

Eastern Loggerhead Shrike

Background

The Eastern Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus migrans*) is a medium sized (approx. 21cm) gray and white bird with a raccoon like mask across its eyes and black on its wings and tail. It is one of the few predatory songbirds. It lacks talons or claws and so the shrike impales its food on branches, thorns or wire fences. It uses its hooked bill to feast on small prey such as mice, vole, grasshopper and other insects.

The female lays between 4 to 6 eggs that hatch 16-18 days after being laid. The young will rely on the parent for 3 to 5 weeks until they learn to fly and can forage on their own.

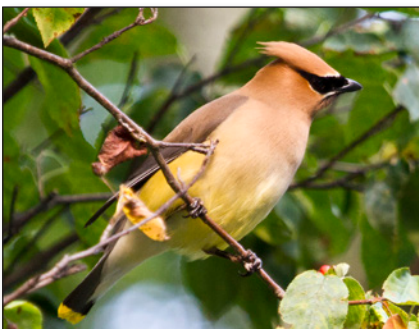
They prefer areas that are flat, and have open short grasslands for foraging with scattered shrubs for nesting.

The range of the eastern loggerhead shrikes once extended from Manitoba to New Brunswick. The decline in population started in the 1950's and by 1991 they were listed as Endangered in Canada. Today there are several small isolated pockets in Ontario. The cause



of the decline is not fully understood but may be due to the change in agricultural land use and/or changes in their migration routes. Another factor may be their vulnerability to collision with vehicles as roadside ditches are ideal hunting ground for the shrike. Several associations are taking action to deal with the eastern loggerhead shrike's decline in population and are now working on repopulating the species. Here in Ontario one of the groups involved in this work is Halton Conservation.

www.conservationhalton.ca



Backyard Bird Photography

There are several ways to attract native birds to your backyard. Research the species you'd like to attract, and what their eating and nesting habits are, and you can plant for that particular species. For example, planting a chokecherry shrub will attract cedar waxwings

(shown left) and robins during the time the berries are ripe.

Bird feeders are a great way to get more birds in your backyard - research the bird, and place feeders accordingly. Remember, photography is only one reason to attract birds. Did you know hummingbirds don't just feed on sugar, they eat insects too, and attracting orioles to your yard can help control the wasp population.

TIPS FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

- hide yourself (camouflage, lattice work)
- use a zoom lens (200 mm or 10x)
- use a tripod with remote shutter release
- manual or continual focus - set the area you want to photograph before the birds arrive.
- practice & be patient!

Earth Day The first Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 1970. Here in Canada in 1990 Earth Day Canada (EDC) was founded. EDC's mission is to 'foster and celebrate environmental respect, action and behavior change that lessens our impact on the earth.'



A few activities planned for Earth Day in Ontario: (taken from the Earth Day Canada website)

New Forest in the City – community tree planting event

Date: 19/04/2015 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Open to the public

Cost: Free

Address: Abbott Ct, Brantford, ON, Canada

Celebrate Birds, Bees, and Butterflies with The Toronto Bruce Trail Club by The Bruce Trail

The topic for the event will be "Birds, Bees and Butterflies".

Date: Sunday April 26th, 2015

Website: www.torontobrucetrailclub.org

Open to the public

Cost: Free

Address: Limehouse, ON, Canada

For more information on Earth Day activities in your area contact Earth Day Canada at: <http://earthday2015.ca/event-list/>



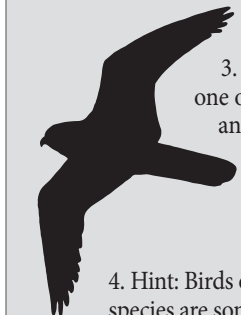
Species at Risk Quiz

How many of these endangered, threatened and birds of special concern do you know?



1. Hint: When flying, this bird very rarely flaps its wings but soars instead, holding its wings almost completely flat.

2. Hint: These birds hunt in the dark and have keen hearing - so keen they can capture prey even in total darkness.



3. Hint: This bird is one of the world's fastest animals, and has been clocked diving for prey at speeds of 160 km per hour.

4. Hint: Birds of this species are sometimes called butcher bird because they impale their prey on thorns, barbed wire or sharp twigs.



5. Hint: These birds make the long flight to Central and South America each fall, returning to southern Canada - including Ontario - each spring.



Endangered: Lives in the wild in Ontario but is facing imminent extinction or extirpation.

Threatened: Lives in the wild in Ontario, is not endangered, but is likely to become endangered if steps are not taken to address factors threatening it.

Special concern: Lives in the wild in Ontario, is not endangered or threatened, but may become threatened or endangered due to a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Answers: 1. Bald Eagle - Special Concern
2. Barn Owl - Endangered
3. Peregrine Falcon - Special Concern
4. Loggerhead Shrike - Endangered
5. Barn Swallow - Threatened

Gardening Awareness: the right plant for the right place

It's been a long cold winter, but spring is almost here, and if you are a gardening enthusiast, you might already be thinking about what to plant for next season. However, before choosing plants, you must consider the issue of invasive plants.

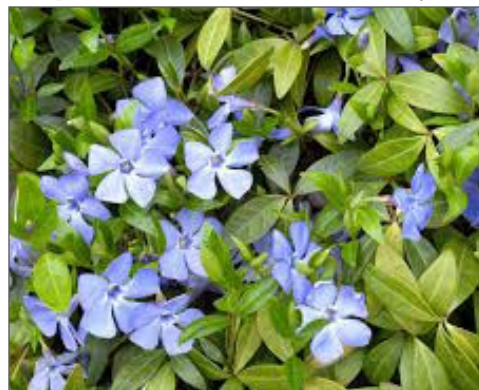
Invasive plants are those that have been introduced to an area outside their native range and negatively affect the environment, economy or society. As well, Ontario is the province with the highest number of invasive plants, because it has such diverse horticultural and agricultural industries, a large population, and an economy that is highly integrated with other parts of the world.

It may be hard to believe that some of the most common and beautiful garden plants can cause economic and environmental damage, but they can. Horticulture is just one of the pathways in which invasive plants are spread. There is no doubt the qualities we love about invasive plants - their beauty, hardiness, ease of propagation and low maintenance, are the same reasons they become so invasive once they are here. Possessing those qualities with the added bonus of leaving behind their natural predators allow these plants to flourish and wreak havoc on a natural area if they escape the confines of a well-maintained garden. Some of these plants have been known to threaten endangered species and rare native plant communities as well as alter natural landscapes and plant populations.

It can be challenging to know which plants are best avoided, so that is why the Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC) and partners created the Grow Me Instead guides (for northern and southern Ontario). The guides help gardeners and landscapers identify common invasive garden plants and provide a list of non-invasive and native alternatives. The following is just one example of a common invasive garden plant and its alternative that is found in the Grow Me Instead guide:

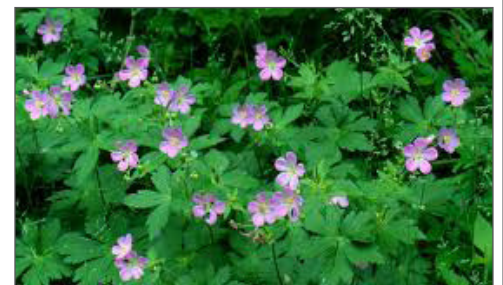
Invasive: Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)

One of the most popular groundcovers found in gardens throughout North America is Periwinkle. But Periwinkle is an invasive groundcover native to Europe. Its popularity is based on its ease of care, dense growth and its ability to grow in dry shade. However, if not kept in a contained area, it can spread rapidly into natural areas and poses a threat to native biodiversity.



Alternative: Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)

Wild Geranium is just one of many non-invasive and native alternatives to Periwinkle and other invasive ground covers. It is a great groundcover for a shady woodland garden. It forms clumps (produces smaller plants near the parent plant, which can be divided and moved to a new location in the future) and produces showy pink or magenta flowers in late-spring and early-summer. It's also a great nectar source for hummingbirds.



Grow Me Instead Nursery Recognition Program

Another challenge is locating garden centres that sell non-invasive and native plants. That is why the OIPC and partners also established the Grow Me Instead Nursery Recognition Program, which recognizes retailers who carry some of the alternative plants featured in the guide.

To download the Grow Me Instead guide, and for a list of participating nurseries, visit: www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca

About the Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC): The OIPC is a non-profit, multi-agency organization which provides leadership, expertise and a forum to engage and empower Ontarians to take action on invasive plants issues.