

CVC's program for grassland birds progressing

Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) continues to make progress in its three-year Grassland Bird Recovery Program.

It's helping at-risk grassland birds, such as the eastern meadowlark and bobolink.

The program is in its final year of collecting data on grassland birds and creating more habitat.

CVC is converting almost 25 acres of an old farm field at Upper Credit Conservation Area near Alton into thriving grassland full of wildflowers and native grasses. Increasing the amount of land certified by CVC's Bird-Friendly Certified Hay (BFCH) program is another way to provide habitat for these birds. Harvesting hay later in the year, a central part of the BFCH program, means birds can finish nesting before hay is harvested. The BFCH program has increased potential grassland habitat by 225 acres to-date. CVC staff visited the fields in June and July, and detected 105 eastern meadowlark and bobolink. Forty-six of these occurrences were identified to be breeding pairs.

The transformation at Upper Credit Conservation Area is in its final stages as the field was seeded in spring with native plants. CVC's Deputy CAO and Director of Watershed Transformation Mike Puddister commented. "We hope that the field will become a demonstration site for landowners who want to improve old fields on their properties. Old fields are often neglected and landowners may not be aware that they could look better and provide critical habitat for grassland birds. We partner with landowners and provide them with tools and resources to enhance the land on their properties."

Landowners interested in learning more about the project and the recovery program can view an online journal showcasing the project at www.creditvalleyca.ca/grasslandrecovery

The program received financial assistance from the Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund.