

Abstracts

(10) MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS AND WINTERING AREAS OF SHORT-EARED OWLS TAGGED IN NOME, ALASKA

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The Short-eared Owl has undergone a steep, long-term, and range-wide decline tantamount to a 70% reduction in population size in North America since 1966. The greatest conservation threat to the species is thought to occur on its wintering grounds, particularly for birds that breed in the northern extent of its range where habitat remains largely intact. Therefore, we harnessed 14 Short-eared Owls with solar-powered satellite transmitters in June 2009 in Nome, Alaska, to address the following research objectives: 1) identify wintering areas of Alaska's Short-eared Owls, 2) identify migration routes, bottlenecks, and potential stop over areas, and 3) describe migration strategies and non-breeding habitat associations. Owls established wintering areas across 25 degrees of longitude, from the Pacific Northwest east to the Great Plains, and 30 degrees of latitude, from the Prairie Provinces south to central Mexico. Straight-line migration distances ranged from 2,000 – 6,000 km. Short-eared Owls used two principal flyways: an inland route through the Prairie Provinces and Great Plains states and a coastal route through Southeast Alaska and British Columbia.

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