



Shrike Recovery Project Report 2018

For the Ontario Wildlife Foundation

January, 2019



January 25, 2019

Denise Hetherington
Coordinator
Ontario Wildlife Foundation
PO Box 1598 Stn Main
Peterborough Ontario K9J 7S4

Dear Denise and colleagues at the Ontario Wildlife Foundation,

Thank you to the Ontario Wildlife Foundation for your ongoing support for the Shrike Recovery Project at Mountsberg Conservation Area dating back to 2011. This project report will provide you with details of our program status as of the end of 2018.

As you well know, the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike is still a critically endangered songbird in Ontario. In 2011, Conservation Halton constructed a dedicated facility to house and breed shrikes and release young into the wild to support the recovery of the wild population. Since opening the breeding facility in 2011, we have been able to release captive-born shrikes every year:

- 2012 - raised and released 8 young
- 2013: raised 28 young (24 were released)
- 2014: raised 29 young (25 were released)
- 2015: raised 34 young (30 were released)
- 2016: raised 27 young (25 were released)
- 2017: raised 30 young (24 were released)
- 2018: raised 27 young (27 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 2017, 26 pairs of Eastern Loggerhead Shrikes were observed in the wild that produced 57 fledglings
- of the wild population observed in 2016, 17% was made up of captive bred birds
- 128 captive bred birds were released to the wild in 2017; this was the highest number of hatchlings released in one year, to date
- 16 of the birds released in 2017 were outfitted with radio tags
- In 2018, only 19 pairs of Eastern Loggerhead Shrikes were confirmed in the wild – a marked decline from the 26 pairs found in 2017 and a strong reminder of the precarious nature of the Ontario population
- Despite the small number of breeding pairs, 53 wild fledglings were confirmed across ON in 2018
- Captive breeding and release continues to be important to maintaining the wild population – in 2018, 9 captive-released birds were confirmed returning to Ontario breeding grounds and captive-origin birds made up 21% of the population of wild shrike spotted in the province in 2018

- All captive produced young from partner facilities were released to the wild in 2018 due to uncertainty over available winter housing space. In total, 131 young were released.

We thank you for your long-standing commitment to this initiative. As you can imagine, bringing a species back from the brink of extinction 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.

If you have any questions please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Garner Beckett
Director
Conservation Halton Foundation
2596 Britannia Road West Burlington Ontario L7P 0G3
Phone: 905-336 1158, extension 2255
Gbeckett@hrca.on.ca