

Agriculture's Impact on Nesting Birds in Dane County & Master Naturalist Program Partnership



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DANE COUNTY

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Surface Level Project Goal:

Gain an understanding for which bird species are using which agricultural land use types during breeding season in Dane County



WHY THIS PROJECT MATTERS

*The Eastern meadowlark
has declined in population
by 75% nationwide*

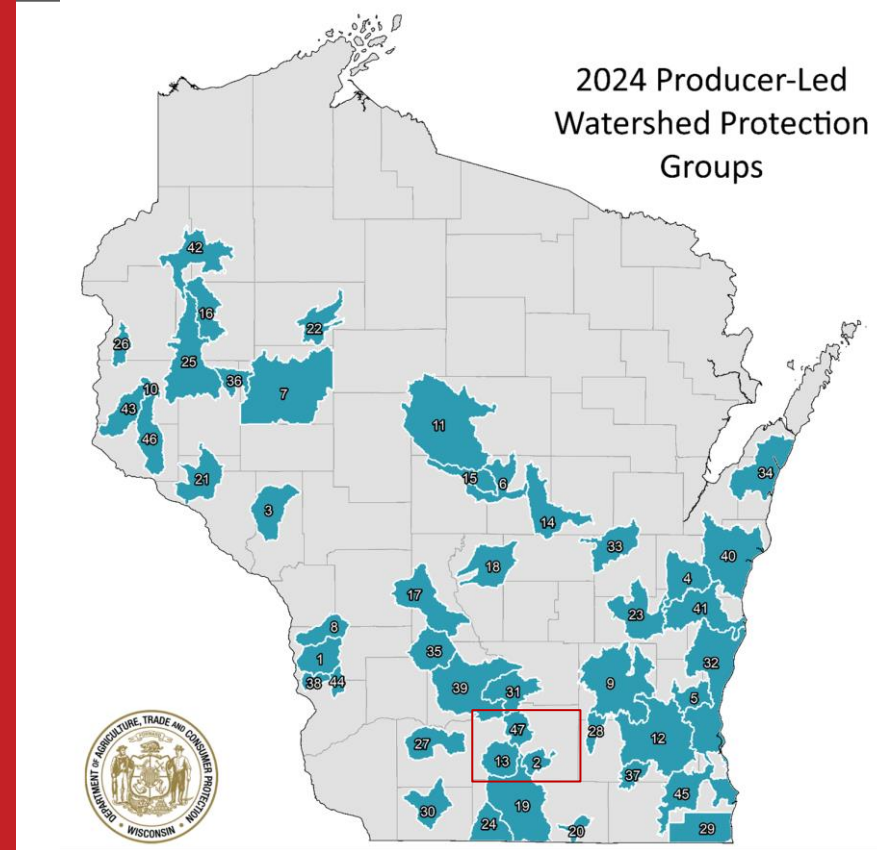


- Grassland bird species are in sharp decline nationally
- DNR has identified grassland bird habitat as a major priority in southern Wisconsin
- Identifies locally-preferable agricultural habitats
- Connects producer-led groups with Dane County Land & Water, Extension, and Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance



BIGGER PICTURE

- Producer-led groups statewide are looking for ways to expand and avoid complacency
- Farmers have shown an interest in how wildlife interacts with their decisions. Could it impact their future decision making?
- Lends itself to a multi-year study, more partners, and larger granting agencies



LONG-TERM PROJECT TIMELINE

2025: Proof of Concept

- Survey farms in Dane County, gather data, create replicable process for other groups

2026: Present and expand

- Present findings statewide/field days
- Add farms/geographic area
- Apply for funding

2027: Strength in numbers

- Continue expanding
- Collaborate on ways to present data to farmers and coordinators



The statewide Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program was launched in 2013.



The Wisconsin Master Naturalist program supports a network of well-informed volunteers and instructors dedicated to conservation service, leadership, and lifelong learning.

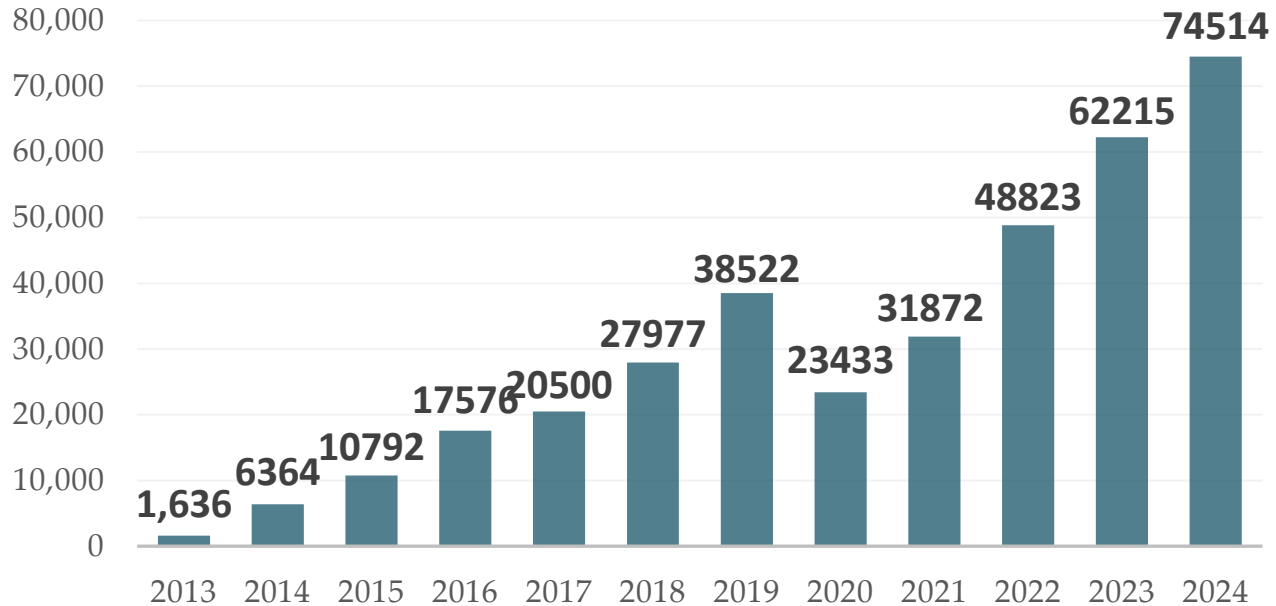


Wisconsin Master Naturalists:

- Attend 40-hour training course
- Annually perform **and record** a minimum of 40 hours of service and receive 8 hours of advanced training.
- Provide Volunteer Service in:
 - education/interpretation
 - citizen science
 - stewardship



Master Naturalist Volunteer Hours (Reported)



DANE COUNTY MASTER NATURLISTS



- In 2024 alone, more than 200 people in Dane County reported Master Naturalist volunteer hours on behalf of more than 125 different organizations/projects
- 12,560 reported volunteer hours in 2024, representing 17% of all hours in Wisconsin
- In 2025, there were only two trainings held in Dane County and each filled quickly and had a full waitlist
- There are more than 130 people total on a waitlist statewide this year



Thank You!



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