



Streaked Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris strigata*) | 2015 Action Plan Summary

The streaked horned lark is a small ground dwelling bird that is endemic to the Pacific Northwest. Small populations occur along Washington's coast, through the Puget lowlands, and on lower Columbia River islands, while the majority of the approximately 1,500 remaining individuals are found in the Willamette Valley. Relying on wide open spaces that have sparse vegetation, the streaked horned lark population has declined greatly with the loss of ideal habitat due to range contraction, land use conversion and the encroachment of woody vegetation. In October 2013, the US Fish and Wildlife Service designated the streaked horned lark as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Protection Status of the Streaked Horned Lark		
		
State of WA Endangered	State of OR Species of Concern	Federal Threatened

CPOP and the Species-Specific Working Groups

The Cascadia Prairie-Oak Partnership (CPOP) is an ecoregional group that brings together conservation focused professionals that represent state, federal and local government, military, conservation groups and other entities interested in prairie-oak conservation. CPOP was created to increase coordination between these groups in order to promote conservation action, leverage funding, and expand recovery efforts. The streaked horned lark working group first convened in 2007 and meets annually to discuss and prioritize recovery actions.



What is an Action Plan and what is its purpose?

Each CPOP working group maintains an Action Plan, a document that lists the 'next best tasks' that can be taken to improve the status of the species and ranks the highest priority actions. Each year at the annual meeting the list is updated to reflect completed work, new opportunities and changes in urgency. The Action Plan is meant to encourage dialogue and consensus among the group as well as to inform entities that work with conservation policies and funding, such as US Fish and Wildlife Service, as to what actions are priorities to support the recovery of the streaked horned lark.

Action Plan Ranked Priorities

Rank	Action to be taken
# 1	Seek opportunities to secure sites dedicated to lark conservation.
# 2	Secure protection commitment on priority occupied sites.
# 3	Develop Willamette Valley component of survey protocol in order to finalize range-wide standardized protocols that address occupancy, abundance, trends, use and spatial distribution.
# 4	Identify threats to population viability with an emphasis on determining the factors limiting juvenile and adult survivorship in Oregon and Washington, on evaluating effects of pest control agents on larks (ranked #8), and on evaluating the need to control predators (ranked #11).
# 5	Support partner biologists to work on agriculture-related lark issues.
# 6	Refine and implement management prescriptions to create breeding habitat, develop winter prescription in agricultural matrix, and understand effect on lark vital rates.
# 7	Facilitate lark-beneficial habitat management on Willamette Valley private lands through incentive programs or other means.
# 9	Enhance existing habitat and increase amount of available habitat in the Willamette Valley with an emphasis on implementing habitat restoration activities on breeding and wintering grounds.
# 10	Survey and monitor for larks on new and historic sites.
# 12	Evaluate appropriateness and feasibility of population augmentation, relocation or reintroduction.
# 13	Conduct habitat restoration on the Columbia River and Coast to increase and improve lark habitat, with an emphasis on implementing restoration on breeding and wintering grounds.
# 14	Facilitate coordination and information sharing with an emphasis on range-wide working group.
# 15	Work with the regulatory community to identify mitigation opportunities including conservation banks with an emphasis on developing mitigation banking strategy and criteria.

Recently Completed Actions

Since the first Action Plan was created in 2007, the following notable tasks have been completed or have made substantial progress:

- Several additional entities have been engaged in the coordinated effort to recover the streaked horned lark.
- An analysis of habitat distribution and change through time following dredged material deposition was conducted on Columbia River islands. This knowledge is informing a plan to systematically create lark habitat.
- Nest enclosure research was implemented range-wide, aimed at protecting eggs and nestlings from predation.
- OR and WA partners are working to abate decline through a genetic rescue project, which translocates eggs from OR to increase lark genetic variability in South Puget Sound. A hatched lark from OR paired, nested, and produced off-spring that fledged and returned the next spring.
- An integrated strategy to remove invasive plants is being implemented range-wide. These include bulldozing beach grass, prescribed fire and careful use of herbicides to remove structure modifying plants.
- Partners are tracking lark productivity and occupancy at many key sites.
- A conspecific attraction study was completed showing that larks will respond to cues, but will only remain at the site if habitat is favorable.
- A larks and airports working group has been formed to address conservation efforts in partnership with airports in the region.

Threats

Although progress has been made, threats such as development and habitat degradation are still very real for the streaked horned lark. Continued efforts will be necessary to ensure their recovery and survival.

