



Moving cattle © Charlie Messerly/TNC



Baird's sparrow © Rick Bohn/USFWS



COVERED ACTIVITIES & KEY THREATS

- Activities covered under the CCAA are considered compatible with or beneficial to populations and habitats of the *Covered Species*.
- Covered activities include:
 - » General farm operations
 - » General ranching and livestock operations
 - » Recreation
 - » Rangeland treatments
 - » Species and habitat monitoring conducted as part of CCAA implementation
- **All participating landowners must commit to maintain contiguous habitat on lands enrolled in the CCAA.**
- Participating landowners can select the most appropriate options from a menu of conservation measures related to threats such as fences, non-native plant species, and conifer encroachment.

HOW TO ENROLL

- Landowners interested in enrolling in the CCAA should contact TNC or the USFWS.
- TNC and the USFWS will assist landowners with the identification of threats and selection of appropriate conservation measures on their properties.

Contacts:

The Nature Conservancy in Montana:
(406) 654-5517

Montana Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program:
(406) 793-7400

Montana Ecological Services Office:
(406) 449-5225

Cover: Top: Matador Ranch cattle drive © Kenton Rowe; Bottom: Sage-grouse © Holly Copeland

Montana Programmatic Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for Declining Prairie Birds

Montana's rangelands provide habitat for several wildlife species that depend on grasslands and sagebrush. Since more than 60% of those habitats occur on private land, private land stewardship plays an essential role in the conservation of these species.





Photo courtesy of Brian Martin/TNC



Chestnut-collared longspur © Rick Bohn, USFWS



Greater sage-grouse on a lek © USFWS

WHAT IS A CCAA?

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has partnered with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to develop a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for greater sage-grouse and four declining grassland songbirds.
- The CCAA is a *voluntary* agreement designed to maintain and enhance habitats for these birds on ranching and agricultural lands.
- Participating landowners voluntarily agree to address threats on property enrolled in a CCAA. In some cases, existing ranch management practices on enrolled properties may already provide suitable habitat conditions for these birds.
- In exchange, landowners receive assurances that no additional conservation measures or additional land, water, or resource use restrictions would be required should any of the species covered by the CCAA become listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

COVERED SPECIES

- The CCAA is designed to protect the habitat of greater sage-grouse, Baird's sparrow, chestnut-collared longspur, McCown's longspur, and Sprague's pipit (*Covered Species*).
- The *Covered Species* require large areas of intact sagebrush and grassland habitats.
- All five species have experienced range-wide population declines due to habitat loss and fragmentation.
- Ranching practices that maintain healthy rangelands provide valuable habitat for the *Covered Species*.
- Several of the *Covered Species* have been considered for listing under the ESA.

Initial CCAA enrollment will be focused in the green areas, which represent core habitats for the *Covered Species*. ►

LANDOWNER ASSURANCES

- The USFWS will issue an *Enhancement of Survival Permit* to TNC, which will then extend assurances to enrolled landowners through a *Certificate of Inclusion*.
- If any of the CCAA's *Covered Species* become listed under the ESA, the permit would authorize any incidental take of species that occurs as a result of CCAA implementation.
- The duration of the CCAA and the associated permit is 20 years.
- Landowners can terminate their enrollment at any point, but doing so results in loss of any assurances and incidental take coverage.

