



Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*).  
Bob Gress, BirdsInFocus



Lesser Prairie-Chickens (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*).  
Bob Gress, BirdsInFocus

## SOME OF THE TYPICAL BIRDS THAT ENLIVEN OUR DIMINISHING GRASSLAND ECOSYSTEMS

“Grassland species are among the most imperiled groups of birds in the United States,” according to the National Audubon Society publication, *North American Grasslands and Birds Report* (2019). More than 60% of the original 550 million acres of historical grassland—shortgrass, tallgrass, and mixed grass—have been lost today, and total populations of grassland bird species have declined by more than 40% just since 1966. 88% (in some estimates, 99%) of the original tallgrass prairie has been lost in the past century and a half, while mixed grass prairies have shrunk from 140 million acres to approximately 30 million acres, and of shortgrass prairies, once some 265 million acres, only half are left.

We present here a portfolio of some of these denizens of what is perhaps our most threatened biome, right here in our backyard in the northern Great Plains.



Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*).  
Bob Gress, BirdsInFocus



Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*).  
Bob Gress, BirdsInFocus



Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*).  
David Seibel, BirdsInFocus