

SHORT-EARED OWL MONITORING *Project WAfLS 2020*



Dear Short-eared Owl enthusiasts,

We need your help! We are embarking on the 3rd and final year of a 3-year collaborative study to monitor Short-eared Owl populations in the western U.S. and looking for enthusiastic citizen-scientists to complete surveys in Montana.

Project WAfLS (Western *Asio flammeus* Landscape Study), involves 15 other agencies and organizations across 8 states and is designed to assess the population status, trends, and threats against the Short-eared Owl – an enigmatic, open-country species.

This project, funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is a rare example of cooperation and collaboration on a large scale and is an opportunity to influence and focus conservation and restoration activities for this species. This species-specific monitoring program will provide the most robust population data for Short-eared Owls to date.

The effort aims to complete a number of coordinated surveys across California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. The survey design is well-suited to volunteer participation and will rely primarily on volunteer, citizen-scientists to collect data.

Volunteers will be asked to select one of 50 grids in the state and will be responsible for two 1.5 hour visits, each occurring in a separate 3 week window (March/April and April/May). The timing for a given route is dependent upon elevation. It is a road based survey (8 - 11 points along a secondary road, separated by 1/2 mile) that is completed starting 100 minutes before darkness and finishing 10 minutes before darkness. The survey timing is set to coincide with the Short-eared Owls elaborate courtship displays.

More information, maps, and links to sign-up page are available at:
<https://www.avianknowledgenorthwest.net/citizen-science/short-eared-owls>

If you're interested in learning more about this ambitious project or want to know how to participate, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Larson".

Matt Larson
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