

Valued Components Wildlife - Birds

and the Manitoba–Minnesota Transmission Project

Why do we assess birds?

Birds are valued by naturalists, hunters, First Nations, Metis and the general public for social, recreational and cultural reasons. Birds are also protected under various forms of provincial and federal legislation such as the *Manitoba Endangered Species and Ecosystems Act*, *Migratory Birds Convention Act* and *Species at Risk Act*.

How will we determine potential effects on birds?

Bird species or groups have been selected to represent birds in the study area, including:

- northern harrier - representative of open habitat raptors and ground-nesting species;
- eastern whip-poor-will - representative of bird species that occupy semi-open forested habitats;
- bobolink - representative of grassland songbirds and sensitive to habitat fragmentation.

What assessment activities are underway?

The project team has undertaken field studies within the study area as well as on existing transmission lines to assess potential Project-related effects. Surveys include:

- bird wire collision rates;
- breeding bird locations and abundance;
- migration location and patterns;
- grouse lek locations and abundance.



What are some of the potential effects on birds?

Potential effects on birds could include but are not limited to:

- Direct loss of habitat due to the removal of habitat through clearing and grubbing in areas where grasslands, wetlands and/or forests occur;
- Indirect loss of habitat due to habitat fragmentation and sensory disturbances such as construction noise;
- Change in mortality risk due to the presence of overhead wires, construction equipment and vehicle traffic.

What are we considering to reduce the potential effects on birds?

Manitoba Hydro will propose mitigation measures to reduce potential effects on birds that may include:

- timing of construction activities to avoid sensitive breeding periods;
- retention of vegetated buffers around wetlands and riparian areas where possible;
- bird diverters on the transmission line to increase visibility and reduce bird collisions at high risk locations.

Valued components (VCs) are components of the natural and human environment that are considered by the proponent, public, First Nations groups, Metis, scientists and other technical specialists and government agencies involved in the assessment process to have scientific, ecological, economic, social, cultural, archaeological, historical, or other importance.



Ruffed grouse

For more information or if you would like to share your concerns, contact us at mmtp@hydro.mb.ca or toll free at 1-877-343-1631.