

Prairie Strips and Songbirds

Updated 7-2-22

We have detected 81 bird species in fields with prairie strips including 17 considered *grassland* birds. The most common birds that use prairie strips are Red-winged Blackbird, Dickcissel (pictured), and Common Yellowthroat.

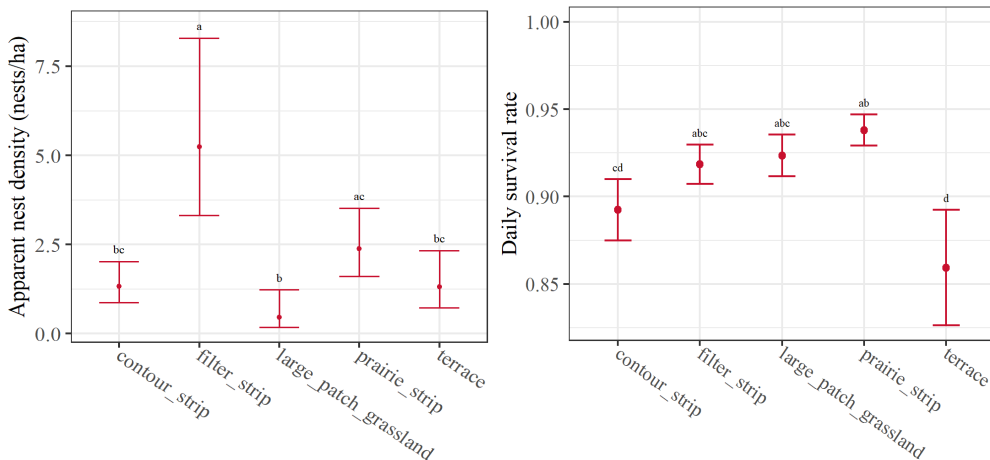
Fields with prairie strips:

- 3x more grassland birds
- 2.5x more Red-winged Blackbirds
- 3.5x more Dickcissels
- 3x more Common Yellowthroats



Field with prairie strips in Pottawatomie County, IA (left); Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*; center); and Dickcissel nest located in a prairie strip (right).

We have found the nests of 30 species of birds in fields with prairie strips. Red-winged Blackbirds and Dickcissels are the most common species to nest in prairie strips. Red-winged blackbird nests are more common only in filter strips and nest survival is higher in prairie strips than other conservation features.



Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) nest density (left) and nest survival (right) across common on-farm conservation features.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY



www.prairiestrips.org

Jordan Giese
Ph.D. Candidate
jgiese@iastate.edu
402-719-7475

Prairie Strips and Pheasants

We tracked 38 Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) hens at three farms during winters of 2018 – 2020 using necklace-mounted GPS transmitters. We recorded 3,248 unique locations.

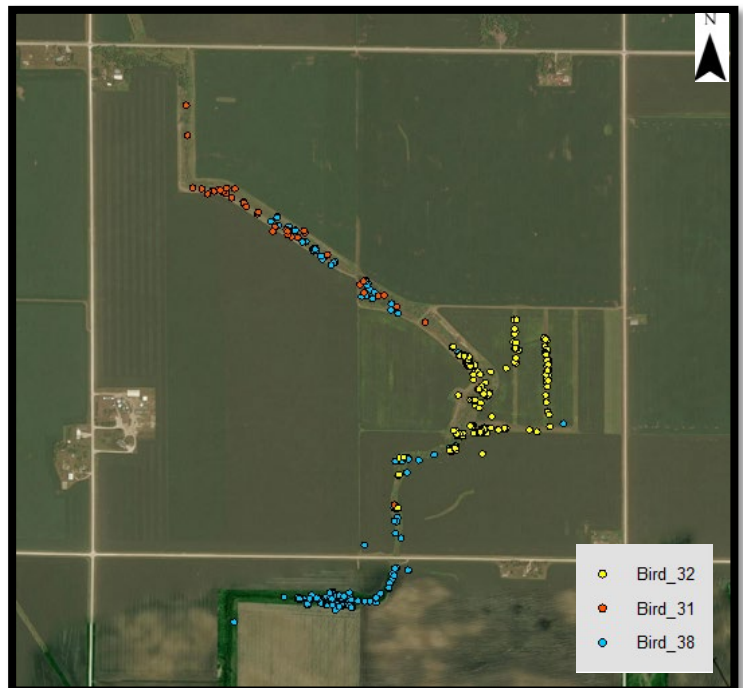


Drone image of Wright County, IA farm with prairie strips in winter (top left); researcher tracking pheasant (bottom left); and pheasant hen with GPS transmitter (right).

Pheasant habitat selection varied by farm and cover availability. Pheasant hens spent:

- 76% of roosting time in prairie/grassy cover
- 18% of roosting time in woody cover
- 6% of roosting time in brush piles and other covers

Prairie strips that do not drift over after heavy snows provide reliable winter cover for pheasants. Heavier covers such as evergreen trees, shrubs, and brush piles are important covers during severe winter weather.



Locations of three pheasant hens Feb 11 – Mar 27, 2020 at farm in Polk County, IA.