Sprague’s Pipits are listed as Threatened in Canada.

- A non-descript brown bird, they are more often heard than seen.
- Sung by the male up to 100 m in the air, their ringing, ethereal song seems to spiral down.
- They are considered to be an indicator of healthy native prairie rangelands.
- They are found almost exclusively in native mixed grass prairie, with 10-30 cm (4-12 in) grass height, moderate dead grass ground cover, and low shrub and tree density.
- Three to six eggs are laid in nests built in dense grass tufts.
- Only 22-33% of nests fledge at least one chick successfully.
- Nest predators include ground squirrels, deer, crows, skunks, foxes, harriers, and merlins.
- They eat primarily insects, including grasshoppers and spiders.
- It is unclear how many adults return to the previous year’s breeding site to nest.
Conservation

- Approximately 60% of the Sprague’s Pipit breeding range occurs in Canada.
- About 80% of native grassland has been converted to agriculture.
- Habitat loss and degradation is the greatest threat to Sprague’s Pipits.
- Fragmentation of remaining areas reduces the density of nesting Sprague’s Pipits.
- Invasive plants reduce the diversity and quality of available habitat.
- Predator abundance increases with human-made structures, reducing nest success.

Get involved

- Read the assessment and status report for Sprague’s Pipits here.
- Moderate grazing rates will create the range conditions preferred by these pipits.

Photo credit: Sprague’s Pipit by logan kahle retrieved from https://www.flickr.com/photos/46812934@N04/8187010904 licensed under CC-BY 2.0 https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/ (front)

Range map credit: “Birds of North America” https://birdsna.org maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY