

FIELD SPARROW  
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HABITATS IN BIRD CONSERVATION  
REGION 14

### Introduction

The Field sparrow (*spizella pusilla*) is a common to uncommon breeder in BCR 14. It prefers open grassy areas with low shrubs or trees. These sparrows are at the northern limits of their breeding range in BCR 14 and are declining with forest succession and development. It is listed as a “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” in the Wildlife Action Plan of at least one State in BCR 14.

### Habitat Needs

This bird breeds in old fields or pastures that are in the early stages of succession so that there are patches scattered woody vegetation in the openings. They also use power line corridors, woodland edges, overgrown gravel pits and cutover pine forests. Young Christmas tree plantations are also sometimes used.

Its territory size averages around two acres and may be as small as a third of an acre in the best habitats.

### Habitat Management Practices

The habitat management objective for this species would be to focus on old fields or pastures and maintain them in the early stages of succession. A mowing rotation should be set up so that around eighty percent of the open area remains as usable habitat. Using a five-year rotation and mowing twenty percent of the area every year can accomplish this. Mowing should be conducted after July 1 so that there will be no interference with nesting and brood production.

When Assessing properties for habitat potential, look for excessively to well-drained soils in Important Forest Soils Group IC if openings need to be created. Adams, Colton, Hinckley, Masardis, Quonset, Stetson, Windsor soils would be examples but there are others depending on where you are in BCR 14.

### Recommended Silvicultural Treatments include:

The only forest type that this species might use is the pine type. This type is not the preferred habitat so it is likely that any habitat produced by pine management would be incidental. However, the application of group selection in this type would likely be beneficial to field sparrows if the pine stand (s) are located adjacent to their preferred old field habitats.

