



The Grassland Meadow at Bishop Farmstead

Grassland Meadow Habitat

Grassland meadows provide important benefits to our local wildlife. This type of habitat has undergone rapid decline in New Jersey as farmland is replaced by development or left to revert to woodlands and fire is suppressed in forest areas. The remaining grasslands are small, fragmented, and isolated. As a result, wildlife that relies on grassland habitat has also declined.

Native warm-season grasses, like the ones here in the Farmstead meadow, provide both food and shelter to wildlife. Because these grasses grow in bunches instead of at a uniform density across the landscape, there are gaps and open spaces at ground level. These spaces allow for mobility and foraging for small wildlife throughout the meadow while still providing protection from predators. The persistent, standing structure of these grasses through the winter provides cover and early spring nesting habitat.

Meadows are particularly important habitat for small mammals such as [Meadow Voles](#) and [Meadow Jumping Mice](#), larger mammals such as [Red Foxes](#), and insects such as [Tiger Swallowtails](#) and [Monarch butterflies](#). Several bird species, including [Bobolinks](#), [Eastern Meadowlarks](#), and [Savannah Sparrows](#) use meadows to build nests, raise young, and forage. Birds of prey such as [American Kestrels](#), [Northern Harriers](#), and [Short-Eared Owls](#) use meadows and grasslands as hunting grounds. While many grassland birds require larger areas of contiguous meadow habitat, several can use smaller meadow patches. These are the birds that we hope will use our meadow here at the Farmstead.

Our Meadow

The meadow is bounded on the north and west sides by an active farm field and on the east side by a tree line. On the south side is a parking area, several farm outbuildings, and an expanse of lawn.

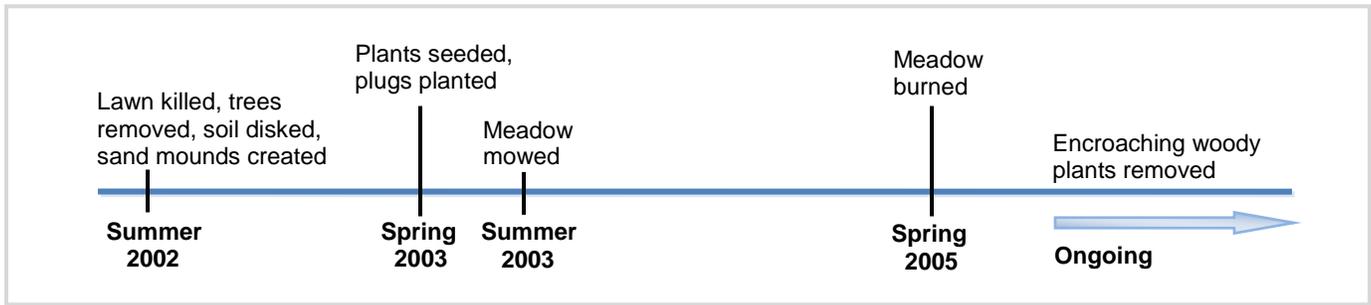
Maintenance of the meadow includes periodic mowing, burning, and routine removal of woody plant species to control weeds and prevent succession towards a woodland. Removal of invasive species such as Canada Thistle, Multiflora Rose, Japanese Honeysuckle, and Mile-a-Minute is also a part of the management.

Our goals are to create and improve habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife that depend on meadows as well as to provide a direct educational experience for our visitors.



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Meadow Creation Timeline



Plant Species

Wildflowers	Grasses
Black-Eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>)	Broomsedge Bluestem (<i>Andropogon virginicus</i>)
Butterfly Milkweed (<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>)	Indiangrass (<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>)
Common Milkweed (<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>)	Little Bluestem (<i>Schizachirium scoparium</i>)
Goldenrods (<i>Solidago</i> spp.)	Switchgrass (<i>Panicum virgatum</i>)
Hairy White Oldfield Aster (<i>Symphotrichum pilosum</i>)	
Purple Coneflower (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>)	
Sundial Lupine (<i>Lupinus perennis</i>)	

Bird Species

The small nestboxes scattered throughout the field are intended as shelter for [Eastern Bluebirds](#). These nestboxes are spaced at intervals appropriate for the Bluebird's territorial behavior. The large, tall nestbox at the north end of the field is intended for [American Kestrels](#), a small falcon now considered to be a threatened species in New Jersey.

Grassland bird species we hope to see include the [Bobolink](#), [Eastern Meadowlark](#), [Henslow's Sparrow](#), [Red-Winged Blackbird](#), [Savannah Sparrow](#), and [Vesper Sparrow](#). In fact, Red-Winged Blackbirds are seen here frequently, and a pair of Bobolinks was seen on one occasion.

Some Grassland Birds of New Jersey

State Endangered	State Threatened	State Special Concern
Henslow's Sparrow Northern Harrier* Short-Eared Owl* Vesper Sparrow*	American Kestrel Bobolink* Grasshopper Sparrow* Savannah Sparrow	Eastern Meadowlark Yellow-Breasted Chat*
Others		
Chipping Sparrow Eastern Bluebird Field Sparrow Indigo Bunting	Northern Bobwhite Prairie Warbler Red-Tailed Hawk	Red-Winged Blackbird Ring-Neck Pheasant Rough-Legged Hawk

*breeding population only