

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR GRASSHOPPER SPARROW MANAGEMENT IN MAINE

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January 1994*

Problem 1: The abundance and distribution objectives will not be achieved without active vegetation management on suitable grasslands.

Strategy 1.1: Continue annual nesting inventories to monitor use and trends of grasshopper sparrows at traditional sites.

Strategy 1.2: Implement habitat management measures at each location to perpetuate suitable vegetation characteristics and avoid unfavorable habitat alterations.

Strategy 1.3: Provide landowners with informational materials on grassland management strategies as well as the status and ecology of grasshopper sparrows.

Strategy 1.4: Management practices at Kennebunk Plains (an IFW Wildlife Management Area) can serve as a model for grassland management.

Strategy 1.5: Formalize management strategies at airfields with suitable grasslands in each airport's operational plan.

Strategy 1.6: Evaluate potential breeding habitats for the species and current carrying capacity.

Problem 2: Unknown elements of grasshopper sparrow biology and regional declines may impede current management efforts in Maine. Population recruitment and survival on wintering grounds are uncertainties, which currently preclude population modeling.

Strategy 2.1: Support research on grasshopper sparrow populations breeding in Maine.

Strategy 2.2: Coordinate studies with other researchers to monitor regional species status.

Strategy 2.3: The traditional rarity of grasshopper sparrows and a dramatic loss of grassland habitats in the region suggest that long-term security of the species requires an integrated approach with other northeastern states and resource managers.