



Figure 1. Adult Loggerhead Shrike and two of three fledged young in the Pembina Valley, Manitoba (June 27, 2015). Photo credit: Paul Goosser

A BREEDING RECORD FOR THE LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE IN MANITOBA'S PEMBINA VALLEY

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The loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), an uncommon breeder in Manitoba, is found primarily in the southwest corner of the province.¹ Manitoba's loggerhead shrike population has sharply declined during the past three decades.^{1,2} A combination of limiting factors including habitat loss, habitat fragmentation and deterioration, increased predation and changing weather patterns are thought to be contributing to ongoing declines of the loggerhead shrikes (K. De Smet, pers. comm.).² Breeding Bird Survey trends show significant long-term declines for loggerhead shrikes in both Canada and the United States.³ Population decline is the reason for the loggerhead shrike being listed as Threatened (Prairie subspecies *excubitorides*) in Canada.^{2,4} In Manitoba the loggerhead shrike is listed as Endangered.⁵

The discovery of new breeding locations for species at risk is significant. Breeding sites found outside the focal range of a species indicate that additional habitat is available away from core breeding areas and provide opportunities for wildlife managers to expand conservation efforts. This is particularly important in Manitoba where the loggerhead shrike population has declined by about 87 per cent (1987-2013).² Loggerhead shrikes in southeastern Manitoba appear to be nearly extirpated.^{4,6} Nesting in the Winnipeg

area was last documented in 2009 (K. De Smet, pers. comm.) and the loggerhead shrike was reported in only four atlas squares in the eastern half of the province during the recent Manitoba Breeding Bird Atlas (MBBA) project (2010-2014).⁶ In this note, we document breeding evidence for the loggerhead shrike in the Pembina Valley of south-central Manitoba, an area outside of its current main nesting range.

On June 14, 2013, Ron and Emmy Wiebe observed a loggerhead shrike on a hydro wire in the Pembina Valley about 6.5 km northeast of the small community of Snowflake.⁷ The shrike was observed to fly from the wire into a low shrub. The Wiebes left the area but returned about 30 minutes later and again saw a shrike flying down into the same shrub. It did not reappear even after 10 to 15 minutes of observation time. The behaviour of the shrike suggested the bird may have been visiting a

possible nest site. Habitat in the vicinity included more than 100 ha of grassland pasture, scattered trees, 2-4 m tall shrubs and cropland.

On June 27, 2015, J.P. Goossen visited the area where the Wiebes had twice seen a shrike in 2013. Even though habitat conditions appeared suitable, no shrikes were seen. He then travelled 1 km south and saw a shrike in flight. He attempted to follow its flight but was unable to locate the bird. He then returned to the area where he had first seen the shrike in flight. During about 40 minutes of observations, he saw two adult loggerhead shrikes and three fledged young (Fig. 1). One young was observed to fly about 30 m. An adult was observed feeding at least one of the young (Fig. 2). Habitat in the vicinity of where the shrikes were seen included cropland, grassland and grassy roadside ditches. Hawthorne (*Crataegus sp.*) shrubs and a few scattered trees



Figure 2. Adult Loggerhead Shrike feeding a fledged young in the Pembina Valley, Manitoba (June 27, 2015). Photo credit: Paul Goossen