

**Recommended Development Setback Distances from Birds**  
**Manitoba Conservation Data Centre**  
**June 24, 2015**

**Introduction**

The Manitoba Conservation Data Centre (MBCDC) developed these recommendations and setback distances in order to provide industry proponents with consistent, readily available guidelines that can be applied in situations where sensitive species may be present in or near the project area. The setback distances were established by reviewing relevant literature and guidelines from other jurisdictions, and consulting local ornithologists.

**General Recommendations**

In most cases, disturbance or potentially deleterious activity outside of the breeding season is preferential to activity during the breeding season. The breeding season begins with territory establishment and ends when the young are fledged and the nesting territory is abandoned.

Where the activity will occur in suitable habitat for these species (eg: native grassland for the grassland birds), minimal clearing/disturbance techniques should be employed during or even outside of the breeding season. Any suitable habitat unavoidably disturbed should be reclaimed/rehabilitated as soon as possible.

If these species have been recorded in or near the project area, it is recommended that the proponent develop an environmental protection plan to submit to the MBCDC for review. At minimum the plan should:

- a) describe the project, including a timeline of activities, a description of the location and current land use, and a description of the wildlife values in the area, including any species of concern identified by the MBCDC;
- b) identify potential impacts of the project to wildlife values, especially to any species of concern identified by the MBCDC; and
- c) propose impact management and mitigation measures to avoid or manage the identified impacts, including reclamation/rehabilitation efforts.

In some cases, MBCDC may also recommend the development of a monitoring program designed to assess species of concern that may occur in the area, impacts on wildlife values and/or the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

**Disturbance Categories**

**Low**

e.g.: foot traffic; occasional/infrequent/short-term small vehicle (<1 ton) or ATV use; operating oil or gas wells without flaring; operating pipelines

Foot-traffic only (FTO) is indicated for certain taxa, in which case all activities normally considered low disturbance (other than foot traffic) are considered medium disturbance.

#### Medium

e.g.: trucks > 1 ton (gravel, oil, grain), regular/frequent/long-term small vehicle (< 1 ton) or ATV use, pipeline construction (diameters < 1 foot), operating compressor station or battery without flaring

#### High

e.g., road construction, roads, drilling rigs, mines and quarries, construction of compressor station or battery, forest harvest, large diameter pipeline construction, seismic exploration, blasting, rock crushing, asphalt batching, gravel pit, operating compressor station or battery or oil/gas well with flaring

#### **Nest Site**

In many cases it will be difficult to identify the exact location of a nest, and intensive efforts to do so may disturb breeding birds and/or their nests. In such cases, determining the main home range, territory and/or song perches through auditory song/call surveys and low-intensity visual observation, are recommended to determine the approximate location of nest sites. The set-back distance should then be applied to this approximate location.

Species	Key Wildlife Feature	Restricted Activity Period	Recommended Set-back Distance by Disturbance Category (metres)		
			Low	Medium	High
Baird's Sparrow	Nest Site	May 15 - August 15	100	250	500
Bald Eagle	Active or Traditional Nest Site	March 15 - July 15	250	500	1000
Bank Swallow	Nesting Colony	May 15 - July 31	50	150	300
Barn Swallow	Nest Site	May 15 - September 30	50	100	100
Barred Owl	Active or Traditional Nest Site	March 15 - July 15	250	500	1000
Bobolink	Nest Site	May 15 - August 15	100	250	400
Boreal Owl	Nest Site	March 1 - July 15	250	500	1000
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Migratory Stop-over Site	May 20 - June 5, July 20 - Oct 10	100	200	400
Burrowing Owl	Active or Traditional Nest Site	April 1 - August 15	200	300	500
		August 16 - March 31	50	250	500
Canada Warbler	Nest Site	May 1 - July 31	200	300	450
Chesnut-collared Longspur	Nest Site	May 1 - August 15	100	250	650
Chimney Swift	Nest or Roost Site	May 1 - July 31	50	150	300
Common Nighthawk	Nest Site	May 1 - August 31	100	200	300
Eastern Screech Owl	Nest Site	March 15 - July 15	200	300	500
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Nest Site	May 15 - Aug 15	50	150	300
Ferruginous Hawk	Active or Traditional Nest Site	March 15 - July 31	500	750	1000
Golden-winged Warbler	Nest Site	May 15 - August 6	200	300	450
Golden Eagle	Active or Traditional Nest Site	March 15 - July 15	500	750	1000
Grasshopper Sparrow	Nest Site	May 16 - August 21	100	250	650
Great Gray Owl	Active or Traditional Nest Site	Feb 15 - July 15	250	500	1000
Horned Grebe	Nest Site	May 1 - Sep 15	100	200	400
Least Bittern	Nest Site	May 1 - July 31	100	200	400
Loggerhead Shrike	Nest Site	May 1 - August 15	100	250	500
Northern Hawk Owl	Nest Site	Feb 15 - July 15	250	500	1000
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Nest Site	May 1 - August 31	50	150	300
Peregrine Falcon <sup>1</sup>	Nest Site	April 1 - August 15	250	500	1000
Piping Plover	Active or Traditional Nest Site	April 15 - August 15	200	400	600
Red-headed Woodpecker	Nest Site	April 15 - August 15	50	100	200
Red Knot	Migratory Stop-over Site	May 20 - June 5, July 20 - Oct 10	100	200	400
Ross's Gull	Nest Site	May 15 - August 15	500	1000	1500
Rusty Blackbird	Nest Site	May 1 - July 31	50	150	300
Sharp-tailed Grouse <sup>2</sup>	Lek	Mar 15 - May 15	200	500	1000
Short-eared Owl	Nest Site	April 15 - September 15	200	300	500
Sprague's Pipit	Nest Site	May 1 - August 15	100	250	650
Trumpeter Swan	Nest Site	April 1 - July 31	500	750	1000
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Nest Site	May 15 - July 16	100	200	300
Whooping Crane	Staging Area	May 1 - November 1	500	750	1000
Yellow Rail	Nest Site	May 1 - July 15	100	150	350
American White Pelican	Nesting Colony	April 1 - August 31	500	750	1000
Double-crested Cormorant	Nesting Colony	April 1 - August 31	400	500	750
Herons	Nesting Colony	April 1 - August 31	400	500	750
Colonial Nesting grebes	Nesting Colony	May 15 - July 15	100	200	400
Colonial Nesting gulls/terns	Nesting Colony	May 1 - July 15	400	500	750

<sup>1</sup>Non-urban occurrences only

<sup>2</sup>Low disturbance is foot traffic only.