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Horned Lark *strigata* ssp.

Eremophila alpestris strigata

A member of the family Alaudidae ("true Larks"), *alpestris* is the only representative of the genus *Eremophila* in the New World. Also referred to as "Streaked Horned Lark" there is genetic data that suggest the subspecies was once part of a larger Pacific Coast lineage but has been evolving independently for some time. Five subspecies are recognized in BC.



Male with "horns" Rod Gilbert



Adult Lark Tim Bowman USFWS



Chick Rod Gilbert



Typical prairie habitat used Rod Gilbert

Characteristics

Prior to European settlement, natural and human-induced fires helped to maintain the open habitat required by grassland birds like Horned Lark. Agricultural clearing by early settlers may have also increased local habitat for Horned Lark by creating additional open spaces, a similar condition which allowed for Barn Owl to spread into southern BC. Much of the biology of the *strigata* subspecies is derived from the species as a whole. A ground dwelling specialist, Horned Lark gets its name from black feather tufts or “horns” that stand up on either side of the head. These are more prominent on males than females. Body plumage is marked with a black breast band, black lores (space between the eye and bill), and black cheek patches that contrast with the yellow to white supercilium (coloured line of plumage that runs from the lores around the eye to the back of the head), ear covers and chin. The nape, back, rump, and upper area of the tail are shades of brown streaked with dusky brown to black. Males are larger than females. The *strigata* subspecies is somewhat darker with a yellowish wash on the breast and belly, a pinkish or rufous tinge to the darker brown upperparts and sides, and an extensively yellow throat and supercilium. The mottled brown and grey plumage of chicks and juveniles provides camouflage during rearing and fledging which occurs on the ground.

Status

Global Status: G5T2

Provincial Status: SXB

SARA Status: Endangered

BC List Status: Red (Candidates for- Extirpated, Endangered, or Threatened status)

Resources

BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer: Species and Ecosystems Search

A source for authoritative conservation information on thousands of plants and animals and hundreds of ecological communities in BC. From here connect to all provincial and federal recovery plans (including the SARA Registry), COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada), Identified Wildlife guidance and conservation requirements for specific species and ecological communities of conservation concern impacted by forestry activities) and links to E-Flora and E-Fauna (the Electronic Atlas of the Plants and Wildlife of British Columbia).

British Columbia’s Coast Region Species & Ecosystems of Conservation Concern

A joint venture resource providing comprehensive information on a range of species and ecological communities specific to the Coast Region of BC (including the South, Central and North Coast, Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii).

Develop With Care Guidelines (see Lower Mainland Region section)

Environmental guidelines for urban and rural land development in BC.

Species at Risk & Local Governments a Primer for BC

Learn what species are at risk in your area, search by name, habitat type, regional district and forest district.

Source URL: <http://sccp.ca/species-habitat/horned-lark-strigata-ssp>

Links

[1] <http://sccp.ca/printpdf/68>

[2] <http://sccp.ca/sites/default/files/species->

habitat/documents/effects%20of%20native%20and%20nonnative%20grassland%20plant%20communities%20on%20breeding%20passer
bunchgrass%20prairie%20restoration_Kennedyetal2009.pdf

[3] http://sccp.ca/sites/default/files/species-habitat/documents/grasslandmngmnt%20of%20birds_hornedlark.pdf

[4] <http://sccp.ca/sites/default/files/species->

habitat/documents/range%20wide%20shl%20assessment%20and%20preliminary%20conservation%20strategy%20pearson%20et%20al%

[5] <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/conservation-data-centre/explore-cdc-data/species-and-ecosystems-explorer>

[6] <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/factsheets/>

[7] http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop_with_care_intro.html

[8] <http://www.speciesatrisk.bc.ca/>