

# BOBOLINK

*DOLICHONYX ORYZIVORUS*

Your natural insecticide

## Main benefits for agriculture

The bobolink feeds mainly on insect pests such as June bug larvae, aphid larvae, and crane fly larvae, which can damage crops. It can also feed on species such as the European corn borer, thus helping control infestations. By protecting this field bird species, farmers can benefit from **natural pest control**.

**Insects** such as caterpillars, butterflies, grasshoppers, and beetles make up **57% of the bobolink's diet**. The seeds of weeds are its other main food source. Bobolink young are fed exclusively on insects by their parents.

The bobolink prefers to breed and nest in fodder crops. However, it can be **beneficial in a variety of agricultural environments** near its nest. For example, it may feed on pests found in grain crop fields (e.g., wheat, barley, oat, and corn fields).



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## Habitats

- Fallow fields, grasslands, and pastureland
- Nests on the ground and is faithful to its nesting site

## Did you know?

In Quebec, the presence of bobolinks can be an **indicator of fertile, well-drained soil**. They're often found in areas with favourable conditions for agriculture and crop growth.

# What you can do to help the bobolink

## Preserving habitat

**Maintain grasslands** for at least four to five years before cultivating again to ensure high-quality breeding sites over long periods.

Rotate lands so that grasslands put back into cropland sit next to new or old grasslands.

## Reducing mortality

Install a **flushing bar** on the front of the machinery to scare away any birds nesting on the ground, and **reduce farm machinery speed to 10 km/h**.

The bobolink nests on the ground! To reduce nest trampling, maintain pastures with **limited livestock density** to ensure a protective cover of at least 30 cm, or **create ungrazed reserves** between May 15 and July 15.

**Reduce pesticide use** by using integrated pest management methods and promoting soil health, to ensure a source of food.

If you spot a nest or bobolink:

- **Maintain a protective buffer around it** (100 m or so) and avoid approaching the nest before July 15.
- **Delay the first haying** until July 15 to avoid destroying nests (this date may vary from region to region).
- **When cutting hay**, work from the inside of the field outward so that birds can fly away and avoid getting trapped.

### References :

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