

BIRD AND BUTTERFLY HABITAT PREFERENCES ON PRIVATE PRAIRIE REMNANTS IN SOUTH-CENTRAL KANSAS

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Abstract: Remnant size, habitat structure, and plant species diversity all contribute to the makeup of faunal species on remnant prairies. Prairie landowners on the western outskirts of the Flint Hills in South-Central Kansas don't always consider prairie bird and butterfly species when managing their prairies, but their actions (or lack thereof) have a profound impact on the types and diversity of species these prairies support. Eight prairie remnants with varying sizes, management regimes, and levels of tree invasion have been sampled for bird and butterfly populations for four consecutive years from 2007-2010. Special attention is being given to species of greatest conservation need in the Kansas Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan that include a variety of grassland birds and butterflies targeted for conservation. These species are found with greater regularity on the larger project area prairies managed for tree and brush control with haying, light grazing, and prescribed burning. Prairie landowners are encouraged to consider impacts to grassland fauna when developing management plans.