

## Loggerhead Shrikes in Virginia



- A 9-inch masked black, white and gray perching bird that flies in bursts of rapid wing beats. Easily confused with a Northern Mockingbird (see distinctions right).
- Found in grasslands and shrublands with short grasses and scattered shrubs.
- Hunts insects, birds, lizards, and small mammals from fence posts, power lines, and other exposed perches. Often nests in isolated trees in open grasslands.
- Impale prey on thorns, branches or barbed wire for easy eating, giving them the nickname “The Butcher Bird”.
- Listed as “threatened” in Virginia with as few as 100 breeding birds remaining.



VIRGINIA WORKING LANDSCAPES

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Contribute to bird conservation by submitting your birding checklists to [www.eBird.org](http://www.eBird.org)
- Search your property for signs of shrikes (i.e. Impaled prey) and report any sightings to SCBI biologists
- Refrain from using insecticides in your fields as this reduces insect biomass, an important resource for shrikes
- Embrace features important to shrikes such as hawthorns, osage orange, barbed wire and shrub patches
- Support SCBI’s mission to conserve Virginia’s Loggerhead Shrikes by donating to our shrike recovery program
- Share our website with friends and colleagues

Visit us on the web:

[www.VAWorkingLandscapes.org](http://www.VAWorkingLandscapes.org)

[www.facebook.com/VirginiaWorkingLandscapes](https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaWorkingLandscapes)

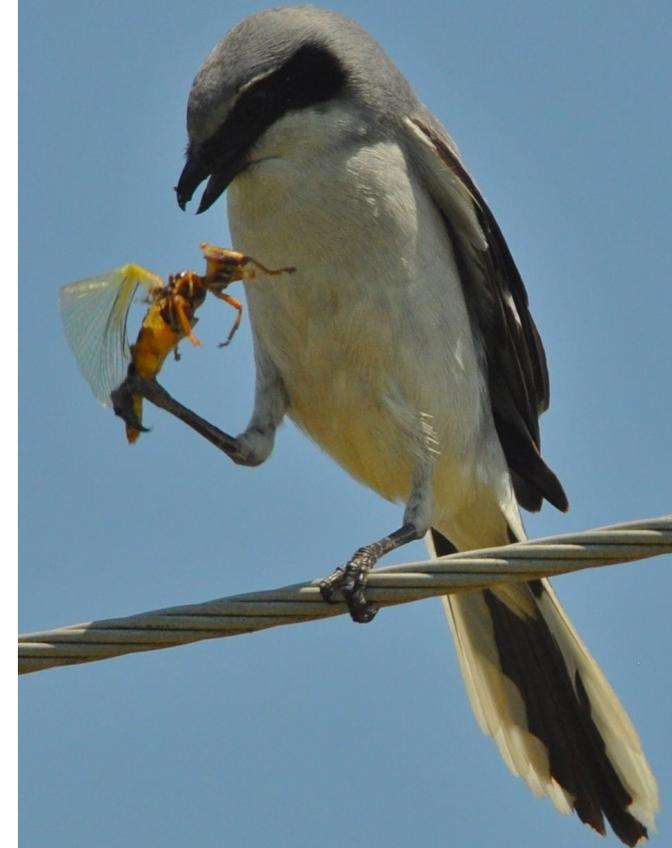


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## Bringing Back the Butcher Bird

Current efforts to understand and reverse the decline of Loggerhead Shrikes in Virginia



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## Distinguishing Features



Loggerhead Shrikes (left) superficially resemble Northern Mockingbirds (right) but have blacker wings, a more prominent face-mask, heavy hooked bill, whiter underside and undulating flight with very rapid wingbeats (mockingbirds have slow wingbeats).

## SCBI Captive Breeding Program



A captive breeding population of Loggerhead Shrikes has been established at SCBI to contribute to a reintroduction program in Ontario, Canada led by Wildlife Preservation Canada. SCBI hopes to set up a similar program in Virginia in collaboration with state biologists once more information is gained from the local population on health and genetics.



## Health Assessment of Wild Birds

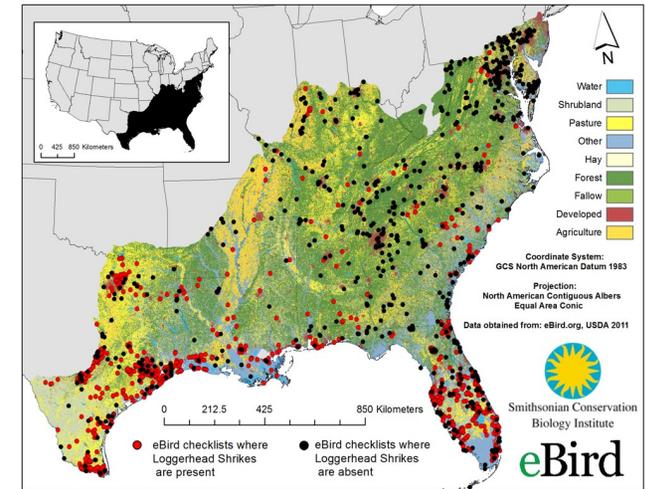
Health assessments of wild bird populations are increasingly used to evaluate wildlife populations but studies related to the health and fitness of Loggerhead Shrike populations are lacking. Shrikes are susceptible to viral pathogens, like West Nile Virus, leading to high mortality.



SCBI Veterinary staff are evaluating the health status of current populations in Virginia and West Virginia. Biological samples are collected from wild shrikes during routine population surveys.



## Habitat Suitability Modeling



SCBI scientists are using data obtained from [www.eBird.org](http://www.eBird.org) to identify landscape features related to shrike occupancy throughout 20 states in the eastern United States. Locating “suitable” habitat will allow scientists to identify conservation priority areas, facilitate searches for undetected wild populations, and aid in choosing locations for potential reintroductions.

## Grass and Shrubland Bird Surveys



SCBI is currently monitoring local grassland bird populations on public and private farms through its Virginia Working Landscapes program. These activities are important for recognizing regional population trends of birds that share similar habitat to Loggerhead Shrikes and will help gain a better understanding of how land management practices influence grassland communities.