



Project Report: 2016

March 2017

Ontario Wildlife Foundation
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Ontario Wildlife Foundation -

Thank you to the Ontario Wildlife Foundation for your generous and consistent support for the Shrike Recovery Project at Mountsberg Conservation Area with your grants in 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015. This project report will provide you with details of our program status as of the end of 2016.

Background:

The Eastern Loggerhead Shrike (*picture, above*) is a critically endangered songbird in Ontario. In 2011, Conservation Halton constructed a dedicated facility (*inset, above*) to house and breed shrikes and release young into the wild to support the recovery of the wild population.



After we built and opened our breeding facility in 2011, we have been able to release captive-born shrikes every year from 2012 through 2016, as follows:

2012: we raised and released 8 young -- 3 of which returned to Ontario in 2013

2013: we raised 28 young, 24 of which were released

2014: we raised 29 young, 25 of which were released

2015: we have raised 34 young, 30 of which were released

2016: we raised 27 young, 25 of which were released

Our project at the Mountsberg Conservation Area is part of a wider partnership that involves Wildlife Preservation Canada, the Toronto Zoo, the African Lion Safari, and U.S. based sites the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, Virginia and the Nashville Zoo.

Most current information from the program shows the following:

- in 2016, 18 pairs of Eastern Loggerhead Shrikes were observed in the wild that produced 64 fledglings
- of the wild population observed in 2016, 28% was made up of captive bred birds, indicating that the breeding programs continue to be an important contributor to the viability of the wild population
- a total of 105 captive bred birds were released to the wild in 2016; this was the highest number of hatchlings released in one year, to date
- 10 of the birds released in 2016 were outfitted with radio tags
- the use of geolocators has been discontinued as recovery is sporadic and most tags that have been recovered have not yielded viable data; radio tagging of birds will continue
- it has been discovered that the birds in Ontario are a genetically separate subspecies. This subspecies extends into Virginia and West Virginia and movement of birds from Ontario to Virginia and from Virginia to Ontario has been documented; in support of this, past radio tag data recovered from a shrike bred at Mountsberg indicated over-wintering in Virginia and a return to Ontario to breed in the wild

Photos: The release site near Napanee Ontario (*above, left*) and shrike hatchlings from the 2016 breeding season (*above, right*).

We thank you for your long-term support for this initiative. As you can imagine, bringing a species back to a better population status is not easy and it is a long term proposition.

By funding the operating costs associated with this program you can help us ensure that the birds have everything they need to be successful in producing young, and allow observation and research that may benefit this and other species recovery programs in the future.

Thank you for your support. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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