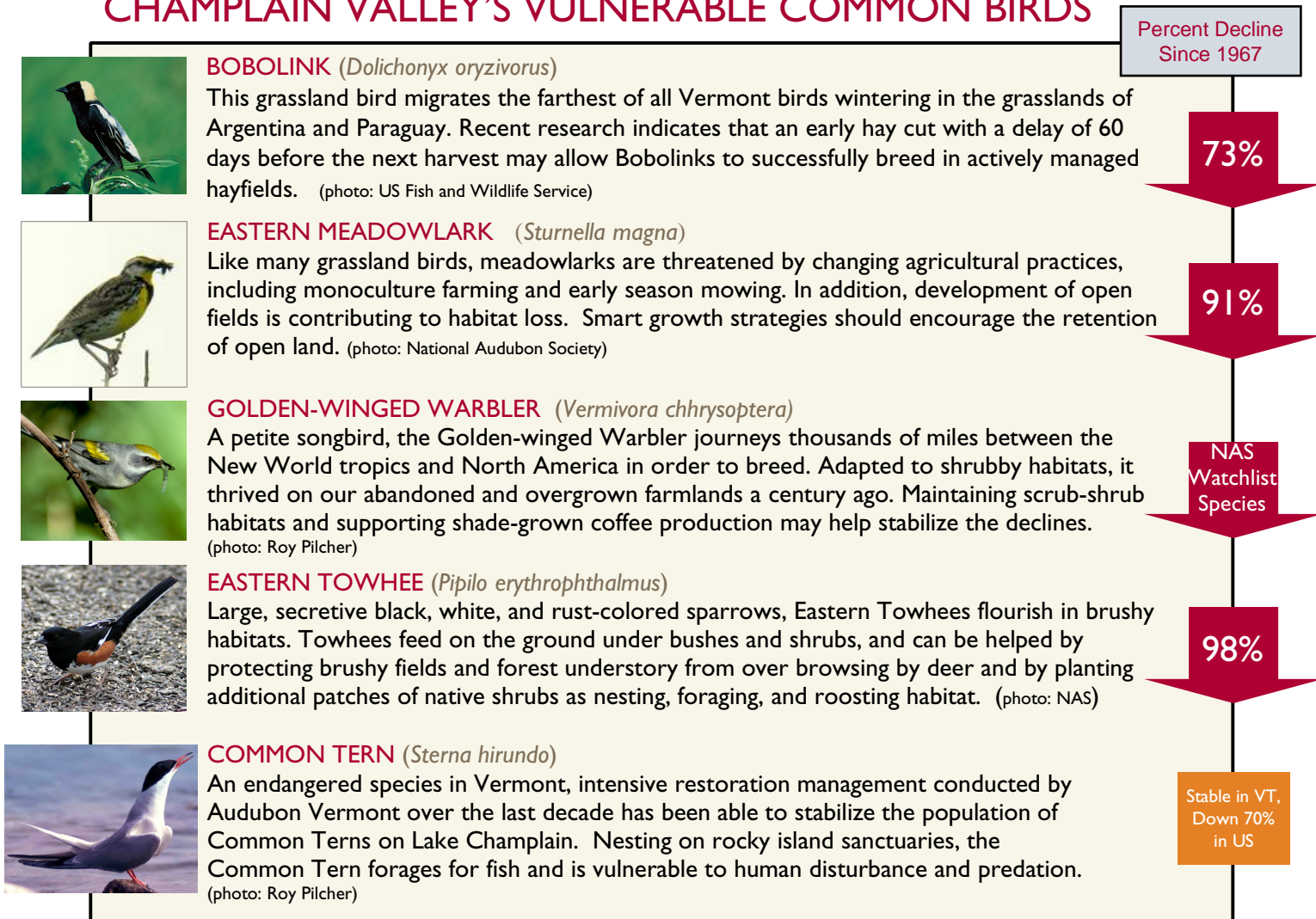


## CHAMPLAIN VALLEY'S COMMON BIRDS IN DECLINE

*A State of the Birds Report  
Summer 2009*

Many of our most common and beloved birds are experiencing precipitous population declines. Audubon has identified our nation's most vulnerable common birds after analyzing forty years of bird population data collected by citizen scientists for Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, combined, for the first time, with Breeding Bird Survey data from the U.S. Geological Survey. Additional analyses focused on state level trends. Some mirror the national picture, while others reveal local and regional differences. The birds below are suffering the some of the most serious population declines in Vermont. Along with their national *Common Birds in Decline* list mates, they showcase the need for vigilance in protecting local habitats and the health of our environment. Working together, we can make a difference. Visit <http://stateofthebirds.audubon.org/CBID> for the national findings.

## CHAMPLAIN VALLEY'S VULNERABLE COMMON BIRDS





## VERMONT HABITATS AT RISK

Vermont's Champlain Valley is a mosaic of fields, clay-plain forests wetlands, lakes and rivers that host a high diversity of breeding birds. This diversity of birds is attracted to the valley because of the regionally unique habitats found there, including open farmlands, shrub patches, large emergent marshes and the lake itself. However, the Champlain Valley's critical bird habitats face a number of threats. The Eastern Towhee and Golden-winged Warbler may be declining due to the lack of shrub-scrub forest. Meanwhile, populations of grassland birds like the Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolink are dropping due to building and agricultural development on open grasslands, as well as early-season mowing and conversion to row crops. Controlling invasive species such as Wild Parsnip and Chervil may also add to the challenge of creating and maintaining suitable breeding habitat.



## WHAT AUDUBON VERMONT IS DOING

Vermonters care deeply about birds and their habitat. Audubon Vermont is working with individuals across the state to monitor bird populations and promote sound stewardship on the ground. With 80% of Vermont in private ownership, Audubon Vermont is hard at work providing landowners with advice and assistance on how to manage their lands in bird friendly ways. Our Champlain Valley Bird Initiative will be offering technical assistance to grassland and shrubland landowners by conducting bird habitat assessments and making recommendations on bird friendly management.

We are also monitoring grassland bird populations and have developed a grassland birds recovery plan for the state of Vermont. On Lake Champlain, our island sanctuaries and intensive restoration efforts are restoring a viable Vermont population of Common Terns. Our Important Bird Areas program is identifying critical bird habitat in the state and we are working directly with our chapters to promote the conservation of these areas.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Vermonters can help keep common birds common in a variety of ways. Landowners with open fields can delay mowing fields until after July 15th each year. Where possible, landowners should maintain old fields and forest edges in early-successional habitat. Backyards provide valuable habitat for common birds. Landscaping using native plants and using "Audubon at Home" practices will help many common birds.

Volunteers can play a critical role in helping us determine bird population trends by taking part in bird monitoring projects. Participating in the Christmas Bird Count, the Great Backyard Bird Count and entering bird observations into ebird are all important ways to help ornithologists track bird populations.

Audubon has seven local chapters around the state which carry out a number of local conservation and monitoring projects. Champlain Valley chapters are the Otter Creek Audubon Society, Green Mountain Audubon Society and Rutland County Audubon Society. For information on a chapter near you and how you can get involved visit our website at [vt.audubon.org](http://vt.audubon.org).