

SPECIES AT RISK: Common Myths



1. **MYTH:** *The government will take away my privately owned land if there is a Species at Risk there.*

There has never been a case in Alberta of a land manager losing his or her land because of a species at risk!

In Alberta, wildlife are addressed in the Wildlife Act. On Alberta's provincial public and private land, the Wildlife Act applies for the management and recovery of Endangered and Threatened species. On Federal land, the Species at Risk Act applies.

2. **MYTH:** *My lease land will be taken away.*

If you have species at risk on your leased land, then you are obviously already applying beneficial management practices on this land, thus providing just the habitats these rare species need! You will not lose the rights to use this land!

If a provincial biologist considers that there are management changes that could result in higher quality habitat, these changes would likely be minor, and if there WERE any costs involved, there are many programs (including OGC) that can help cover these costs.

3. **MYTH:** *Conservation groups, government or otherwise, will tell me what to do...*

Again, if you have species at risk, you are already doing something right. OGC's mandate is never to tell people what to do. You know your land better than anyone. Us 'telling you what to do' would mean that we would be missing more than half the important information to formulate any management choice – your half! We seek only win-win solutions when it comes to management... if there is something that might provide even greater benefit to your species AND benefit you economically as well, then we want to help.

4. **MYTH:** *If I have Burrowing Owls nesting in my pasture, I won't be able to graze that pasture anymore.*

Another myth! Burrowing owls are nesting in your pasture BECAUSE you graze that pasture. If the grass gets too long around their nests (so that they can't see predators coming), your owls will move elsewhere. Not to mention the manure.... The owls use manure to line their burrows and nest chambers (ideas about why include everything from the masking scent it might provide, to moisture and carbon dioxide absorption).

5. **MYTH:** *If I report my species at risk to OGC, then my information will be shared with everyone.*

Everything you tell us is held as strictly confidential. We would only share information if you have granted your written permission to do so!

6. **MYTH:** *Loggerhead shrikes (aka 'butcher birds') will eat all my songbirds.*

If a shrike is lucky, it may catch a songbird here and there, but this takes a tremendous amount of energy on the part of the Shrike. Instead, they mainly feed on insects – e.g., grasshoppers and beetles.

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