trees. Nest cavities are usually in old aspen or birch trees located within older coniferous forest stands. A 1995 study of Boreal Owl nests or potential nests (cavities near song perches) in Minnesota found 36 (92%) of 39 cavities were in old trembling aspen trees. The average age of 17 of these cavity trees was 86 years. In a separate study conducted during 1987-2009, trees supporting 50 active Boreal Owl cavities averaged 42.6 cm dbh, with 52% in trembling aspen, 26% in paper birch, and 22% in pine and other species. The Boreal Owl is a nocturnal species that roosts during the day and forages at night. Telemetry studies have found that roosting and foraging sites tend to be located within older stands of lowland conifers, primarily black spruce.

Cavity nesting birds like the Boreal Owl require trees old enough to support the development of heart rot and the subsequent creation of a suitably sized cavity. However, trembling aspen on most forest lands in Minnesota are currently being managed at a rotation age of less than 60 years. The continued demand for aspen fiber indicates that a gap in the availability of trees sufficiently large to support cavity development will occur in the coming decades and will limit the availability of nest sites for the Boreal Owl. Lowland conifer stands that are used by this species for roosting and foraging are also being reduced in size and are increasingly isolated from each other.

In 2005, the Boreal Owl was designated a 'Species of Greatest Conservation Need' under Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. In light of the steady loss of nesting and foraging habitat, and the continued decline in observations of this species, it is needed and reasonable to designate the Boreal Owl as a Species of Special Concern at this time.

### SELECTED REFERENCES:

- Belmonte, L.R. 2005. Home range and habitat characteristics of boreal owls in northeastern Minnesota. M.S. Thesis, University of Minnesota. 56 pp.
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## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Ammodramus henslowii*

COMMON NAME: Henslow's Sparrow

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: Endangered

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Threatened

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The Henslow's Sparrow was once broadly distributed across the northcentral and northeastern United States, from southern Minnesota east to New York and south to Missouri and Virginia. Across the country, the number of Henslow's Sparrows declined by over 68% between 1966 and 1991. In Minnesota, the Henslow's Sparrow has been a widespread but relatively uncommon summer resident throughout the southern half of the state. This species requires uncultivated grasslands and old fields with standing, dead vegetation and a substantial litter layer. Areas used one year may be abandoned the next year if the grass has become too long or too short. Therefore, the Henslow's Sparrow's distribution in the state is sporadic and the extent of its former range is difficult to delineate. The major cause of the species' decline is habitat loss and degradation resulting from urban sprawl, intensive agriculture, increased frequency of mowing hayfields, and conversion of pastures, hay fields, and old fields to row crops. There is evidence that other factors are also involved in this species decline, as it is not utilizing seemingly suitable habitat in some places. The Henslow's Sparrow was classified as a Special Concern species in Minnesota in 1984, but its continued decline in the state led to its reclassification as Endangered in 1996. Since that time there has been an increase in records, particularly from several native prairie areas in western Minnesota.

A 1988-1989 habitat evaluation of 23 sites where Henslow's Sparrows had been sighted in previous years revealed that one-third of the sampled sites were no longer suitable because of urban development and agricultural use. For a number of years, Great River Bluffs State Park (formerly O.L. Kipp State Park) supported a stable population of Henslow's Sparrows. This population was intensively studied between 1987 and 1989 and was found to consist of 19-23 adults; however, from 1996 to 2006 the number of singing males fluctuated between 1 and 28 singing males. A management plan for Henslow's Sparrows was drafted in 1996. Some of the habitat maintenance activities recommended in this plan have been implemented, including prescribed burns, removal of woody vegetation, and fertilizing brome grass to increase vigor. Since 1996, observations of Henslow's Sparrows have increased, with breeding season records coming from counties scattered throughout western, central, and southern Minnesota. From 2006 to 2009, the Minnesota DNR's County Biological Survey documented singing males at 25 sites in 10 different counties. Also, Henslow's Sparrows have become established at Afton State Park in east-central Minnesota. Of particular interest is the consistent presence of this species in several large tracts of native prairie in western Minnesota.

Recent studies in several other states have shown a positive correlation between Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land enrollments and an increasing Henslow's Sparrow population trend. However, many of these CRP acres are scheduled to expire by 2012, and therefore large areas of grassland habitat may be converted back to rowcrops if contracts are not extended, as currently appears likely. In addition, grassland habitat is under increasing pressure for use in biofuel production. Because several new colonies of Henslow's Sparrows have been discovered in recent years and some historic populations appear to be recovering, Endangered status is no longer necessary. However, Threatened status remains reasonable and needed because of its sporadic distribution in the state and the continued threats to grassland habitat.

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## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Chondestes grammacus*

COMMON NAME: Lark Sparrow

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: None

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Special Concern

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The Lark Sparrow is a distinctive bird that breeds throughout much of western and central United States into southern British Columbia. Near the northeastern edge of its continental range, this species occurs in low densities along the prairie-forest border from southeastern Minnesota, through the Minnesota River valley, and at scattered sites in both the northwestern part of the state and the Anoka Sand Plain. In Minnesota, Lark Sparrows specialize in relatively open oak savanna or in dry prairie with scattered small trees, primarily bur oak or red cedar. They are typically closely associated with native plant communities, but can sometimes be sparsely-distributed in brushy pastures. This species appears to tolerate some disturbance (e.g., grazing) as long as dry grassland habitat with sparse tree cover and sandy soil are present.

The population estimate of Lark Sparrows based on the Breeding Bird Survey is the fourth lowest of any sparrow, with an estimated 4,169 individuals breeding in Minnesota. The Minnesota DNR County Biological Survey has documented Lark Sparrows in approximately 57 known nesting locations in the state. However, recent surveys have found few new records despite significant effort. The vast majority of oak savanna and dry prairie habitat for Lark Sparrows has already been lost. The few remaining areas of suitable habitat in Minnesota are susceptible to increases in woody vegetation, primarily due to lack of fire. These remaining sites are also at significant risk of development for housing and sand and gravel mining. Invasive species such as spotted knapweed are also a potential threat. Due to its rarity, patchy distribution, restrictive habitat requirements, and limited habitat availability, Special Concern status for the Lark Sparrow in Minnesota is reasonable and needed at this time.

### SELECTED REFERENCES:

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## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Cygnus buccinator*

COMMON NAME: Trumpeter Swan

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: Threatened

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Special Concern

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The Trumpeter Swan was a widespread but uncommon breeder throughout the prairies and parkland regions of Minnesota until the early 1800s. As central and western Minnesota was settled, this large, conspicuous bird quickly became over-hunted. When the first official species status review by the state was conducted in 1984, the last record of a wild breeding population in Minnesota was found to be from about 1885. As a result, the trumpeter swan was considered extirpated in the state.

Captive breeding of Trumpeter Swans was initiated by Hennepin Parks (now Three Rivers Park District) in 1969. Implementation of a restoration plan for the species in Minnesota was initiated in 1982 through a collaborative effort by partners from state and federal agencies, Canadian provinces, universities, tribes, and the Trumpeter Swan Society. The initial objective of the plan was to establish a breeding population of 15 pairs of swans in Minnesota. By 1996 when the Trumpeter Swan was listed as a state-threatened species, there were approximately 17 nesting pairs in east-central Minnesota and 13 nesting pairs in the northwest. To date, more than 350 swans have been released in the state, and Minnesota's trumpeter swan population now exceeds 5,000 birds. The species' breeding range is now expanding to the north and east, with Trumpeter Swans released in Minnesota documented in southwestern Ontario, and Trumpeter Swans released in Iowa nesting in Minnesota. Minnesota DNR biologists continue to conduct management and education efforts to ensure that a healthy population of this species remains in Minnesota.

Once hunted to near extinction, the recovery of Minnesota's population continues, far exceeding the state's initial reintroduction goal of 15 breeding pairs and the revised goal of 500 individuals. However, due to continued threats and the lack of secure wintering locations, long-term viability of the population is still unknown. Threats to the Trumpeter Swan population in Minnesota include illegal shooting, collisions with power lines, loss or degradation of wetland habitat, and human disturbance. In addition, it is estimated that lead poisoning from ingestion of lead shot and fish sinkers in bottom sediments of wetlands is responsible for more than half of the mortality of midwestern Trumpeter Swans. The Minnesota Trumpeter Swan population has reached the point where Threatened status is no longer necessary. However, with long-term viability still a concern, Special Concern status is needed and reasonable to ensure the continued recovery of the species in Minnesota.

### SELECTED REFERENCES:

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## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Falco peregrinus*

COMMON NAME: Peregrine Falcon

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: Threatened

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Special Concern

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The Peregrine Falcon formerly nested on bluffs along the Mississippi River and its tributaries south of Red Wing and into Iowa, along the St. Croix River, on cliffs along the North Shore, and in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Extirpated by pesticide poisoning, the falcon last nested along the Mississippi River in 1962. A substantial reintroduction effort began in 1982, after several earlier attempts had failed. The success of this effort was highly uncertain in 1984 when the species was designated as Endangered. In 1993, the reintroduction goal of 40 territorial pairs in the Midwest was surpassed, and the rearing and releasing of Peregrine Falcons produced in captivity had essentially been completed. In 1994, there were 17 territorial pairs in Minnesota, of which 13 pairs successfully fledged 36-37 young. As a result of these successful reintroduction efforts, the status of this species in Minnesota was downgraded to Threatened in 1996, and they were removed from the federal endangered species list in 1999.

Historically never having supported more than 40 nesting pairs, Minnesota is now home to a Peregrine Falcon population that has adapted to artificial eyries and urban habitats, recolonized several historical eyries along the North Shore, and increased its nesting range in the state. In 2007, 52 nesting pairs successfully fledged 94 young in Minnesota, a figure which is nearly double the number of nesting pairs and fledged young in 1998 (24 & 52, respectively). However, the majority of breeding Peregrine Falcons in the Midwest now inhabit urban or semi-urban areas, with approximately 84% nesting on tall buildings, bridges, and smokestacks, a marked change from the original cliff-nesting population. Peregrine Falcons have been slow to recolonize their original cliff habitat along the Mississippi River, in part due to heavy predation by Great Horned Owls. Falcons continue to nest on cliffs along the North Shore of Lake Superior, and two cliff-nesting pairs are also known from Houston and Winona counties in southeastern Minnesota. Continued threats to Peregrine Falcon populations include collisions with buildings, disease, environmental pollutants, predation, particularly by Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) and Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), and potential loss or disturbance of natural cliff nesting sites. The Minnesota Peregrine Falcon population has reached the point where Threatened status is no longer needed. However, with long-term viability still a concern, reclassification of the Peregrine Falcon to Special Concern status in Minnesota is reasonable at this time.

### SELECTED REFERENCES:

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## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

COMMON NAME: Bald Eagle

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: Special Concern

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: None

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The designation of the Bald Eagle as Threatened in Minnesota in 1984 recognized the perilous decline in its abundance due to organochlorine-based pesticide poisoning that occurred in the first half of the 20th century. When DDT was banned in 1972, the Minnesota population had declined, but not to the point of being endangered. In 1983, the Northern States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan set a goal of 300 occupied breeding areas in Minnesota by the year 2000. This goal was surpassed in 1987 when 350 occupied breeding areas were documented through aerial surveys. Due to continued range expansion and increases in the numbers of occupied breeding areas, Bald Eagles were downgraded to Special Concern status in 1996. Bald Eagles are now occupying parts of their historical range along rivers and lakes in southern and western Minnesota that had been vacant for decades, including along the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The number of known active Bald Eagle nests has been steadily increasing statewide since 1973. In the spring of 2005, the Minnesota DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey conducted a statewide Bald Eagle survey of known nest sites and identified 872 nests with adult eagles present. This translates to a 28% increase in the number of nesting Bald Eagles across Minnesota over the 681 active nests found in the 2000 survey, and greater than 100% increases in southwestern Minnesota, the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and along the lower Mississippi River. The range of Bald Eagles also continues to expand. The 2005 survey documented an increase in known active nests within 52 (60%) of Minnesota's 87 counties over the five-year period, including the location of nests in 10 counties for which they had not been found in 2000. As in the 2000 survey, the greatest increases in numbers of known nests were observed at the edge of the Bald Eagle's range in the state, indicating that the species is continuing to expand into southern and western Minnesota, regions from which it disappeared over 100 years ago. Moreover, there is increasing evidence that some Bald Eagles are relatively tolerant of human disturbance, allowing them to nest successfully in areas with higher levels of human activity.

Due to continued population increases, range expansions, and evidence of adaptation to human disturbance, it is reasonable to remove this species from Special Concern status. With an estimated 1,312 active nests in the state, the Minnesota Bald Eagle population far exceeds the original 300 pair recovery goal set forth for the year 2000, and eagles are successfully nesting in proximity to humans, even in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. With the support of the results of these and similar surveys in Maine, Florida, and Washington, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed Bald Eagles from its federal list of threatened species on August 9, 2007. Bald Eagles and active nests still receive federal protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

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Statement of Need and Reasonableness: August 10, 2012

## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Lanius ludovicianus*

COMMON NAME: Loggerhead Shrike

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: Threatened

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Endangered

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** Loggerhead Shrikes are widely distributed throughout most of the continental United States and the southern part of the Prairie Provinces of Canada. They live in upland grassland habitat and sometimes in agricultural areas, where short grass vegetation and perching sites such as hedgerows, shrubs, and small trees are found. In Minnesota, the Loggerhead Shrike population has fallen sharply, and the species is currently very rare or absent throughout much of its former range. There are now only a few localities, primarily in western and east-central Minnesota, where the species is consistently reported each year. The Loggerhead Shrike was placed on the National Audubon Society's Blue List in 1972 and was designated a threatened species in Minnesota in 1984.

Since the 1940s, some areas have experienced population declines, partly as a result of tree encroachment on grasslands and increasingly intensive row-cropping practices. Federal breeding bird survey routes, which are run throughout the country, indicate a population decline of 3% each year between 1966 and 2000 and a 53% decline rangewide over a 20-year period from 1980-2000. Additionally, demographic data from the upper Midwest show that annual survival rates of adult and juvenile Loggerhead Shrikes are too low to maintain population stability. As of the 1990s, the densest population of shrikes in Minnesota occurred in Dakota County where territories were annually monitored and reports during the nesting season were investigated. This Dakota County population as well as all known historical shrike locations in northwestern Goodhue County, eastern Rice County, and the Anoka Sand Plain were surveyed in 2008, but shrikes were only confirmed at a total of 7 locations. Targeted surveys were also conducted at non-historical locations in Sherburne, Anoka, Isanti, and Chisago counties in 2008; however, no shrikes were observed.

Habitat destruction is partly responsible for this species' decline, as Loggerhead Shrikes require relatively large areas of grassland with scattered shrubs or small trees for nesting. Many sites currently used by this species in Minnesota are threatened by rural residential construction. Intensive farming practices often preclude shelterbelts and hedgerows, making the habitat unsuitable for Loggerhead Shrikes. Some areas have become overgrown with trees, particularly red cedar. While often an important nest tree, dry grassland slopes can get so covered by the dense growth of red cedar that they become unsuitable shrike habitat. Habitat losses on overwintering grounds are likely a big factor in the species decline as well, especially as migrating shrikes from northern breeding areas increasingly encounter sites already saturated by resident, non-migratory shrikes. Additionally, as predators, shrikes are vulnerable to environmental contamination via reduced food supply and ingestion of contaminated prey. In one study, the decrease in Loggerhead Shrike numbers corresponded to the treatment of grasshoppers with an insecticide.

While Loggerhead Shrikes continue to be observed at widely scattered locations in Minnesota, few persistent populations are known. Shrikes are likely extirpated from central Minnesota, are rare and declining from grassland habitat in southern Minnesota, and appear to be declining from the last known stronghold in Dakota County. Due to the current population status and increasing threats from habitat loss and fragmentation, reclassification of the Loggerhead Shrike to Endangered status is needed and reasonable at this time.

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EXTRACTED FROM

Proposed Amendment of Minnesota Rules, Chapter 6134: Endangered and Threatened Species  
Statement of Need and Reasonableness: August 10, 2012

## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Podiceps auritus*

COMMON NAME: Horned Grebe

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: Threatened

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Endangered

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The horned grebe nests across the northwestern tier of the United States, from Minnesota to Oregon, and northward through most of western Canada to central Alaska. Formerly, this species also nested south and east to the Atlantic Coast. Horned grebes nested throughout Minnesota in the early 1900s, although they were more regular and abundant in the northern counties. Small, shallow marshes with emergent vegetation interspersed with areas of open water are the preferred habitat of the horned grebe. On larger water bodies (over 10 ha (24.7 ac.)) they prefer to use bays and inlets, which provide protection from wind and wave action. By 1984, breeding records were restricted to the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area and Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge in northwestern Minnesota. This range contraction, coupled with declining numbers, led to the horned grebe's designation as a state special concern species in 1984. A 1991 survey of 76 wetlands deemed to provide suitable horned grebe habitat in 6 northwestern counties (Kittson, Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau) located only 1 grebe, and there was no evidence of breeding. As a result, the horned grebe was reclassified as a threatened species in 1996.

Both the federal breeding bird survey routes (BBS) and Christmas bird counts indicate slow, long-term population declines and range contraction for horned grebes continent-wide. BBS data show declines of nearly 3% each year between 1966 and 2010.

Historically, habitat destruction was undoubtedly an important fact in this species' decline. Horned grebes are generally tolerant of humans, although they may abandon lakes with highly developed shorelines or too much human activity on the water. Several serious threats to horned grebe habitat in Minnesota are the direct result of agricultural activities, including eutrophication of water bodies from fertilizer run-off, pesticide build-up, and filling or draining of wetlands. Horned Grebes spend the winter primarily in coastal bays and estuaries along the Pacific, Atlantic, and Gulf Coasts. Recent oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico could negatively impact wintering Horned Grebes.

Since being reclassified as Threatened in 1996, reports of horned grebes in suitable habitat during the breeding season have continued to decline, and no persistent breeding populations are known in Minnesota. There has been no documented nesting of Horned Grebes in Minnesota in over 20 years. Interestingly, there have been two recent observations of Horned Grebes with juveniles from northeastern Minnesota during mid- to late August; one from northern Cook County in 2008, and another from northern Lake County in 2009. Both observations were outside of this species' historic breeding range in Minnesota, and August is typically the time of Horned Grebe migration. In both cases it is unknown whether or not nesting actually occurred in Minnesota, or if the birds migrated into the state from elsewhere. Due to the current population status and continuing threats from habitat loss and water quality issues, reclassification of the horned grebe to Endangered status is needed and reasonable at this time.

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## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Progne subis*

COMMON NAME: Purple Martin

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: None

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Special Concern

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The Purple Martin is a large, neo-tropical migratory swallow with a breeding range distributed throughout much of the central and eastern United States, the west coast, and parts of Canada and Mexico. This aerial insectivore is widely distributed throughout Minnesota. While it was historically known to inhabit woodpecker holes in dead snags and other natural cavities, the decline in availability of these natural nest sites and the ease with which Purple Martins are attracted to artificial nests has resulted in their almost exclusive use of nest boxes in Minnesota today.

Although not naturally colonial, the Purple Martin's reliance on birdhouses has resulted in their aggregation in large colonies, and exposes them to several threats. They must compete with House Sparrows and European Starlings, two invasive exotic cavity-nesters that are also widely distributed in the state, which displace Purple Martins from nest boxes, and which are also known to destroy Purple Martin eggs and kill their nestlings. Predators such as Cooper's Hawks and Great Horned Owls are known to prey on Purple Martin colonies. In addition, Purple Martin colonies are vulnerable to infestation by nest parasites such as blow flies, bird fleas, and mites. In the fall, Purple Martins aggregate in the thousands at pre-migratory roost sites where they are vulnerable to any localized impact to the site.

Purple Martins are readily observed by participants in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Survey, and BBS data show a population decline of 5.4% per year in Minnesota during the period 2000-2010. This is one of the largest declines of any bird for which the state's BBS data are statistically significant. Due to the documented decline in Purple Martins over the past three decades, as well as the continuing threats to the state's population, its designation as a Species of Special Concern is needed and reasonable.

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## SPECIES STATUS SHEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Vireo bellii*

COMMON NAME: Bell's Vireo

CURRENT MINNESOTA STATUS: None

PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS: Special Concern

**BASIS FOR PROPOSED MINNESOTA STATUS:** The Bell's Vireo is a breeding resident in the central and southwestern portions of the United States and is sparsely distributed in southern Minnesota, which lies at the northern edge of its range. This small bird has very restricted habitat requirements, utilizing semi-open shrub swamps, brushy oldfield, and brushy prairie edges. Only an estimated 15 nesting locations are known for the Bell's Vireo in the state, and significant regional declines have been detected. Federal breeding bird survey routes indicate an average population decline of 2.9% per year between 1966 and 2007 in the Midwest. Surveys by the Minnesota DNR County Biological Survey have documented isolated locations of the Bell's Vireo in Dakota, Wabasha, and Winona counties, and most recently one record in Lyon County in 2006. Due to its rarity, patchy distribution, and specific habitat needs, it is reasonable and needed to designate the Bell's Vireo as a species of Special Concern in Minnesota. This status will highlight the need to monitor its occurrence at known nesting locations, and to gain a better understanding of its current distribution and abundance in the state.

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