



*long-billed curlew*

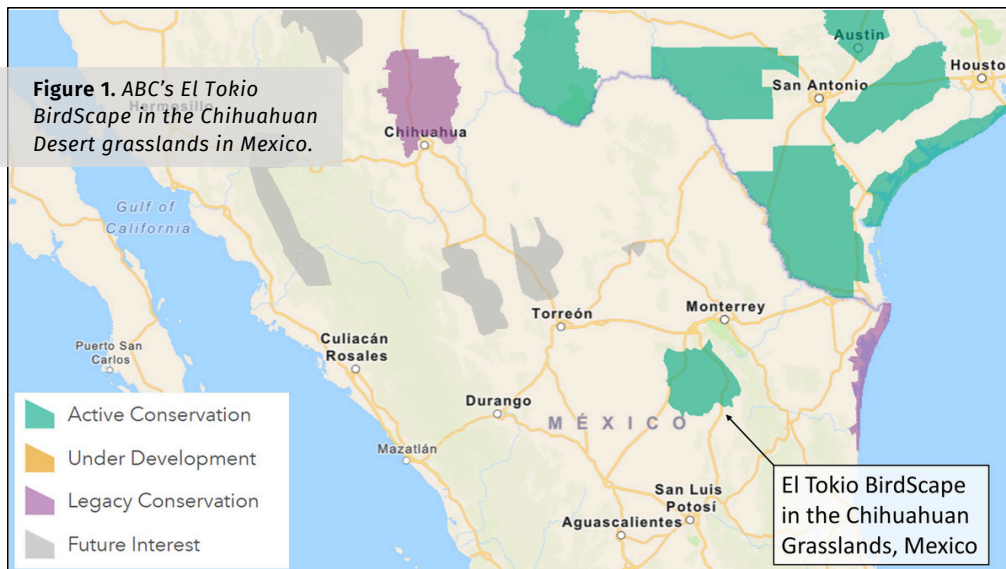
## SUCCESS STORIES

### CONSERVING NORTH AMERICAN GRASSLANDS BIRDS

Southern Wings partners with American Bird Conservancy (ABC), Pronatura Noreste, the Autonomous University of Nuevo León, and ejidos to promote and facilitate the conservation of shared grasslands bird species, through the protection and conservation of the Chihuahuan Desert grasslands in Mexico.

The El Tokio Grassland Priority Conservation Area (GPCA) in northeast Mexico has been identified as a critical location for conserving desert grasslands and the migratory grassland birds that overwinter in them. El Tokio is one of the largest GPCAs in North America's Chihuahuan Desert. It comprises nearly 3,615 mi<sup>2</sup> and is located on the edges of the Mexican states of Coahuila, Nuevo León, Zacatecas, and San Luis Potosí. ABC includes this region in ABC's BirdScape initiative as the El Tokio BirdScape (Figure 1). El Tokio is critical for many species of greatest conservation need, particularly long-billed curlews, mountain plover, and Sprague's pipit, as well as the resident Worthen's sparrow.

The main threats to grasslands in El Tokio include soil desertification due to poor livestock practices and industrial agriculture and climate change. Partners are working to restore key grassland remnants and promote and implement bird-friendly best management practices for cattle grazing (Figure 2), as well as to manage and maintain private reserves. The conservation actions include the removal of invasive plant species, soil restoration, improvement of cattle ranching infrastructure to practice rotational grazing and reduce soil desertification, the creation of a Cattle Management and Grassland Restoration Plans for each of the participating properties, and environmental education workshops (Figure 3).



*mountain plover*

# CONSERVING NORTH AMERICAN GRASSLANDS BIRDS

## PROJECT SUCCESSES

Over 140,000 acres have been included in conservation agreements or are under direct management since 2011, with more than 25 properties participating, including 21 ejidos (communities owning communal land).



**Figure 2.** Fence installation at Loma del Gorrión Reserve in EL Tokio. Installation of the fence is part of the Cattle Management and Grassland Restoration Plan for the property.



**Figure 3.** Workshop on bird identification and the importance of local grasslands to migratory birds. Members of the ejido Nuevo Gómez Farias (top row) and San Francisco del Ejido (bottom row) participated in both a classroom and a field practice.



## ON THE GROUND PARTNERS

- American Bird Conservancy
- Pronatura Noreste
- Ejidos
- Autonomous University of Nuevo León

## MOVING FORWARD, FUNDING IS NEEDED TO

- engage and work with new ejidos to restore degraded grasslands and enhance their livestock grazing practices;
- continue installing and restoring ranching and water infrastructure, erosion control measures, and the removal of invasive plants;
- build ejidos' knowledge of grassland birds and their importance;
- establish new private conservation agreements;
- conduct avian monitoring to gauge progress toward meeting long-term goals, inform our approach, and adapt as needed; and
- to achieve the objective of conserving an additional 47,000 acres by 2030.

## STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCY PARTNERS

- South Dakota
- Iowa
- Nebraska
- Oklahoma
- Kansas
- Pacific Flyway Council

## CONTACT

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